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Introduction: Cash, Commoditisation and Changing Foragers

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It has recently been argued that hunting and gathering as a distinct way of life no longer exists and has not done so for the past several thousand years. All foragers¹⁾, it has been asserted, have interacted through exchange with non-foragers and while there may still be some that practise neither cultivation nor animal husbandry of any kind, such people are not "pure" hunter-gatherers/foragers because they depend at least seasonally on produced foods secured through trade [HEADLAND and REID 1989: 48, 60]. People such as the San of Botswana remain dependent on hunting and gathering not because they are voluntarily continuing to live in that way but because they are forced to by their more powerful neighbours and because it is their most viable option in their restricted circumstances. Observers have not understood such societies, it is concluded, because they have failed to realise that what they interpret as fossilised isolates are really "commercial foragers" carrying on a life-style not in spite of but because of their particular economic role in the world economy [DENBOW 1984; HEADLAND and REID 1989; WILMSEN 1989].

These views echo long standing materialist ideas about the central role of cash and commoditisation in bringing about change in precapitalist societies. Marx, for instance, argued that the exchange of commodities evolved not within primitive communities but on their margins at the few points where they come into contact with other communities: from these points, he argued, commoditisation moves into the interior of the community, 'exerting a disintegrating influence upon it' [1859/1970: 50]. His assumption that the impact of the exchange of commodities on these societies is negative has also been widely shared.

The appearance of cash and commoditisation are usually seen as the first manifestation of modernity and as evidence of the impact of market economies among people previously untouched by them. Such impacts go back five thousand years or more in some cases and certainly encompass virtually all foragers today. Despite the general recognition that there are no 'pure' foragers in this sense, it has not stopped the continued use of the term to refer to people living in a wide range of circumstances as the papers in this volume indicate. It is used to encompass

1) The term forager, as used in this volume, is identical with the term 'hunter-gatherer.' No distinction is implied or intended.

Pygmies dependent on meat trading, small-scale swiddening Agta in the Philippines, state subsidised hunters in northern Canada, commercial fisherman in Alaska, welfare dependent Aboriginal artefact producers in Australia and people not classified as hunter-gatherers/foragers yet indistinguishable from them in their 'impure' form, the Semai of Malaysia. The grouping of these people together not only raises questions of definition but also the question of when do hunter-gatherers stop being hunter-gatherers.

The current debate over foragers 'pure' and 'impure' has for the most part been fuelled by neo-marxist views that have tended to see contemporary precapitalist economies as under-developed and created or internally orchestrated by the dominant world economy, giving causal priority to production over exchange. Such views tend to collapse culture into superstructural ideology and consequently underrate its significance and are often in danger of casting the members of precapitalist societies in an entirely passive role, thus ignoring the full range of possible consequences of these external impacts. Yet if economic activity is socially constituted, as such materialist perspectives assume, then it is possible that as well as being transformed by these external influences foragers may assimilate some, many or all of the intrusions and linkages with the dominant economy to their own internal social purposes and in so doing reproduce distinctive sets of economic and social relations.

In this introduction I will examine how the papers in this volume relate to these general issues. I will begin by briefly outlining classical views of the general significance of cash and commoditisation for social relations, and the nature of the category hunter-gatherer/forager, before turning to a consideration and an evaluation of a classic model of their impact on precapitalist societies in the light of the contributions here.

CASH AND COMMODITISATION

A simple definition of commodity is something produced for exchange: commoditisation is, thus, the process of becoming involved in producing things for exchange and by extension the obtaining of things offered for exchange by others. The inclusion of land and labour as commodities and the free circulation of money are the central features of market economies and intimately involved with the emergence of industrialisation and capitalism. Capitalist market economies appeared at the end of the eighteenth century when the predominant form of labour organisation started to be through the market in some areas, although in other areas of the world money and full commoditisation only arrived during the twentieth century.

The development of commoditisation and money relates directly to the history of exchange. Exchange is central to all social life, but the ways in which people have made their labour social has evolved over time in a process of increasing abstraction. Keith Hart [1982: 39-41] has distinguished ten stages in the

development of commoditisation which show a progressive abstraction of social labour. Each stage of the sequence presupposes those preceding it but does not necessarily entail those that follow. Commoditisation has its origins in things produced for use, subsequently these come to be alienated through gift and barter which leads to an intensification of the division of labour and circulation by means of exchange. Later comes exchange through the market mechanism, crystallising in the appearance of money (pure exchange value), the use of money as capital to make profit, and its deployment as industrial capital. The final two steps in this sequence, which becomes excessively evolutionary are human labour becoming the main exchange value and finally an abstract cipher as in computerised transactions.

The development of money has always been seen as playing a crucial part in facilitating the growth of commoditisation since in its general purpose form it is a medium of exchange for most things, as well as a standard and store of value. Further money has the potential to objectify and depersonalise social relations. Thus Simmel argues that if the things people produce are bought or sold rather than exchanged by barter or gift, people become increasingly less closely identified with what they produce. This in turn leads to a decrease in interpersonal dependency [SIMMEL 1907/1978: 342] and an increasing differentiation of people. It does this in part by setting exchange free by, for instance, not requiring certain activities of exchange partners [SIMMEL 1907/1978: 286] and often liberating them from the constraints of time and place.

Money allows value in fixed form to be converted to value in any form. It thus comes to have the greatest number of unpredictable uses [SIMMEL 1907/1978: 212] and becomes the site of conflict between purposes [1907/1978:215–216] since it can be allocated to any purpose. Increasingly too, Simmel argues, the world of everyday life comes under the control of intelligence rather than of feeling, as more and more actions, objects and activities become objectively calculable in terms of money and in so doing progressively reduce their emotional content and the desires that attach to them. This is made all the more significant by the huge rise in the sheer number of material things under modern production systems. Thus Simmel sees money as both a symbol and a creator of, the increasingly abstract nature of human relations. In his view money is pure directed purpose and therefore subject to individual will, which while carrying alienation with it also carries freedom, in the sense that it facilitates interacting with a greater number of people and thus lessens, to a variable extent, the personal nature of each interaction. The owner of money is for this reason in a superior position to the owner of a commodity since money is undirected to specific purposes [SIMMEL 1907/1978: 214]. As many commentators have argued (e.g. see Parry and Bloch [1989]) Simmel failed to see the extent to which his analysis of the impact of money reproduced a specific set of social constructions of it, but nevertheless he points to powerful potentialities.

Given these general views on the nature of cash and commoditisation which were widely shared by the founding fathers of sociology, it is not surprising that they have been seen to threaten the social relations of societies without them. Pre-

colonial forager economies and market economies differ markedly. Characteristically most foragers traditionally lived in self-supporting residential groups with a weakly developed division of labour, primarily organised along gender lines. The common form of exchange was sharing of food amongst those present at the time of killing, butchery or cooking. In many of these societies, however, there were and are other forms of intra-society exchange. For most of them this exchange tends to take the form of prestation rather than barter or trade and has a number of distinctive features. Frequently the goods exchanged are of the same kind and not the product of locally specialised resources and/or the specialised product of the givers; the return gift is usually delayed; the transactions are usually between groups of relatives and even if between individuals often have implications for sets of people; because of the social nature of the exchange, involvement is frequently involuntary; the gift may never be fully alienated from the producer and/or giver; the transfer nearly always involves prestige and status, is usually in public and accompanied by ceremony (see Hughes [1973:119] and Gregory [1982]). Thus in traditional forager societies exchange is highly personalised and the abstraction of labour is only weakly developed, a great deal of activity being organised by kinship. This has led a number of authors to speak of the kin-mode of production in these societies (e.g. see Wolf [1982: 88-96]).

Market exchange stands in complete contrast to the gift exchange characteristic of transactions internal to foraging societies. In market exchange the goods are always different; they are the product of specialised resources and/or labour; they are completely alienable from the producer; the return payment is immediate; the transaction is nearly always with a non-relative and of an individual nature without group implications; the exchange is voluntarily entered into on the basis of self-interest rather than entailed by social relations; the exchange itself rarely involves prestige or status and it is usually private and unceremonial.

Thus two ideal types of economy can be distinguished: on the one hand there is the traditional hunting and gathering society based on gift exchange where gifts are total prestations [MAUSS 1925/1969: 3], and their social significance greatly more important than their purely utilitarian value. On the other hand there is the pure market economy where exchange is depersonalised and the utilitarian aspects of the exchange eclipse the social significance as far as the transactors are concerned. Although many precapitalist societies had currencies and partial commoditisation there is no good ethnographic evidence to challenge the view that any developed form of commodity exchange, in the sense of producing for unknown consumers in return for goods or money, is not a phenomena internal to foraging societies but that it emerges in relationships with societies based on other forms of economic organisation. It thus appears reasonable to place emphasis on the potential of cash and commoditisation to bring about substantial changes in social relations.

Although all trade seems to have its origins in the exchange of luxuries, sooner or later some or all of the luxuries take on the form of necessities. At that point, or soon after, the threat to a self-sustaining economy begins and a compulsion enters

the production for exchange since it is through the exchange that the necessities for life come to be obtained. In the case of foragers this compulsion can arise quite rapidly since the production of goods for exchange usually competes with the daily requirement, for at least some part of the active workforce to forage for food. Even if people can remain self-sustaining in food they may become dependent on introduced technology if they are to carry out both activities. Thus commoditisation can quickly become involved in activities essential to survival and therefore integral to the nature of social life.

Commoditisation is thus significant because it is bound to be centrally involved in the transformation of self-sufficient foraging ways of life and because it is predicated on values that are opposed in many ways to those underwriting the foraging life. It is obviously important, however, in understanding at least the initial impact, whether the involvement with commoditisation is entered into voluntarily or under some form of duress. While some trade between foragers and others was voluntarily entered into, more often commoditisation of relations followed on from warfare, invasion, territorial dispossession and/or taxation, leading people to have to sell their labour to survive.

'PURE' FORAGER SOCIAL RELATIONS

Much energy has been expended on arguing about the nature and even the existence of a distinctively foraging way of life or mode or modes of production. Because materialist views have generally privileged production the actual techniques of subsistence—hunting, fishing and gathering—have assumed a central significance in defining a foraging way of life. This is unsurprising for several reasons not least the fact that such modes of subsistence have dominated human history in temporal terms and under most conditions place considerable constraints on the possible range of social relations that can be developed. Yet even so, the diversity of social groupings, gender relations, degrees of inequality and variation in property rights found among people with such subsistence techniques is wide and does not definitively distinguish them from small-scale part-time swiddeners such as the Semai. The result is that generalisations about the nature of forager social relations cannot usually be exclusively confined to people with that kind of subsistence technique. Thus foragers are usually characterised as being dominated by sharing, communal ownership of land and resources and egalitarian political relations (e.g. Headland and Reid [1989: 48]). But these are all matters of degree and the question of how dominant these characteristics have to be for a society having them to be called a 'pure' foraging society is obviously problematic. In the end it is evident that while the term forager is a useful shorthand label its analytical usefulness is limited because it is not possible to specify any set of social relations exclusively associated with people living by foraging.

This then suggests that the issue in the context of the analysis of the impact of cash and commoditisation on societies that have only recently abandoned, partially

or completely, total dependence on foraging subsistence techniques, is whether the specific forms of social relations the particular group of people had prior to these impacts have changed or not, and if they have changed in what ways. The issues are those to do with continuities and changes in the reproduction of practices, beliefs and social forms and the reasons for these responses.

IMPACT OF COMMODITISATION ON PRECAPITALIST SOCIETIES: A CLASSIC FORMULATION

The classic formulation of the impact of commoditisation on precapitalist societies is found in Robert Murphy's and Julian Steward's paper, 'Trappers and Tappers: Parallel Process in Acculturation' [1956/1968]. In this comparison of two societies with common levels of 'socio-cultural integration,' but not subsistence techniques, Murphy and Steward drew on the recently published work of Eleanor Leacock on the Canadian 'Montagnais "hunting territory" and the fur trade' [1954], and Murphy's own work on the horticultural Mundurucu of Brazil who became involved with rubber tapping. They trace the history of each group's involvement with a mercantile barter economy to argue for a high degree of structural parallelism in the consequences. They conclude that:

when the people of an unstratified native society barter wild products found in extensive distribution and obtained through individual effort, the structure of the native culture will be destroyed, and the final culmination will be a culture-type characterized by individual families having delimited rights to marketable resources and linked to the larger nation through trading centers [MURPHY and STEWARD 1956/1968: 233].

These consequences come about, in their view, primarily because indigenous people desire industrially made goods and put their effort into production for exchange in order to obtain them [MURPHY and STEWARD 1956/1968: 233]. An irreversible turning point comes, they argue, when the amount of activity devoted to production for trade grows to such an extent that it interferes with the traditional subsistence cycle and associated social organisation, making their continuance impossible [1956/1968: 217]. Murphy and Steward identify four causal factors creating the parallelism: the producers were tied by bonds of debt to the traders; the dependency on the trader increases at the expense of internal collective bonds which because of the lack of a medium of exchange is based on important personal ties: the resource traded can be collected by a single person who comes to have a conservation interest in the resource base on which he/she is dependent; the resource is dispersed and requires the people exploiting it to live at some distance from each other [1956/1968: 227].

The culmination of the acculturation process is the formation of loosely integrated communities about the trading posts and the increasing assimilation of the populations to the national culture with a concomitant loss of cultural

distinctiveness. The consequences, as outlined by Murphy and Steward, are the same for both the foraging and the horticultural people, although the process, in its initial stages, somewhat different.

At the end of the paper they note, but do not really explore, alternate trajectories depending on the nature of the internal social organisation of the societies involved. Trade reinforced class-structure among the Skagit of the northwest coast whereas among the plains Indians hunting the buffalo for the fur trade group cohesion was enhanced by the acquisition of the horse, the gun and intensification of warfare [1956/1968: 232].

The specific propositions on the consequences of commoditisation are that: the individual family will become the main social unit; the family will have property rights in the traded resource; the family will be linked to the nation through trading centres; loosely integrated communities will grow up around the trading posts; the structure of the native culture will be destroyed; the population will become assimilated and the path of acculturation will vary depending on the internal organisation of the particular society. This general analysis received confirmation from research by Richard Fox [1969], Brian Morris [1977], Peter Gardner [1966, 1972] and Nurit Bird [1983] working with forest traders in India who had been involved in the sale of forest products for many hundreds and in some cases thousands of years.

From this Indian work the following propositions can be added. Commodification creates competition between families; individuals become highly migratory; local groups lose any formal kin composition; reciprocity and sharing declines [Fox 1969: 142]; the terms of trade are usually unfavourable to the foragers [MORRIS 1977: 231]; and their culture places a high value on personal autonomy [GARDNER 1972; MORRIS 1977].

The papers in this volume allow us to reconsider this overall analysis and demonstrate that the consequences of commoditisation are much more complex and diverse than these propositions suggest. I shall do so by first considering the significance of the nature of the encapsulating environment and then the internal impacts.

ENCAPSULATING ENVIRONMENT

Murphy and Steward deal with only one kind of contact: an initial frontier situation characterised by the operation of single traders. In such a situation production for exchange, at least initially, is voluntary and in the control of the indigenous people. But there are other situations such as that among both the Mbuti and the Agta, where traders more actively seek out people to entice them into trading or where deterioration in and loss of habitat forces people such as some Agta into trading or doing so more intensively²).

Where there is no consumer dependency and/or where the people have a number of strategies for obtaining goods they do not produce themselves, traders

appear to be compelled to be more generous and to accommodate themselves, at least to some extent, to the people with whom they trade. Thus the African meat traders discussed by Ichikawa have to extend credit to the Mbuti, demonstrate generosity and recognise fictive kinship ties to get the Mbuti to trade with them. Similarly with the Agta discussed by Griffin, although the formalised *ibay* trading partnership with the lowland farmers has been greatly weakened because of the rapid growth in poor peasants taking up land in the area who do not want a formalised social relationship, the new rattan traders plying the coast in boats seem to rely partly on being more generous in their forward payment of provisions to ensure a supply of trade goods. In the Mbuti situation debt to traders does not seem to be a problem since the traders by going to the forest camps are placed in a situation where they have little alternative but to be somewhat flexible, because there are other traders and traditional village patrons with whom the Mbuti can trade. For the Agta things are a little different: habitat deterioration in some areas seems to be forcing a greater dependency on the lowland farmers to whom they have to go for exchange and who are therefore in a much better situation to determine the terms of trade. The situation may be ameliorated to some degree because the Agta have the opportunity to establish relations with several different families. It is only in the situation where an absolute market dependency has become established, as among the Semai discussed by Gomes, that debt creates real problems and people are obliged to sell their assets on occasions in order to survive and/or maintain relations with the local traders.

Murphy and Steward argue that the dependency on the trader is increased because people are bartering which creates important personal ties between the producers and the traders. While this may be the case in some circumstances, Ichikawa's analysis of the Mbuti situation shows this is in no way inevitable. The Mbuti insist on barter because it protects them from the instability and high inflation rate in the Zaire economy which saw the cost of meat rise by 1,000% in the 12 years between 1975–1987. It does this because barter is carried out at a fixed rate of exchange. The Mbuti also maintain a two price/two sphere system in which they deliberately avoid the adoption of a single price system so that they do not compare the price of labour paid in cash with the price of labour paid in kind. Labour for cash is confined to transactions in the wider society, while the transaction of labour for kind is maintained with the traditional agricultural patrons. This greatly advantages the Mbuti for they get three times as much cassava from payment in kind as they would were they to be paid the standard daily wage rate and have to purchase it.

It is also clear that the development of social relationships with the traders is sought by these and many other former foragers because they hope and expect that

- 2) Gross *et al.* [1979] have argued that it was environmental deterioration that drew many Amazonian Indians into a dependence on trading rather than a desire for industrial goods. This deterioration in the environment was brought about by outsiders moving into the area.

such relationships will give them some moral leverage over them. Thus there is the Agta *ibay* relationship, the extension of fictive kinship to the traders by the Mbuti and by Aboriginal people to those Europeans with whom they interact frequently. Presumably the wide ranging gift exchange network between male San and male Kgalagadi reported by Sugawara in the sedentary community he studied is at least partially motivated in the same way.

The cases Murphy and Steward drew on covered a period when the extension of state control over the indigenous people was relatively undeveloped. If state control is not coercive in the initial phase it can become so as in the case of the Agta. It can also evolve into a more benign relationship as in the first world nations after the Second World War with the development of the welfare state. Here the evolution of the state and its penetration of the areas where indigenous people live is far advanced beyond the frontier situation.

For a range of reasons, state involvement with contemporary foragers such as the Quebec Cree, Aboriginal people of remote Australia or the Alaskan Yup'ik tends to be contradictory and inconsistent. While in all three areas the liberal democratic state is predicated on the legal equality (in theory) of all citizens, for a complex of historical, political and social reasons it is unable to maintain this stance in respect of indigenous people. Thus while on the one hand it actively seeks to assimilate them into the mainstream it is, on the other hand, an active agent in perpetuating many of the practices and social relationships that make these people distinctive in the first place. Of particular significance is the recognition of a separate land base, something which people such as the San, Agta, Semai and Mbuti do not have. This is predicated on the recognition by the colonising society that these people's distinctive histories, if not giving them distinct legal rights at least give them a moral claim to a distinctive status. In the case of the Cree the state is making cash payments which prolong the viability of the fur trade and provide encouragement for the reconstitution and continuation of a set of activities that were in decline. The willingness to do so has to be understood within the political economy of the state gaining legitimate and speedy access to lands in which the Cree had interests, for hydro-electric schemes. The approximately \$C5 million annual payment to hunters [SCOTT 1984: 76] can be seen in a number of ways, including having some aspect of a rent and from a long term point of view, as the penultimate stage in the appropriation of Cree lands. In Australia the government subsidises the manufacture of traditional artefacts in order to help people earn their living rather than receive it as a transfer payment, thus prolonging the production of some artefacts beyond their practical use. While the government sees this in terms of inculcating the work ethic and promoting behaviour consistent with the dominant economy it is clear from the papers on artefact production by Koyama, Kubota and Matsuyama that the motivation and income are related more closely, although not completely, to perpetuating existing social relations and reaffirming aspects of personal identity.

In Alaska the liberal democratic state is less benign but nevertheless transfer

payments play a crucial role in making possible the continuation of subsistence production which is still central to the people's identity as Yup'ik rather than Americans. This support has to be understood within the context of the final phase of colonial history in Alaska and the political economy of oil extraction. The oil producers' concerns about their titles to their tenements led the state to negotiate an extinction of aboriginal title which included the allocation of land to each indigenous village. Many of these are quite remote geographically and isolated from mainstream economic activity. Granting of lands has reinforced people's ties to these areas and transfer payments have underwritten the perpetuation of these communities with their distinctive practices and identities.

INTERNAL EFFECTS AND REACTIONS

Murphy and Steward's analysis is based on the straight forward cultural ecological assumption that the organisation of work will influence the nature of social arrangements and lead to the transformation of value systems. As Feit points out it predicts the course of local level change entirely from an account of the macro-level interventions, taking as unproblematic how the indigenous population will respond to those interventions (see page 260 in this volume). Feit, writing about people culturally similar to the Montagnais, makes a central point: the impact of cash and commoditisation among the Cree has been profoundly shaped by daily community practices and social values that are brought to bear in the processes of distribution, consumption, production, social group formation and access to land (see page 260). This is a central theme running through many of the papers.

The initial catalyst for change in Murphy and Steward's model is a strong desire for industrial goods. This stands in contrast to Sahlins' characterisation of the foraging economy as one of concrete and limited objectives in which people achieve affluence by keeping material wants low and reap the reward in spare time. While this view embodies an important insight it is in need of amendment: it is not that wants are limited so much as production. That is to say there is no evidence that contemporary foragers are not, or cannot be encouraged to become, great consumers, indeed there is much evidence to the contrary, but that there are limits to the amount of time they will put into production. While there is evidence from the Agta to the Alaskan fisherman of the desire for goods, the unused refrigerator at Gamardi outstation in Arnhem Land stands as a reminder that the nature of and motivations for consumption are not unproblematic.

The refrigerator underlines the complex and ambiguous status of many commodities in a cross-cultural situation. With no regular power supply at Gamardi except from a small generator activated spasmodically, mainly to watch television, it can never have been intended for conventional use. The ethnography provides no answer to the reasons for its purchase but it is too intriguing not to speculate. Is it a symbol of modernity or status; an indication of commitment to

the outstation; irrefutable evidence of infrastructural needs, since it cannot work without them; or a gift to the government in a complex construction of reciprocal relations in which by expending their own money for European approved self-improvement (of a kind which Aboriginal people do not greatly care about) the government is seen to be obliged to reciprocate by meeting the peoples' requests. Even if these speculations seem too elaborate, the ambiguous status of consumption is evident in the way in which the two artists at this outstation completely abandoned production and its intermittent nature among the Aboriginal women of Galiwinku and the producers in central Australia.

No direct evidence is adduced in the papers in respect of the nature of the initial desire that drew people into exchange relations, and doubtless this varied from region to region, yet as Griffin and Tanaka suggest tobacco seems to have had an enormous and instantaneous appeal in many areas, as did sugar and various forms of flour. It has to be asked whether it is any coincidence that these are all items that are physically consumed and thus items which individuals can be sure to benefit from themselves, for it would seem that it is pressure to share that constitutes one important constraint to production. Sharing limits people from receiving the full benefits of any increased effort they put into production that is much more than the local norm.

There seems little doubt from the papers that money and small items that are bought with it are shared less readily than traditional foods and goods and although they do not say so this would seem to be related to the fact that not only is money easily concealable but that the small consumable goods bought with it from shops are also relatively concealable or instantly consumable. In Australia much of the money is paid directly to people by the state as a transfer payment and seen very much as private property. Wild foods by contrast are not, and are embedded in clear patterns of long established reciprocity that indicate how such foods should be shared.

Among the San it seems that generalised reciprocity, if it ever existed, is now in decline because the G/wi and G//ana expect immediate return even from close kin and there is no evidence for barter and purchase being any more depersonalised between male transactors than gift giving. This seems a more general phenomena as Gomes reports that generalised reciprocity is being increasingly replaced by balanced reciprocity among the Semai. For the Mbuti meat trading has led to a decline in sharing and an end to the male communal eating which was one of the mechanisms through which sharing took place, Yet here as among the Semai, the idea of selling meat to kin is unacceptable and the ethic of sharing survives even if it is at a more muted level.

This then raises the question as to whether if there is less sharing there are greater inequalities in wealth emerging. The clearest case is with the Alaskan fishermen. Here there are great disparities in income, most of which is invested in upgrading the quality of subsistence technology in the form of larger and more boats, outboard engines, small planes, and larger houses. Interestingly, the planes,

which are not allowed to carry fare paying passengers, are widely used to service kinship obligations enabling more frequent visiting between widely separated kin. So while there are increasing disparities in levels of income and consumption they are apparently not, yet leading to internal exploitation within the communities and all people retain access to the means of production.

Among the Semai there are also growing disparities in material possessions but the options for capitalist investment and chances to exploit the labour of others are limited. Indeed labour exchange between families is one of the factors minimising the development of inequality but the sixty year old tradition of paying a commission on fruit sales to the village headman, who is supposed to return the income in the form of feasts, has the potential to develop into an exploitative relationship as the wealth of a few headmen indicates.

Among the Cree the hunting territory stewards are in a hierarchical situation which advantages them, including allowing them to levy a small 'rent' of upto five pelts from people they invite to hunt on their territory. The stewards say, however, that they provide continued access to animals through their good stewardship and that they share the knowledge of their territories and hunting skills with those less knowledgeable, something with which the non-stewards apparently agree, according to Feit, raising questions about hegemonic domination (see page 254 in this volume). If the Semai headmen do emerge as an elite it is not because of commoditisation but results from opportunities offered by the external imposition of such a system of headmen.

Murphy and Steward place considerable emphasis on the emergence of the individual family, by which they appear to mean the nuclear family or independent household composed of such a family and possibly one or two dependents. This they see as the main social, economic and property owning unit, emerging at the expense of community ties. The Agta case would appear to support this in some ways. It is also the case that the welfare state's preferred units for delivering support to, are the individual and the family: thus the Cree ISP programme is directed towards families and the payment of social security in Australia is based on the model of the nuclear family even if it results in somewhat different arrangements in many Aboriginal contexts. Nevertheless Murphy and Steward fail to consider that the importance of the family/household might in fact be the persistence of an Aboriginal feature. It seems possible that they are making their analysis in a dialectic with an idealised view of foraging societies as communalistic, so that in finding an economic significance to the household they assume it to be new. In this they would appear to be wrong for most societies considered here. Langdon finds it appropriate to characterise the Yup'ik in terms of the domestic mode of production [SAHLINS 1974] and it is certainly characteristic of other foragers such as Aboriginal people and the Mbuti prior to the advent of cash and commoditisation.

The particular significance of the emergence of the family/household is within the context of the breakdown of intra-community ties at the expense of external ties, particularly to traders. Among the Mbuti the development of meat trading

has given the family/household an increased significance but the continued dependence on net hunting ensures that intra-group relations remain highly significant. It is apparent, however, that it is not just technical necessity that maintains internal relations: the standing of such groups with their neighbours or the encapsulating society is generally marked by a reciprocal ethnocentrism, which among other things tends to keep the encapsulators and encapsulated separate.

Murphy and Steward assume that with the emergence of the family as the main economic unit, the development of private property will develop. Feit's paper shows that whether or not one wants to characterise the kind of control a steward exercises over a hunting territory as ownership, the whole system of land rights and the granting of access to land is a source and means of community rather than a cause or indicator of social atomisation and dependency (see page 262–263 in this volume). Similarly among the San, ownership of goats is used to cement social ties in complex systems of agistment which may result in an owner not looking after any animals at all as both Sugawara and Tanaka show. However, among the much longer settled and increasingly more market dependent Semai there are indications that the system of land tenure is being modified towards a more privatised form, in some regions, down to parcelling out areas that were formerly collectively owned. Significantly it is in respect of crop trees that privatised ownership is developing apace.

While no analysis deals with the impact of cash and commoditisation on the nature of the person in these societies the high valuation placed on autonomy which the south Indian studies relate to the impact of trading seems elsewhere to be an indigenous feature (e.g. Australia see Myers [1986]). The papers do suggest however that commodification benefits women less than men. The cheap artefacts produced by Aboriginal people are largely made by women and their production has been slotted into the genderised category of craft until very recently. The rates of return they receive are low compared to those received by men for a complex of reasons: their bags and baskets compete with similar items from the Third World and it is not culturally appropriate for women to make many of the more distinctively Aboriginal artefacts classified as art by the market. While Koyama presents evidence that some women in central Australia are concerned to improve the return they receive for their carvings, it seems evident that maximising income is not the primary motive in many acts of artefact production. Thus women at Galiwinku frequently make pandanus and string bags which provide a rate of return per hour at a half to one fifth that for the carvings they can also produce. This suggests that the production of some of these artefacts is serving other more complex functions, probably to do with personal identity through exercising familiar skills. Semai women are partly protected from the impact of commodification by a tradition of bilateral inheritance of fruit trees but as people switch to wage labour or emphasis is placed on activities in which males gather wild produce then they are likely to have less access to the income and to suffer.

CONCLUSION

A concern with authenticity is frequently associated with a negative view of the impact of modernity upon social existence. This classically assumes modernity to eventually render cultural products and human relationships meaningless. The founding fathers of sociology saw commoditisation as linked to the rise of secularisation, technical rationality and the appearance of individualism, taken as a necessary ideological complement to the development of private property and the increasing abstraction of labour. These assumptions make sense if culture is seen as an integrated system of meanings so that anything that falsifies, disorganises or challenges participants beliefs in its authenticity will be destructive. But it is clear from the papers here that peoples' practices are much more resilient and persistent than this classic view would lead one to expect and that they can assimilate cash and commoditisation to their internal purposes. Alternatively in many situations they respond to them in new and creative ways that blunt or transform the secularising potentialities.

It would be romantic and naive, however, to see the impact of cash and commoditisation as largely, if not entirely under internal control. While enclaved people are notoriously persistent, often outlasting the encapsulating states, it is not simply a matter of choice. Central to this persistence are oppositional processes that help maintain boundaries between these groups, not least of which are racial and ethnic ideologies and discriminations. Universally, it seems, foraging peoples have low status in the eyes of the encapsulating society. This helps to reinforce identity based on common understandings, shared symbols, distinct languages and homelands. Such common identity is often further strengthened by a frequently marginal geographical position which reduces the numbers of linkages between the economies of the encapsulated and encapsulating, giving new significance to internal relations, constructions and understandings regardless of the involvement with cash and commoditisation.

These papers make it clear, however, that foraging peoples encapsulated within first world liberal-democratic states are in a category all their own. Nowhere does the moral economy of the encapsulating society more dramatically result in patent contradictions. The rights of citizens and the assumptions of the welfare state, meet the economy of limited production objectives and in the process the logic of a capitalist economy is subverted. Inalienable rights to land, statutory indigenes, neo-traditional practices and the frequently realised possibility of a life unstructured by work, perpetuate difference at the moment the state is seeking to dissolve it. In stark contrast are the prestate ethnic minorities in the Third World for whom the relentless pressures of personal responsibility for day to day survival provide a demanding discipline. Yet in some ways the results are similar: the main resource in social and political environments over which people have little control is each other and the shared understandings and symbols that underwrite their sense of identity.

None of these societies are pure foragers in the sense of living by hunting, gathering or fishing alone. It seems safer to predict the demise of these mixed economies, whether they be the mix of transfer payments and subsistence hunting, production for exchange and subsistence hunting or wage labour and subsistence, than it does the demise of the distinctive identities of the people associated with these survival strategies. The persistence of such long standing symbiotic relations between foragers and horticulturalists as that between the Mbuti, Agta or south Indian foragers and of social relationships among the Semai that seem little different from those of foragers much closer to their unfettered foraging past, suggest they will have a long future. Even when eventually trapped by the treadmill of consumption, there is no reason to suppose that the ways in which people use their cash, sell their labour and consume will not be harnessed to distinctive sets of identities and purposes even if they are more recognisably cognate with those of the encapsulating societies.

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