

!Kung

Data source: eHRAF

Secondary source

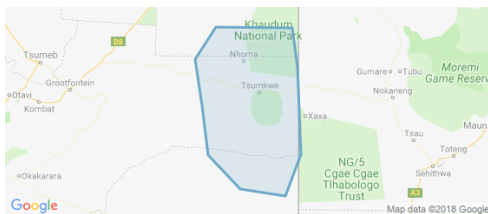
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** Data Source entry, prepared based on data sourced from an external project.*

** Secondary Source entry, prepared from a literature review by a Ph.D. RA*

Entry tags: Religion, African Religions

This entry focuses on one of the most widely known sub groups of the San-speaking people, the !Kung (self-referred to as (“Zhu|ǀoasi”), specifically of the Nyae Nyae region, Namibia ca. 1950. The !Kung live in autonomous bands, which are comprised of a group of families residing together and “linked to one another and to the headman by kinship bonds” (Marshall, 1965:267). The headman is chiefly responsible for the band’s movements and regulation of the consumption of resources. While the !Kung are traditionally described as hunter-gatherers, they now also practice agriculture. There are no religious specialists among other than diviners and medicine men, who would be more accurately be characterized as ritual specialists or curers. The !Kung religious beliefs center around a greater and lesser god, spirits of the deceased, as well as occasional ceremonies. The religious group is best characterized as coterminous with the society itself.



Date Range: 1925 CE - 1960 CE

Region: Nyae Nyae region, Namibia

Region tags: Africa, Southern Africa, Namibia

Nyae Nyae region, Namibia ca. 1950

Status of Participants:

✓ Elite ✓ Religious Specialists ✓ Non-elite (common people, general populace)

Sources

Print sources for understanding this subject:

– Source 1: Divale, W. 2004. Codebook of Variables for the Standard Cross-Cultural Sample. *World Cultures: The Journal of Cross-Cultural and Comparative Research*.

– Source 2: Tuden, A. & Marshall, C. (Oct., 1972). Political organization: Cross-cultural codes 4. *Ethnology*, 11(4), 436-464.

Online sources for understanding this subject:

– Source 1 URL: <http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=fx10-013>

– Source 1 Description: Marshall, L. (1962). !Kung Bushman Religious Beliefs. *Africa*, 32, 221-252.

– Source 2 URL: <http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=fx10-015>

– Source 2 Description: Marshall, L. (1965). !Kung Bushmen Of The Kalahari Desert. *Peoples Of Africa*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston

– Source 3 URL: <http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=fx10-001>

- Source 3 Description: Marshall, L. (1959). Marriage Among !Kung Bushmen. *Africa*, 29, 335–364.
- Source 1 URL: <http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=fx10-000>
- Source 1 Description: Wilmsen, E. N., & Beierle, J. (2005). *Culture Summary*: San. New Haven, Conn.: HRAF.
- Source 2 URL: <http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=fx10-017>
- Source 2 Description: Marshall, L. (1976). *!Kung Of Nyae Nyae*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Source 3 URL: <http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=fx10-009>
- Source 3 Description: Thomas, E. M. (1959). *Harmless People*. New York: Knopf.

General Variables

Membership/Group Interactions

Are other religious groups in cultural contact with target religion:

– Yes

Notes: "Although there has been contact with people who have Christian ideas, I do not recognize with certainty any Christian elements among !Kung beliefs" (Marshall, 1962:221).



Is there violent conflict (within sample region):

– No

Notes: SCCS Variable 1649, Frequency of internal warfare (resolved rating), indicates that "internal warfare seems to be absent or rare". Additionally, SCCS Variable 1654, Pacification, indicates "ambiguous or contradictory information". Source of information: Ember and Ember, 1992; Retrieved from Divale, 2004.



Is there violent conflict (with groups outside the sample region):

– No

Notes: SCCS Variable 1650, Frequency of external warfare (resolved rating), indicates that "external warfare seems to be absent or rare". Additionally, SCCS Variable 1654, Pacification, indicates "ambiguous or contradictory information". Source of information: Ember and Ember, 1992; Retrieved from Divale, 2004.

Does the religious group have a general process/system for assigning religious affiliation:

– No

Notes: Because the religion is coterminous with the society, there is not a concept of assigning religious affiliation.

Does the religious group actively proselytize and recruit new members:

– No

Notes: Because the religion is coterminous with the society itself, there is not a sense of recruiting new

members.

Does the religion have official political support

Answer 'yes' also in cases where the religious and political spheres are not distinguished from one another, but the religious group's activities are tied up with, and supported by, the functioning of the society at large.

– No

Notes: No, there is no official political institution among the !Kung that can give political support (See Marshall, 1959:336).

Size and Structure

Number of adherents of religious group within sample region (estimated population, numerical):

– Estimated population, numeric: 1000

Notes: "About 1,000 !Kung live in the region" (Marshall, 1959:336).

Number of adherents of religious group within sample region (% of sample region population, numerical):

– Estimated population, percentage of sample region: 100

Notes: Because the religion is coterminous with the society, all members of the society adhere to the religious group.

Are there recognized leaders in the religious group:

– No

Notes: "There are no priests among the !Kung and it is not the function of medicine men to pray for the people or to lead them in prayer" (Marshall, 1962:246). "The !Kung do not have sorcerers, witches, or witch doctors, and do not believe that the divine beings enter into the medicine men or speak through them. Almost all the !Kung men are medicine men. They do not all choose to practise, for one reason or another, but there are always several in a band who are active. Medicine men receive no rewards other than their inner satisfactions and emotional release. I know that some of them feel a deep responsibility for the welfare of their people and great anxiety and concern if their curing fails, and a corresponding satisfaction if it prevails. Others of them appear to be less concerned about the people whom they try to cure and more inwardly turned" (Marshall, 1962:249).

Scripture

Does the religious group have scriptures:

Scripture is a generic term used to designate revered texts that are considered particularly authoritative and sacred relative to other texts. Strictly speaking, it refers to written texts, but there are also "oral scriptures" (e.g. the Vedas of India).

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of scripture.

Architecture, Geography

Is monumental religious architecture present:

– No

Notes: SCCS Variable 66 (Large or Impressive Structures) indicates that there is no monumental architecture present (Murdock and Wilson, 1972; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Are there different types of religious monumental architecture:

– No

Notes: SCCS Variable 66 (Large or Impressive Structures) indicates that there is no monumental architecture present (Murdock and Wilson, 1972; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Is iconography present:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of iconography.

Are there specific sites dedicated to sacred practice or considered sacred:

– I don't know

Are pilgrimages present:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of pilgrimages

Beliefs

Burial and Afterlife

Is a spirit-body distinction present:

Answer "no" only if personhood (or consciousness) is extinguished with death of the physical body. Answering yes does not necessarily imply the existence of Cartesian mind/body dualism, merely that some element of personhood (or consciousness) survives the death of the body.

– Yes

Notes: "The //gauwasi pull the spirit out through the head of the corpse. The head is, likewise, the egress of the spirits of the medicine men. When the medicine men are in trance, which the !Kung call half-death, their spirits go out temporarily from their bodies through their heads to encounter and combat //Gauwa and the //gauwasi, who lurk in the shadows around the dance fire, and it is through the heads that the spirits return" (Marshall, 1962:242).

↳ Spirit-mind is conceived of as having qualitatively different powers or properties than other body parts:

– Yes

Notes: "The spirit which the //gauwasi take from the corpse is distinct from life. The !Kung believe that life, ≠toa, is inside the body of a person or animal, that it is put there and held there by the creator. It exists in all the vital organs in the abdomen, in blood, in the heart, lungs, throat, and mouth, and is everywhere in the head. It does not exist in the arms and legs, the !Kung believe, because they know that human beings and animals can be wounded in a limb or even lose one and not die, whereas a wound in the vital parts is likely to kill. Life dies in the body and stays there—dead, as the body itself is there but dead. It is the spirit which does not die. The only word I know for spirit is //gauwa. The spirit is like air. It cannot be seen and cannot be kept by mortals. The //gauwasi take it and they take the heart and blood of the person as well. These the //gauwasi carry first into the western sky, to the place where //Gauwa lives, but they do not leave them with him. They carry them further, around by the south to the east, to the place where ≠Gao!na, the great creator, lives" (Marshall, 1962:242).

↳ Spirit-mind is conceived of as non-material, ontologically distinct from body:

– Yes

Notes: "The spirit is like air. It cannot be seen and cannot be kept by mortals" (Marshall, 1962:242).

Belief in afterlife:

– Yes

Notes: "The spirits of dead persons are transmuted into //gauwasi by ≠Gao!na in the east. When a person dies, //gauwasi come soon to take his spirit. The children of the gods are sometimes the ones who come, we were told, but any of the //gauwasi may do so, either ancestors of the dead person or non-related spirits" (Marshall, 1962:242).

↳ Is the spatial location of the afterlife specified or described by the religious group:

– Yes

Notes: See questions below for more information on the location of the afterlife.

↳ Afterlife in vaguely defined "above" space:

– Yes

Notes: "When mortals die he takes their spirits to the place where he lives in the eastern sky, where there is a certain tree that has no name. He hangs the spirits in the tree, makes a medicine smoke in a pot beneath them, and transmutes them into the //gauwasi, the spirits of the dead, who live in the sky with him and are his servants. He has a medicine with which he renews himself, the //gauwasi, and the other heavenly beings and thus keeps them immortal" (Marshall, 1965:269).

↳ Afterlife in vaguely defined "below" space:

– No

Reincarnation in this world:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of a belief in reincarnation.

Are there special treatments for adherents' corpses:

– Yes

Notes: See questions below for more information regarding the treatments of corpses among the !Kung.

↳ Cremation:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of cremation.

↳ Mummification:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of mummification

↳ Interment:

– Yes

Notes: "The body is folded into a sitting position and bound, but the head is bowed down to the knees. Beads and a kaross ornament the body, which is also lowered into the grave and buried upright..." (Thomas, 1959:126).

↳ Corpse is flexed (legs are bent or body is crouched):

– Yes

Notes: "The body is folded into a sitting position and bound, but the head is bowed down to the knees. Beads and a kaross ornament the body, which is also lowered into the grave and buried upright..." (Thomas, 1959:126).

↳ Corpse is extended (lying flat on front or back):

– No

Notes: (Thomas, 1959:126)

↳ Corpse is upright (where body is interred in standing position):

– No

Notes: (Thomas, 1959:126)

↳ Cannibalism:

– No

Notes: "To the !Kung the two worst sins, the unthinkable, unspeakable sins, are cannibalism and incest" (Marshall, 1962:228).

↳ Exposure to elements (e.g. air drying):

– I don't know

↳ Feeding to animals:

– I don't know

↳ Secondary burial:

– No

Notes: SCCS Variable 1850 (Secondary Bone/Body Treatment: Original Scale), indicates that "secondary contact with the body or bones of the deceased does not occur" (Schroeder, 2001; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).

↳ Re-treatment of corpse:

– No

Notes: SCCS Variable 1850 (Secondary Bone/Body Treatment: Original Scale), indicates that "secondary contact with the body or bones of the deceased does not occur" (Schroeder, 2001; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Are co-sacrifices present in tomb/burial:

– I don't know

Notes: Insufficient ethnographic information.

Are grave goods present:

– Yes

Notes: "Beads and a kaross ornament the body, which is also lowered into the grave and buried upright...after filling in the grave and protecting it with stones or thorn branches, break the scherm of the dead person down over the grave, shatter all or most of his possessions, and strew the fragments over the grave together with sasa powder. Last, they kindle a fire in front of the now destroyed scherm and bend a reed, which they thrust into the ground, so that the grave, the fire, and the pointing reed make a line toward the place where the person who is now dead was born" (Thomas, 1959:126).

Are formal burials present:

– Yes

Notes: See Thomas, 1959:126 for a description of a !Kung burial

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↳ As cenotaphs:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for cenotaphs

↳ In cemetery:

– I don't know

Notes: Insufficient ethnographic information

↳ Family tomb-crypt:

– I don't know

Notes: Insufficient ethnographic information

↳ Domestic (individuals interred beneath house, or in areas used for normal domestic activities):

– I don't know

Notes: Insufficient ethnographic information

Supernatural Beings

Are supernatural beings present:

– Yes

Notes: "In present times the !Kung of the Nyae Nyae region believe that there are two gods, one the great and one the lesser, that they have wives and children, and that they are attended by the spirits of the dead" (Marshall; 1962:223).

↳ A supreme high god is present:

– Yes

Notes: SCCS Variable 238 (Religion: High Gods [Note, identical to Ethnographic Atlas 0034]), indicates that "a high god present and active in human affairs but not offering positive support to human morality (Murdock, 1962-1971; Retrieved from Divale, 2004). Note that this coding contradicts ethnographic information in Marshall, 1962:244 (the high god may actually be involved in the moral affairs of humans).

↳ The supreme high god is anthropomorphic:

– Yes

Notes: "...the !Kung, it seems, always thought of their protagonist [high god] as man-like in size and appearance" (Marshall, 1962:235).

↳ The supreme high god is a sky deity:

– Yes

Notes: The great god lives in the sky (Marshall, 1962:223).

↳ The supreme high god is chthonic (of the underworld):

– No

Notes: (Marshall, 1962:223)

↳ The supreme high god is fused with the monarch (king=high god):

– No

Notes: No monarch is present among the !Kung

↳ The monarch is seen as a manifestation or emanation of the high god:

– No

Notes: No monarch is present among the !Kung

↳ The supreme high god has knowledge of this world:

– Yes

↳ The supreme high god's knowledge is unrestricted outside of sample region:

– Field doesn't know

Notes: "Several times in our talks I [ethnographer] asked if the great creator controlled the lives of Bushmen only, or if he controlled all the people on earth. It was not surprising that the !Kung's thinking on this point was vague and contradictory. Some said, 'He is over all people. He can kill anybody.' (They had said this same thing about Ko.) Others claimed that ≠Gao!na and //Gauwa as well were 'only for Bushmen'. White people and black people, they said, have their own gods" (Marshall, 1962:235).

↳ The supreme high god has deliberate causal efficacy in the world:

– Yes

Notes: "He controls the actions of people. If they do good deeds or bad deeds it has been under his control. He arranges all things" (Marshall, 1962:235).

↳ The supreme high god can reward:

– Yes

Notes: "...[≠Gao!na] is deeply involved with humanity, constantly aware of what people do, constantly reacting with pleasure or displeasure, and he favours, punishes, or ill-treats man accordingly" (Marshall, 1962:244).

↳ The supreme high god can punish:

– Yes

Notes: "...[≠Gao!na] is deeply involved with humanity, constantly aware of what people do, constantly reacting with pleasure or displeasure, and he favours, punishes, or ill-treats man accordingly" (Marshall, 1962:244).

↳ The supreme high god exhibits positive emotion:

– Yes

Notes: "...≠Gao!na has great power and that he is not evil incarnate, but has a dual nature which can feel pity as well as displeasure, makes beneficence a possibility" (Marshall, 1962:247).

↳ The supreme high god exhibits negative emotion:

– Yes

Notes: "...≠Gao!na has great power and that he is not evil incarnate, but has a dual nature which can feel pity as well as displeasure, makes beneficence a possibility" (Marshall, 1962:247).

↳ The supreme high god possesses hunger:

– Yes

Notes: "The //gauwasi eat food. As I understand it, they, like ≠Gao!na and //Gauwa, eat the same foods that mortals eat, meat and veldkos, but they have their own supplies. They also are very fond of honey. They are said on occasion also to steal the veldkos of human beings from the places where they grow, and they sometimes change themselves into birds—not vultures, but smaller birds called !gwara—and in this form come into the werf and eat the people's meat right where it hangs in the branches beside the scherms. The //gauwasi have their own implements, weapons, karosses, &c. They want nothing from men and there is no point in offering them things" (Marshall, 1962:243).

↳ The supreme high god communicates with the living:

– Yes

↳ In dreams:

– Yes

Notes: "Although ≠Gao!na comes only to the great medicine men 'in the flesh', so to speak, he appears to anyone in dreams and 'helps all his people'" (Marshall, 1962:238).

↳ Only through religious specialists:

– No

Notes: "Only exceptionally great medicine men see ≠Gao!na. If I understood correctly, this is not because he is generally invisible but because he comes

near only to them" (Marshall, 1962:237). "Although ≠Gao!na comes only to the great medicine men 'in the flesh', so to speak, he appears to anyone in dreams and 'helps all his people'" (Marshall, 1962:238).

↳ Previously human spirits are present:

– Yes

Notes: "The Nyae Nyae !Kung believe strongly and vividly in the existence of spirits of the dead, the //gauwasi, who live immortal lives in the sky with ≠Gao!na, doing his bidding" (Marshall, 1962:241).

↳ Human spirits can be seen:

– Yes

Notes: "//Gauwasi are mischievous as well as conveyors of grave evils and they trick and fool people on their own initiative, often appearing to people in dreams to do so" (Marshall, 1962:244).

↳ Human spirits can be physically felt:

– I don't know

Notes: Insufficient ethnographic information.

↳ Previously human spirits have knowledge of this world:

– I don't know

Notes: Insufficient ethnographic information.

↳ Human spirits have deliberate causal efficacy in the world:

– I don't know

Notes: Insufficient ethnographic information.

↳ Human spirits have indirect causal efficacy in the world:

"Indirect causal efficacy" refers to not being seen as consciously, directly and actively intervening in the human world, but their overall well being or general attitude has effects on, e.g., quality of harvest, success in war, health, etc.

– I don't know

Notes: Insufficient ethnographic information.

↳ Human spirits have memory of life:

– I don't know

Notes: Insufficient ethnographic information.

↳ Human spirits exhibit positive emotion:

– I don't know

Notes: Insufficient ethnographic information.

↳ Human spirits exhibit negative emotion:

– I don't know

Notes: Insufficient ethnographic information.

↳ Human spirits possess hunger:

– Yes

Notes: "The //gauwasi eat food. As I understand it, they, like ≠Gao!na and //Gauwa, eat the same foods that mortals eat, meat and veldkos, but they have their own supplies. They also are very fond of honey. They are said on occasion also to steal the veldkos of human beings from the places where they grow, and they sometimes change themselves into birds—not vultures, but smaller birds called !gwara—and in this form come into the werf and eat the people's meat right where it hangs in the branches beside the scherms. The //gauwasi have their own implements, weapons, karosses, &c. They want nothing from men and there is no point in offering them things" (Marshall, 1962:243).

↳ Human spirits possess/exhibit some other feature:

– Yes [specify]: Messengers of the Great God (≠Gao!na) and Lesser God (//Gauwa)

Notes: "The function of the //gauwasi is, first and foremost, to be the servants (≠gasi) of the gods and to carry out their orders. They obey ≠Gao!na primarily, but are servants of //Gauwa as well. They are the messengers, whether good or bad fortune is being sent to the people" (Marshall, 1962:244).

↳ Human spirits communicate with the living:

– I don't know

Notes: Insufficient ethnographic information.

↳ Non-human supernatural beings are present:

– Yes

Notes: "In present times the !Kung of the Nyae Nyae region believe that there are two gods, one the great and one the lesser, that they have wives and children, and that they are attended by the spirits of the dead" (Marshall; 1962:223).

↳ These supernatural beings can be seen:

– Yes

Notes: "The medicine men see //Gauwa. Only a very big medicine man, full of the power which ≠Gao!na had put into him, might see ≠Gao!na himself, as we learned, but

any of the medicine men can see //Gauwa... Anyone may see //Gauwa in dreams" (Marshall, 1962:240).

↳ These supernatural beings can be physically felt:

– I don't know

Notes: Insufficient ethnographic information.

↳ These supernatural beings have indirect causal efficacy in the world:

"Indirect causal efficacy" refers to not being seen as consciously, directly and actively intervening in the human world, but their overall well being or general attitude has effects on, e.g., quality of harvest, success in war, health, etc.

– I don't know

Notes: Insufficient ethnographic information.

↳ These supernatural beings possess hunger:

– Yes

Notes: "The //gauwasi eat food. As I understand it, they, like ≠Gao!na and //Gauwa, eat the same foods that mortals eat, meat and veldkos, but they have their own supplies. They also are very fond of honey. They are said on occasion also to steal the veldkos of human beings from the places where they grow, and they sometimes change themselves into birds—not vultures, but smaller birds called !gwara—and in this form come into the werf and eat the people's meat right where it hangs in the branches beside the scherms. The //gauwasi have their own implements, weapons, karosses, &c. They want nothing from men and there is no point in offering them things" (Marshall, 1962:243).

↳ Does the religious group possess a variety of supernatural beings:

– Yes

Notes: "In present times the !Kung of the Nyae Nyae region believe that there are two gods, one the great and one the lesser, that they have wives and children, and that they are attended by the spirits of the dead" (Marshall; 1962:223).

↳ Organized hierarchically:

– Yes

Notes: "In present times the !Kung of the Nyae Nyae region believe that there are two gods, one the great and one the lesser, that they have wives and children, and that they are attended by the spirits of the dead" (Marshall; 1962:223).

Supernatural Monitoring

Is supernatural monitoring present:

This refers to surveillance by supernatural beings of humans' behaviour and/or thought particularly as it

relates to social norms or potential norm violations.

– Yes

Notes: "...[≠Gao!na] is deeply involved with humanity, constantly aware of what people do, constantly reacting with pleasure or displeasure, and he favours, punishes, or ill-treats man accordingly" (Marshall, 1962:244).

↳ There is supernatural monitoring of prosocial norm adherence in particular:

Prosocial norms are norms that enhance cooperation among members of the group, including obviously "moral" or "ethical" norms, but also extending to norms concerning honouring contracts and oaths, providing hospitality, coming to mutual aid in emergencies, etc.

– No

Notes: "The concept of sin as an offence against the gods is vague among the !Kung. Man's wrong-doing against man is not left to ≠Gao!na's punishment nor is it considered to be his concern. Man corrects or avenges such wrong-doings himself in his social context. ≠Gao!na punishes people for his own reasons, which are sometimes quite obscure" (Marshall, 1962:245).

↳ Supernatural beings care about taboos:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about other:

– Yes [specify]: Burning bees

Notes: "Burning bees, I learned, displeases ≠Gao!na intensely. He likes the bees, his wife is the 'mother of the bees', and he is very fond of honey himself. On one occasion, two men found honey in a tree. They tried to chop it out but the bees stung them so badly that they built a fire to drive them away and many bees were burned. ≠Gao!na did not like this. He sent a sickness upon the men and both died. When a person has burned bees, his body becomes hot as though burned by fire and he dies" (Marshall, 1962:245).

Do supernatural beings mete out punishment:

– Yes

Notes: "≠Gao!na punishes people for his own reasons, which are sometimes quite obscure" (Marshall, 1962:245).

↳ Is the cause or agent of supernatural punishment known:

– I don't know

Notes: ≠Gao!na, the high god, has been described as punishing. Additionally, ≠Gao!na commands the spirits of the deceased to perform his punishments on his behalf. However, it is unclear if the lesser god also metes out punishments.

↳ Is the reason for supernatural punishment known:

– Yes

Notes: See questions below for more information concerning the reasons for supernatural punishment.

↳ Done to inhibit selfishness:

– No

Notes: "Man's wrong-doing against man is not left to ≠Gao!na's punishment nor is it considered to be his concern. Man corrects or avenges such wrong-doings himself in his social context" (Marshall, 1962:245). If ≠Gao!na is not concerned with Man harming Man, it can be assumed that ≠Gao!na does not care about selfishness.

↳ Done randomly:

– Yes

Notes: "...≠Gao!na might punish a person just a little by giving him a mild sickness, which would be comparable to giving him a thrashing. A good person who had done no wrong at all might also be punished by a mild sickness" (Marshall, 1962:245).

↳ Supernatural punishments are meted out in this lifetime:

– Yes

Notes: Evidence is available for supernatural punishment being meted out in this lifetime. However, little information is provided on the nature of these punishments.

↳ Punishment in this life consists of sickness or illness:

– Yes

Notes: "...≠Gao!na might punish a person just a little by giving him a mild sickness, which would be comparable to giving him a thrashing. A good person who had done no wrong at all might also be punished by a mild sickness" (Marshall, 1962:245).

Do supernatural beings bestow rewards:

– I don't know

Notes: From the following quote, it appears that the high god bestows rewards, however, there is insufficient information to make a confident decision. "...[≠Gao!na] is deeply involved with humanity, constantly aware of what people do, constantly reacting with pleasure or displeasure, and he favours, punishes, or ill-treats man accordingly" (Marshall, 1962:244).

Messianism/Eschatology

Are messianic beliefs present:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of messianic beliefs.

Is an eschatology present:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of an eschatology.

Norms and Moral Realism

Are general social norms prescribed by the religious group:

– Yes

Notes: General social norms are prescribed by the !Kung society, which is coterminous with the religious group. Social norms include elements such as meat sharing (Marshall, 1965:254), marriage regulation (Marshall, 1959:343), and self-control (Marshall, 1976:280).

Is there a conventional vs. moral distinction in the religious group:

– I don't know

Notes: Insufficient ethnographic information.

Practices

Membership Costs and Practices

Does membership in this religious group require celibacy (full sexual abstinence):

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the requirement of celibacy

Does membership in this religious group require castration:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the requirement of castration

Does membership in this religious group require fasting:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the requirement of fasting

Does membership in this religious group require forgone food opportunities (taboos on desired foods):

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of food taboos.

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of adults:

"Adults" here referring to an emic or indigenous category; if that category is different from the popular Western definition of a human who is 18-years-old or older and who is legally responsible for his/her

actions, then please specify that difference in the Comments/Sources: box below.

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of human sacrifice among the !Kung.

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of children:

"Children" here referring to an emic or indigenous category; if that category is different from the popular Western definition, please specify that different in the Comments/Sources: box below.

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of human sacrifice among the !Kung.

Does membership in this religious group require self-sacrifice (suicide):

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of human sacrifice among the !Kung.

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of time (e.g., attendance at meetings or services, regular prayer, etc.):

– No

Notes: Prayer occurs, but does not appear to be mandatory. "Individuals frequently pray, however, spontaneously and alone. Anybody, everybody, may pray directly to ≠Gao!na, to //Gauwa or to the //gauwasi, at any time or place, without assuming special posture or observing any other formalities" (Marshall, 1962:246).

Does membership in this religious group require participation in small-scale rituals (private, household):

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of small-scale rituals among the !Kung. Large-scale rituals, on the other hand, are present. (See Marshall, 1962:248)

Does membership in this religious group require participation in large-scale rituals:

I.e. involving two or more households; includes large-scale "ceremonies" and "festivals."

– I don't know

Notes: Large-scale rituals are present, in which "all the people of the werf come together and participate, men and women, old and young" (Marshall, 1962:248), but it is not clear whether or not participation is mandatory. "The ceremonial curing dance is the one religious act which has form and in which the people are united. The purpose of the dance is to cure sickness and to drive away evil. If there is actual sickness among the people or if real misfortune has come upon them, the dance will be held especially to cure these ills. But the people dance often when no one is actually known to be sick, and when no particular misfortune has come, to drive away evil which might be there but which one cannot see, and to feel protected by goodness" (Marshall, 1962:248).

Society and Institutions

Levels of Social Complexity

The society to which the religious group belongs is best characterized as (please choose one):

This question refers to the wider society in which the religious group is located.

– A band

Notes: "The S.W.A. [South West Africa] and B.P. [Bechuanaland Protectorate] governments administer the region as it lies within the territory of each but not as a unit in itself. The !Kung have developed no internal political organization to unite their bands. The unity of the region exists, in so far as we know, only in the minds of its !Kung population and in the fact of their intermarrying and being held together in a net of kinship and affinity" (Marshall, 1959:336).

Welfare

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized care for the elderly and infirm:

– No

Notes: Institutionalized care for the elderly and infirm is not provided. However, families take care of their dependents. "!Kung families are responsible for dependents. Thus, old, dependent parents are unfailingly supported by their offspring and may choose with which one of their offspring they will live. Orphaned children are taken by their grandparents or by a sibling of their parents. It happens occasionally that a person has no living parent, offspring, or sibling. In that case, other relatives assume the responsibility" (Marshall, 1965:259).

Education

Does the religious group provide formal education to its adherents:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of formal education.

Is formal education available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence for the presence of formal education.

Bureaucracy

Do the group's adherents interact with a formal bureaucracy within their group:

– No

Notes: "The !Kung have developed no internal political organization to unite their bands. The unity of the region exists, in so far as we know, only in the minds of its !Kung population and in the fact of their intermarrying and being held together in a net of kinship and affinity" (Marshall, 1959:336).

Do the group's adherents interact with other institutional bureaucracies:

– I don't know

Public Works

Does the religious group in question provide public food storage:

– No

Notes: SCCS Variable 20 (Food Storage) indicates that no food storage is present (Murdock and Morrow, 1970; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Is public food storage provided to the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– No

Notes: SCCS Variable 20 (Food Storage) indicates that no food storage is present (Murdock and Morrow, 1970; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Does the religious group in question provide transportation infrastructure:

– No

Notes: It can be assumed that transportation infrastructure is not present, as routes of land transport are "unimproved trails", according to Murdock and Morrow (1970; Retrieved from Divale, 2004; SCCS Variable 14).

Is transportation infrastructure provided for the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: "The government of South West Africa, realizing the problem of the Bushmen, has appointed one of their most competent administrators of native affairs to be Bushman Affairs Commissioner, and is supplying him with funds and equipment. He and his wife are in the Nyae Nyae area and are working with several families of !Kung. He is leading one group of them into agriculture and this year they harvested a crop of corn. Others of the men are employed in road building and are being paid a cash wage, currently a shilling a day" (Marshall, 1956:273).

Taxation

Does the religious group in question levy taxes or tithes:

– No

Notes: According to SCCS Variable 1736, Tribute, taxation, expropriation, there is "no tribute, taxation, or expropriation (original code 10)" among the !Kung (Lang, 1998; Retrieved from Divale, 2004).

Are taxes levied on the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– I don't know

Enforcement

Does the religious group in question provide an institutionalized police force:

– No

Notes: "Police functions are not specialized or institutionalized at any level of political integration, the maintenance of law and order being left exclusively to informal mechanisms of social control, to private retaliation, or to sorcery" (Tuden and Marshall, 1972, Column 10).

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized judges:

– No

Notes: "Supreme judicial authority is lacking at any level above that of the local community" (Tuden and Marshall, 1972, Column 9).

Written Language

Does the religious group in question possess its own distinct written language:

– No

Notes: No ethnographic evidence indicating the !Kung language was written.

Is a non-religion-specific written language available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– I don't know

Is a non-religion-specific written language used by the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– I don't know

Calendar

Does the religious group in question possess a formal calendar:

– No

Notes: "They [the !Kung] have no calendar, and they do not count years" (Marshall, 1976:53).

Is a formal calendar provided for the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– I don't know

Food Production

Does the religious group in question provide food for themselves:

– Yes

Notes: The !Kung rely on hunting and gathering for subsistence. Source of information from Ethnographic Atlas (Murdock, 1962-1971), retrieved from Divale, 2004; Variables 203-207, 232.



Please characterize the forms/level of food production [choose all that apply]:

– Gathering

– Hunting (including marine animals)

Notes: The !Kung rely on hunting and gathering for subsistence. Source of information from Ethnographic Atlas (Murdock, 1962-1971), retrieved from Divale, 2004; Variables 203-207, 232.