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The paper engages with the question of how groups maintain social order in a consistent and well-argued manner. The writing is eloquent, and the ethnographic examples given display careful attention to detail. Overall the paper shows well-grounded knowledge on egalitarianism among hunter-gatherers. The paper went on from describing the practices of ridicule among the San and the Mbuti to disobedience, then to mobility and ostracism. At times though the ridicule and disobedience seemed to have similar characteristics, e.g. the use of joking to undermine the authority of the leader, or people considered too arrogant. The example of the Molimo could have been explained more, it was a very interesting point.

Conclusion needs to be made stronger. A good conclusion sums up the paper and/or develops an argument like the one you started. A good way to sum up is to make or pick up a sentence from each paragraph. Avoid making the sentences too long. You could have maybe ventured a bit away from your comfort zone, and insert more readings or engaged with topics we went through in class throughout the course.

Overall a very nicely written and argued paper, well done.

In up to 1500 words, offer 4 different examples of how social groups maintain order. Explain how these methods maintain social order.

How does a society maintain social order? This question largely depends on what form a society has taken, what is the groups collective focus, how does the group survive together? The starkest contrast in cultures and the focus of the group is most obviously distinguished by their means of subsistence, how they choose to survive. The most polarised forms of subsistence can be seen in the differences between Immediate-return systems and Delayed-return systems of economy as described by Woodburn. He defines Immediate-return systems as;

"People obtain a direct and immediate return from their labour. They go out hunting or gathering and eat the food obtained the same day or casually over the days that follow. Food is neither elaborately processed nor stored. They use relatively simple, portable, utilitarian, easily acquired, replaceable tools and weapons made with real skill but not involving a great deal of labour." And Delayed-return systems as "People hold rights over valued assets of some sort, which either represent a yield, a return for labour applied over time or, if not, are held and managed in a way which resembles and has similar social implications to delayed yields on labour." (1982; p.432)

The former of these two economic systems produces the most Egalitarian social orders found anywhere on earth, although partly due to the globalisation of western values and

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the formation of nation states and borders which threaten nomadic ways of life the number of these Hunter-Gatherer societies are so few in comparison to the rest of the earth's societies which are predominantly delayed-return and feature much more familiar economic systems such as you would find here in the UK. From here in I will be describing the mechanisms and practices that enable Egalitarian societies to achieve and maintain equality within their groups. Some of the most studied Hunter-Gather groups that fall into this category include the Mbuti Pygmies of Zaire (Turnbull 1961) and the !Kung Bushmen (San) of Botswana and Namibia (Lee 1979).

Anthropologists have not developed a universal theory for explaining egalitarian behaviour, so let us examine these two groups and see what they have most in common. Both groups are nomadic and have no fixed abode, both have a strong connection to their environment and view themselves as part of the eco-system they inhabit as opposed to holding themselves above or trying to bend it to their will and neither of these groups have a single leader or ruling class in fact in the absence of a typical orthodox hierarchy what they practice could be referred to as a reverse dominance hierarchy as described by Christopher Boehm (1993). Many of the social practices and cultural behaviours are used as intentional levelling mechanisms to restrict the ability or desire of individuals to take control or gain too much influence and thus maintain social order and equality. I will now explain four different methods of social interaction used.

Ridicule is a very important part of !Kung life and regularly used to keep any member from getting idea's of self importance or delusions of grandeur for instance one would be mistaken in thinking that the role of the hunter might be an important one deserving of praise and admiration due to the fact that it takes considerable skill and understanding to be successful. Actually rather than give praise to the individual or for a personal achievements the !Kung who are indeed happy and grateful that any hunt should be a success are likely to insult the meat of the hunter, mocking him about the meat as being worthless deliberately to stop hunters from being boastful or thinking their better than everyone else. Certain hunters are far more successful in their endeavours than others but rather than this causing a hierarchy amongst the men or allowing the best hunter to dominate the camp or have preferential rights over resources or women, the !Kung expect the hunters to exhibit traits admired by the group such as modesty and humility, this was described to Lee by a /Xai/xai man named /Gaugo;

"Say that a man has been hunting. He must not come home and announce like a braggart, "I have killed a big one in the bush!" He must first sit down in silence until I or someone else comes up to his fire and asks, "What did you see today?" He reply's quietly, "Ah, I'm no good for hunting. I saw nothing at all...maybe just a tiny one." Then I smile to myself because I know he has killed something big." (1979;244)

Disobedience is an incredibly effective tool for undermining someone who is trying to increase the power and control in a group. And for the Mbuti public displays of disobedience effectively stop bullies from exerting dominance over another. Much like the !Kung's ridiculing of the meat the Mbuti respond to arrogance and self-importance by refusing to do as they are being told often making a joke about the person giving the

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command or criticizing them, usually this results in other members of the group laughing at the arrogance of the person which is painful for the recipient partly due to the small number of people in the group and the absence of privacy. Contempt for a person, their actions or behaviour are usually displayed by ignoring that person completely but this cant last long in such a small interdependent group. Another from of disobedience is to behave in a mischievous manner, however this kind of behaviour could have negative ramifications if it displeases or upsets the rest of the group. In order to regulate offensive behaviour they have developed a construct which enables them to behave in a mischievous manner towards an offender without shouldering the personal responsibility, the young men do this through adopting the guise of the spirit of the forest 'Molimo' and in this way they cannot be censored by the group as Turnbull describes "If anyone had given offence the previous day, usually by being too argumentative, the youths in the morning rampage paid particular attention to the offender's hut." (1962;p.86)

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Mobility is essential to both of these groups and Nomadism is a central aspect of their societies, and this also plays a part in insuring that authority is difficult to achieve.

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Individuals are not bound to fixed areas, to fixed assets or to fixed resources. ~~Individuals are not bound to fixed areas, to fixed assets or to fixed resources.~~ For the !Kung keeping up connections with extended family in other camps is an important part of social life and individuals can exercise their right to visit other camps sometimes for a short term and other times they may seek to take up permanent residence. Woodburn explains how this can relieve tensions and supports their egalitarian way of life "What it also does is to allow people to segregate themselves easily from those with whom they are in conflict, without economic penalty and without sacrificing any other vital interests. Most important of all for the present discussion is the way that such arrangements are subversive for the development of authority. Individuals are not bound to fixed areas, to fixed assets or to fixed resources. They are able to move away without difficulty and at a moment's notice from constraint which others may seek to impose on them and such possibility of movement is a powerful levelling mechanism" (1982;p.435-436)

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Ostracism is one of the strongest forms of punishment in many societies and for the Mbuti it is a response reserved for the worst crimes or acts that are the most taboo such as incest. In the The Forest People Turnbull recalled an instance when a young man had been caught engaging in incest and described how he was run out of the camp and driven into the forest which is akin to a death sentence as Kenge informed him "no one can live alone in the forest. The forest will kill him." However after a period of isolation the youth was quietly allowed back into the group having been taught a lesson. Reflecting on this experience Turnbull noted " I have never heard of anyone being completely ostracized, but the threat is always there, and this is usually sufficient to insure good behaviour." (1962;p.114).

It is important to note that these practices and behaviours are a subtle and constant force that play a role in the daily lives of both the Mbuti and the !Kung societies to uphold their values and preserve their structure and harmony.

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