

THE EMERGENCE AND MAINTENANCE OF A DEVIANT SUB-CULTURE: THE CASE OF HUNTING/ POACHING SUB-CULTURE

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Abstract: Few accounts of deviant sub-culture properly examine their historical context and relationship to the dominant culture. This paper attempts to achieve both goals. It is an account of the social organization and practice of members of the hunting/poaching sub-culture in North America. An historical ethnographic description of poachers includes a description of the sub-culture and the strategies adopted by members both to deal with the increasing technological sophistication of regulators and to achieve social control within their own small-scale group.

Résumé: Il y a peu de récits concernant la sous-culture déviante qui examinent de façon approfondie son contexte historique et sa relation avec la culture dominante. Cette étude entreprend d'achever ces deux mêmes buts en examinant l'organisation sociale et la pratique des membres d'une sous-culture de braconniers en Amérique du Nord. Une étude historique et ethnographique de braconniers décrit la sous-culture et les stratégies adoptées par les membres pour mieux combattre les développements technologiques utilisés par les autorités et pour établir un contrôle social parmi leur propre groupe à petite échelle.

Sociology has made heavy use of the concept "sub-culture" in explaining and analyzing deviance. Generally, it is used to account for socially organized and patterned deviance as it exists in communities. The notion of sub-culture helps to understand the apparent paradox of the immorality of deviance *and* its continued existence. In spite of the importance of this concept, it remains a "sensitizing" concept that is barely analyzed and is, indeed, ignored (McCarthy-Smith 1990). Some analysis of the emergence of deviant sub-cultures has appeared in the work of Cohen (1955), Kitsuse and

Dietrick (1959) and others. This work generally emphasizes the “collective reactions” of disenfranchised groups as they pursue solutions to the status frustrations imposed by middle class institutions. More recent critical work by various British and neo-Marxist schools has emphasized the “proactive” and indeed even “oppositional” sources of emergence (Taylor, Walton and Young 1973; Mungham and Pearson 1976; S. Cohen 1972; Willis 1977; Hebdige 1979, etc.).

In my view, all of these works suffer from two problems. First, none *does* any historical analysis. Even the neo-Marxist approach, using the notion of “historical specificity,” rarely gets beyond an analysis of the current existence of the sub-culture. In their analysis of current sub-cultures few — especially labelling theorists — examine the detailed day-to-day ties between the deviant world and the straight world, even though their argument suggests that such ties should exist. Rather the ethnographic discussions treat the sub-culture as essentially static and isolated from the rest of society. Finally, none of the foregoing perspectives uses an approach to history which would locate sub-cultures as part of the more general process of the development of scalar complexity in human societies.

In this paper, I address these problems by examining a sub-culture in the context of its history and its location in the development of human societies (Johnson and Earle 1987; Raybeck 1991). I suggest that changes in the organization and content of sub-cultures are a result of continued contact and negotiation with the dominant cultural world. The dominant cultural world, in turn, changes its responses to the sub-cultural world so as to give its world a new “problem” to solve. Thus the relationship between deviants and “straights” is not static, but interactive or dialectical. I conceive of the straight world as providing not only a reactive or proactive focus, but as also providing an opportunity structure which makes it possible for members of sub-cultures to create new ways of “*being*” deviant. This latter point is suggested by Farberman (1975) but not elaborated.

The data are provided in a case study of one type of hunting/poaching sub-culture which has as a part of its repertoire systematic violation of game laws. My experience with this sub-culture spans 45 years, in many locales in North America, including Canada, the United States and Northern Mexico.¹ It is further reinforced by the experiences of my father and grandfather as contained in their oral histories and memories which date to the middle 1800s. These orally transmitted historical events on which I draw occurred in the frontier move from the southeastern United States into Texas.

I have also consulted historical sources where appropriate, although these are rarely directly valuable because few deviants write their own history. Rather, such documents are written by crusaders against the deviance, legislators and politicians who create laws and the various persons charged with

controlling the deviance. Thus one must read between many, many lines.² My data from years of experience in these different locales reveal very similar and consistent patterns of one type of hunting/poaching sub-culture, and we now turn to these patterns.

Hunting/Poaching Sub-Cultures and Their History

Introduction

Historically, hunting, along with gathering, was the major mode of subsistence for the smallest scale societies. Recent or contemporary examples include the Great Basin Shoshone and the peoples of the Kalahari in southern Africa. With the development of more complex extractive technologies and their associated, more complex social organization, human groups placed less and less dependence on hunting, and comparatively fewer person hours were involved (Johnson and Earle 1987:309-310).

Hunting has continued to exist, and is carried out by a small number of persons in North America. As an activity, however, it is now located in a very complex industrial society, and its nature has been transformed by this "new" location. A very significant part of its new existence in an industrial society concerns game laws and official agencies responsible for their enforcement. While the vast majority of modern hunters are law-abiding, there are various groups who more or less routinely violate game laws, and these violations are socially and culturally patterned. This patterning would seem to qualify them as sub-cultures of the larger North American industrial society. I suggest that there are four main types of illegal hunting/poaching sub-cultures. Each has its own level of organizational sophistication (Best and Luckenbill 1982:25) and a different rationale for engaging in such activity. These types are as follows:

Market Hunters

These groups operate strictly for profit and are often international in scope. Their purpose is to kill large numbers of commercially valuable game animals and to sell them on the black market. In Best and Luckenbill's (1982:25) terms, they exhibit a high degree of formal organization that can approach that of the currently notorious Colombian cocaine cartel. Occasionally more localized "mobs" (Best and Luckenbill 1982:25) will pursue this illegal market activity, although their division of labour and knowledge of the black market suggest some formal organizational connections.

Trophy Hunters and Guides

The purpose of these hunters and guides is not to kill large numbers of animals, but to obtain a single high quality "trophy." Most guide services are legal and above-board because of a high commitment to conservationist values and, also, because of the strict and multi-level surveillance of such activities. The presence of trophy hunters who are willing to pay extremely high prices for illegal trophies does serve, however, as an opportunity structure for a minority of guides, as well as a motive to carry out such illegal activities. A high degree of organizational sophistication is required to enter forbidden areas, to negotiate international boundaries and avoid international law enforcement.

Tourist Hunters

These are persons who work and live in urban areas and cannot afford, or do not use, guides. They are not connected with rural kinship networks and thus they must hunt wherever they can, often in areas with which they are not familiar. This may lead them into game law violation. The organizational level appears to be that of the peer or friendship group (Best and Luckenbill 1982:25)

My primary focus in this paper is on the fourth type, Local Rural Hunters.

Local Rural Hunters

These are traditional hunters whose activities are holdovers from a pre-industrial, agrarian communal/familial network. With the imposition, by the state, of game and property laws, many of their activities became illegal. Yet, they continue to hunt and their interaction with various authorities and "outside others" has produced a type of sub-culture. Not all of their activities are illegal, by any means, but some are.

The organizational nuclei of this sub-culture are extended families, still retaining rural lands which serve as the centre of their hunting territories. Even though they may work in town, the members of such groups commute home, and pursue an essentially "rural" lifestyle. The hunting territories may be small or large, depending upon the traditions and requirements of the geographical area, but will usually have been "in the family" for at least three generations, and often longer. This home tract may also provide the basis for extended hunting claims on land that may now be owned by the government or absentee land lords. If such lands have traditionally been hunted for generations, they too may form part of the "territory." The groups in this sub-culture also include members who may live and work in distant urban areas, but return periodically to hunt with their extended kin. Finally, the social network may include non-familial members who, for a

variety of reasons, have established fictive kin relations of interpersonal trust. Such groups are tightly knit, and outsiders are likely to be distrusted and treated with a friendly but formal distancing.

Hunting is viewed as a “traditional activity”; it is not engaged in for profit or personal gain. Indeed, it is not defined as fun or recreation in the sense of other leisure activities such as vacations, dances, etc. Hunting is the performance of a traditional role. A primary value is to *actively* hunt the game, making a clean kill or tracking a wounded animal until it is located. Game is rarely lost as tracking skills are the basis for personal status, and intimate long-term knowledge of the area is vital in this regard. “Tourists,” in contrast, often lose game because of lack of knowledge and skill and, hence, are defined by the Local Rurals as “deviant.” Finds of dead or wounded animals are occasions of great pejorative debate and discussion as to who might be the culprit (fieldnotes 1980, 1985).

The game taken is also used and wastage is negatively sanctioned, as in the oft-used phrase (especially when socializing younger members), “If you’re not going to eat it, don’t kill it; and if you do kill it, you damned well be *ready* to eat it!” Almost total usage of the animal occurs, although intestines and stomachs and other tripe are eaten only by a few small sub-cultural groups. What isn’t consumed by the nuclei is fed to pets or farm animals, and hides are either tanned for gloves and other clothing or are traded for “favours” with other Local Rurals.

Another value is sharing game within the social network so that, even when few animals are taken, “at least everyone gets a taste” (fieldnotes 1986). This is analogous to Christian Communion in that consuming the game is an affirmation of membership in the network and in the tradition. This is particularly true when the game is illegally obtained and, thus, the boundary between insiders and outsiders is demonstrated. Alternatively, to refuse, or be refused, commensality is to be set apart. On one occasion, I had dinner with a family while I was still an outsider. I was pretty sure that I was eating venison, but I was told that it was an older steer. Two years later, they admitted that it was, in fact, an illegal deer. Sharing is also extended to network members who, for reasons of age or physical infirmity, are unable to actively hunt. “Great-aunt ___ hasn’t gotten her deer yet this year, son, so go and get her a nice, young fat doe” (Father to son, fieldnotes 1980). Great Aunt ___’s membership in the network is thus affirmed.³

Forms of poaching include taking game out of season, or without a proper license, or by other illegal means. Game laws are often viewed as arbitrary and illegitimate invasions of the state into a traditional activity that is governed by its members.

- (X) I've been hunting [this area] for forty years and no damned game warden is going to tell me when and where I can hunt.
- (Brymer) What if the warden catches you?
- (X) I'd like to see that s.o.b. try, because I know [this area] better than anyone and can outrun any one through it. (Fieldnotes 1987)

Sometimes bag limits are exceeded, but only if someone "needs" it or the hunters/poachers' judgment of the game population is at variance with that of the governmental agency that sets the limits. If the hunters/poachers judge that there are too few animals, bag limits are kept small, or they voluntarily restrict hunting in claimed or owned territories. I have personal recollections and fieldnotes detailing such judgments. In at least one case, hunting was suspended for a four-year period. During this time, the "official" judgment retained previously set limits. Conversely, when the hunter/poachers' judgment is that there are "too many," legal bag limits are routinely ignored and the game-sharing network is intensified and, sometimes, expanded. Occasionally, for example, an additional freezer will be purchased solely for storing extra game. At other times, canning, drying and jerky preparation (especially for larger game animals) will help to handle the need for storage and avoid violation of the taboo against waste.

History

I was introduced to hunting/poaching and its history (and am now perhaps part of it) 45 years ago by my grandfather. He and my grandmother were share-cropping a small ranch in southwest Texas, and I went to live with them. He had a one-third share of the goat crop, and kept chickens and two cows, selling the eggs and cream for cash—a scarce commodity. Subsistence activities were routine, including fishing, hunting and foraging for wild fruits and berries. Food was provided by fresh or canned garden produce, roosters and goats that came out of his share. Skim milk was processed into clabber (thick, sour milk) and cottage cheese; honey and bartered cane syrup provided the only sweeteners. About the only foods purchased were pastry flour, sugar, coffee and tea.

One day we were riding the mule checking the goats and, as usual, my grandfather was carrying his cheap, single-shot shotgun. He saw and shot a large wild turkey gobbler, and I was overjoyed. This was not only meat for several meals, but it meant roast turkey(!), as opposed to the small frying roosters we ate occasionally and the more regular goat. I was allowed to carry the turkey home and was thrilled to be able to make the presentation to my grandmother. In this day and age, it is difficult to appreciate the significance of this event.

As we approached the house, my grandfather stopped about a quarter mile from the house and told me to stay there with the turkey until he came for

me, because someone was at the house. A few minutes later he returned for me, and I was introduced to the fact that we had just killed a turkey illegally. The man at the house had been a neighborhood gossip. I had no idea that my grandfather didn't have a license, that it was "out of season," and that shooting turkeys was illegal anyway. We were also riding a mule and one wasn't supposed to shoot from a mule.

Although this is a personal and retrospective account, I think that my grandfather was a typical representative of the category "redneck" and was caught in the vortex of change from an essentially pre-industrial, agrarian society to an industrial, urban one. Our lifestyle in 1945 was little different from that described by Roebuck and Hickson (1982) as characteristic of the antebellum white southerner. Roebuck and Hickson (1982) provide the most recent survey of the historical emergence of the redneck as a type of white southerner. I rely heavily upon them in the next few paragraphs, and use their data to comment on the emergence of similar sub-cultures in other locales, all of which include "local rural" type hunter/poachers.

Before 1770 there was opportunity for all whites, including the poor, to become independent artisans or farmers in the colonies. In the eighteenth century however, the establishment and development of the plantation slave system in the South made it more difficult for the freed indentured servants and other poor people to rise or maintain their own. . . . In the South, agriculture based on slave labor provided limited employment opportunities for white laborers and small landholders. The land tenure system, the one-crop system, and soil exhaustion caused the planters to move to new lands constantly, leaving in their wake worn-out fields . . . to the yeoman farmers and poor whites. . . . [M]ost of the small farmers were pushed onto a new frontier by the plantation system, or to the outlying hills where they grew some tobacco and cotton. Downward mobility was the rule for many, as opposed to upward mobility for the few. (Roebuck and Hickson 1982:9, 10)

In this frontier, the poor white became, essentially, a squatter on open land, engaged in subsistence farming, hunting, fishing and herding.

Most obtained food, clothing and shelter from rural pursuits and lived in self-constructed cabins or houses. . . . They raised pigs and chickens, cultivated corn and other vegetables, and occasionally planted a small crop of cotton or tobacco. Some had cattle, horses and a milk cow which grazed frequently on open land. They also hunted, trapped and fished for food. Animal furs and hides were sold at a town market. (Roebuck and Hickson 1982:12)

The folk culture and physical circumstances encouraged the development of rule by men instead of law and institutions. Individualism developed from a self-sufficient life on the frontier . . . often just beyond the frontier stage of development, the plain folk depended on and asserted themselves according

to a personalized set of human relations (man to man) and a code of violent behavior based on the redress of wrong. (Roebuck and Hickson 1982:13)

In the post bellum period, between 1865 and 1900, the poor whites were integrated into the economic system as one, dependent lumpen lower class. They shifted from small subsistence farming, hunting, fishing, and herding to tenancy and sharecropping, and to wage earners as mill workers, miners and factory hands. Most poor whites and blacks became tenants and sharecroppers in a competitive situation. The poor white, in short, was for the first time reduced to an equal work status with the black, which intensified white racism. (Roebuck and Hickson 1982:16)

Roebuck and Hickson go on to argue that this intensified white racism was manipulated by upper-class white elements in order to deflect the development of a white underclass consciousness of class. Accordingly, this white racism is used as a major defining characteristic of the modern-day redneck. Roebuck and Hickson's historical summary is quite useful, but their portrayal of the modern redneck is condescending insofar as they consider the redneck to be ignorant, racist and culturally impoverished. A more serious flaw in their work is that they ignore the positive features of the redneck's adherence to traditional cultural patterns, except to note that the retirement dreams of even urban rednecks are to return to the South and a little patch of land (Roebuck and Hickson 1982:120, 178, 188).

They also ignore analogues of the plantation economy in other contemporary geographical locations in agri-business, factory-ship fishing and the mechanization of herding and stock-farming that have led to the death of the small, family farm. Even where a slave economy is *not* present, these analogues *did* give rise to similar types of sub-cultures, at least with respect to hunting and poaching. In addition to white southern lower-class rednecks, those affected include the *rancheros* of Northern Mexico, the "cowboys" (marginal ranchers) of Western Canada and the U.S., the marginal farmers of Northern Ontario, Québec and the Maritimes, and the marginal fisherman of the Maritimes.⁴ While these groups lack the racist traits that southern rednecks exhibit, they have a healthy distrust and disrespect for outsiders and "tourists," and they *all* engage in hunting/poaching styles of the "local rural" type.

All of these groups have been squeezed off the land and now work at the mercy of the industries of the post-industrial state. Nevertheless, they retain an identification with the values of a long-gone pre-industrial era that focusses on *using* land in a communal sense rather than *owning* it as a commodity. In their traditional hunting practices, rural poachers are doing roughly the same thing that their forefathers did, though some of their activities are now illegal. They have become more or less instant and involuntary

deviants. More importantly, knowledge of their own deviance, coupled with a vigorous sense of individualism and a populist distrust of authority, has led them to construct a deviant sub-culture in a self-conscious manner. On the one hand, they want to continue this tradition; on the other, they are aware of the power and organization of the state which enforces laws and can have consequences for their total lives.

This leads to a kind of "cops-and-robbers" contest between members of the sub-culture, and the state and its enforcers. As new laws and surveillance tactics are developed, the sub-cultural group attempts to create counter-tactics. If a counter-tactic works, or if a new hunting technology is developed, then the Game Law enforcers respond, creating a new problem for the sub-culture. Not only is there constant improvement of surveillance technology, but the increasing public objection to hunting means that the sub-culture's members now must both contend with the problem of informers and maintain even tighter internal social control. This kind of dialectical interaction appears to account for the continuing change in the hunting/poaching sub-culture.

Dialectical Interactions with the State and with the Community

In this section, I illustrate some instances of problems that the hunting/poaching sub-culture has with the State and with their own community. Within the community, I note two types of problems: first, there is the problem of internal social control in the extended family nucleus; the second problem concerns maintaining relationships with other extended family nuclei in the same small rural community. Concern with the latter problem is generated by the fact that there is competition between nuclei for use of "unowned" or government land and disputes over what constitute the boundaries of "territorial" hunting tracts. This problem may be exacerbated because the same individual may belong to competing nuclei. The in-laws of group X may in fact be sisters or brothers or other kin of group Y. Thus individuals may be able to choose the hunting group to which they wish to be identified. Generally, membership is more or less exclusive and longlasting, given the extreme sense of trust necessary to evade the authorities. At times, this can become a *very* divisive issue. Such problems are reminiscent of Richard Lee's (1984:57-61) discussion of the same kinds of difficulties occurring among the Dobe !Kung of the Kalahari.

All of the problems noted above derive from the position of the local game law enforcers, or game wardens as they shall be henceforth called. It is not widely known, but game wardens have a legal mandate that is sometimes broader than that of the usual police authorities. The following pas-

sage appears in *Hunting Regulations: Summary, Fall '88-Spring '89*, Ministry of Natural Resources, Ontario, p. 8:

OFFICERS: An Officer may, without a search warrant:

1. stop, enter and search any aircraft, vehicle, or vessel;
2. enter and search any fishing, hunting, mining, lumber or construction camp or any office of any common carrier; and
3. open and inspect any trunk, box, bag, parcel or receptacle.

if he has reasonable grounds for believing that any of the above contain game or fish taken, shipped or possessed in contravention of the Game and Fish Act and Regulations. . . .

An Officer has the authority to request information about hunting and fishing.

Most other Canadian national and provincial and U.S. national and state jurisdictions have similar laws and regulations. Additionally, game wardens can call upon police forces for aid and assistance in investigations which are crimes under various wildlife acts. This potentially creates a substantial police presence with which the sub-culture must cope. In fact, directive (2) above has been construed as referring to homes and outbuildings which are believed to be used as a hunting base (fieldnotes 1986).

Compounding the problem for the sub-culture is the recent attempt to involve the general citizenry in surveillance. Just as hot-lines have been set up by police for criminal offenses, so hot-lines have been set up and particularly focussed on poachers in certain jurisdictions. Such hot-lines maintain confidentiality and allow for anonymous tips. Such services are often advertised at sports shows and are often part of displays by various hunting and fishing groups. Occasionally, these groups will also distribute free Violation Report Forms with self-addressed postage-paid envelopes. Such tactics have also become weapons, in small communities, to settle feuds between nuclei. And, as with most tactics, the poachers themselves occasionally put them to use.

Problems with the State

Some problems stemming from game laws have already been solved by the sub-culture, and are now a part of their cultural knowledge. Most jurisdictions have laws against baiting game animals with salt or feed. This challenge has been fairly easily resolved by the rural locals because they generally either own small tracts of land, or lease grazing rights. They pasture the odd cow or horse on this land, and provide *that* animal with a salt lick, or with a small patch of oats or other small grain. In drier climes, water tanks are often set up. Should a game animal avail itself of the facility and get killed, it can then be argued that this was not the original intent of the land-

holder. This is a convenient, but demonstrably true, rationale, because farm animals need salt, water and food—just as a game animal does.

Another tactical problem already solved by rural hunters has been the game wardens' use of mandatory checkpoints on major thoroughfares. Given the broad mandate in most jurisdictions, very thorough checks can be made and are very effective against tourist hunters. Once known, though, these points are almost useless against local rurals, whose knowledge of the area often exceeds that of the game wardens. Back roads and old ranch or logging roads across private property are well known. The recent advent of small four-wheel drive and all-terrain vehicles is also an effective solution to road checks. Technology in the form of Citizen's Band radios also allows members to ascertain the location of, and avoid game wardens fairly easily, either through contact with local base operators or through monitoring the game wardens' own frequencies. Game wardens in some jurisdictions are beginning to react to this situation by shifting to other means of radio communication, often involving the use of military systems.

Jack-lighting, or taking game at night with the use of a light to "freeze" them, is a technique that has a very interesting history. It was originally developed in pre-industrial times when pine-knot torches were used with birch-bark or whitened leather reflectors to concentrate the light in the eyes of the game animal, usually a ruminant. It is a *very* effective technique for taking game animals. Its history more or less parallels the technological history of concentrated lights. Historically, kerosene lamps and candles were concentrated by using mirrors in what is known as a "bull's eye lantern." Then followed the use of pressure-operated lights using mantles. Each new development led to more and more game taken. Eventually, most jurisdictions made such techniques illegal and the practices then became part of the deviant sub-culture.

Once the practice was ruled illegal, the nature of the "contest" shifted to the use of light that was minimally detectable. One solution was to use telescopic sights, which don't require "silhouette" sighting, against a broadly lit target. During this phase, various automobile headlights were used, but game wardens responded by using hydraulically powered small "cherry picker" cranes to achieve a height from which lights could be observed for fairly long distances, especially in prairie-like settings. One of the latest technological responses has been to use extremely small quartz halogen lights, with long beam concentrators, which are mounted on scopes with mercury microswitches, allowing the light to be turned on by simply raising the rifle to the firing position. These lights, and the scopes, are pre-targeted. The short duration of lighting activity is effective in taking animals, but difficult for enforcers to observe. Ironically, such devices are legal in the state of Texas for hunting predators, and they are advertised in the magazine pub-

lished by the Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife (Texas Parks and Wildlife 1975:19, 24).

A problem that is currently being solved by the sub-culture also constitutes an opportunity for innovation. This possibility stems from recent rules referred to as the "cow-calf" rule. Depending upon the jurisdiction, these rules specify that only bulls and calves may be killed, and cows are protected. Bull elk and moose have horns and are readily identifiable; cows and calves are distinguished generally by size, and elk and moose calves grow rapidly during their first year. This has given rise to various practices designed to "convert" illegally taken cows into legally taken calves. One reported practice is to remove a set of ribs from the middle of a cow prior to quartering it. This reduces the absolute size of a cow to that of a large calf. Presumably "once it is quartered, no one will ever know" (fieldnotes 1988). Because most jurisdictions require that a tag be affixed to the lower jaw of a calf, and because inspection of the teeth is the definitive criterion for a calf, this technique may not be that effective. To date, I have no reports.

Another problem that has *not* yet been solved by the sub-culture also stems from the evolution of technological complexity. A recent development in wildlife research has been the use of electronic transmitters affixed to game animals such that their movements can be tracked by radio telemetry. This research has been very productive in the development of scientific knowledge about game animals, and will ultimately allow for more conservation of game. In the short term however, it produces a problem for the hunter/poacher. When the radio transmitter stops moving for any length of time, or ceases transmission, the research biologist assumes that the animal is dead, locates its last known position and attempts to retrieve it for study.

From the poachers' perspective, this provides very detailed information about his illegal act and its location, and leads to an official actively seeking the animal, something a poacher avoids at all costs. While collars or external tags are fairly obvious, implanted tags are not. Thus far, poachers are worrying about how to locate such implanted tags, or what to do should they shoot an externally tagged animal. The current consensus is that one looks for tags before one shoots, but, should one miss seeing the tag and kill the animal, one should immediately leave the scene and warn all others in the party. This is the chosen action, despite the fact that most regulations state that hunters will not be penalized in any way. (See *Hunting Regulations: Summary, Fall '88, Spring '89, Ministry of Natural Resources, Ontario*, p. iv, for an example from the Ontario jurisdiction.) Local rurals simply do not trust governmental statements. Currently, no acceptable solution to the problem of electronic monitoring has been developed. Some hunter/poachers are turning to their more electronically sophisticated

friends for information, but it is hard to discuss the immediate problem with such friends, because they are not usually part of the extended family network.

Extended Family Nuclei and Local Community Problems

Problems stem from a variety of sources. Both extended family nucleus members, and the members of other nuclei are usually mature males and as such are granted personal autonomy and individual freedom to do as they please within the local community. All are members of the local community, share the same values and often share the same intimate knowledge of the area, although obviously each nucleus specializes in its own territory. But members of such groups may so outrageously violate game laws as to focus official attention on the entire community. Such events do happen and are especially problematic for the entire local community.

The case of the Judas X is an excellent example. This case was one of the most problematic cases I have ever encountered, and has had consequences that have lasted to the present; and yes, the term Judas *was* used by locals to describe him!

In 1980, a few weeks prior to the opening of hunting season, Judas, a member of nucleus X, killed an animal at night on a rural road and butchered it a few yards away. He was turned in (on a hot-line), and the next morning game wardens, local and state police were on the scene investigating the crime. The location of the kill was closest to nucleus Y, and on a road that gave access to some 12 other nuclei. Initial suspicion fell on these nuclei, with the result that barns and outbuildings were searched, and many persons in the area were interviewed. The next few days saw the investigation spread to more outlying areas. Patrols by all levels of police were increased, and checkpoints were set up in order to question and search all traffic, the author included.

The impact was devastating, and the initial reaction was a drastic escalation of inter- and intra-nuclear gossip to figure out who was involved, and how the nuclear unit might protect itself. Suspicion and distrust, even inside nuclei, was rampant. The local community had lost its moral basis. Once the identity of the suspect was known, then all nuclei shifted their strategies to distance themselves from Judas and nucleus X, and reaffirm their own boundaries to ensure distancing and information control.

Ironically, the animal was never found, and Judas was never charged. The social order of the community was disturbed and remained so for at least three years. Other consequences will be discussed below.

Equally, there is inter-nuclei competition concerning territorial boundaries and "use" of land. This is particularly true if a section of the territory

has not been used for some time; in such a case, it is deemed "vacant" and up for grabs. Finally, members of other nuclei are potential members of one's own nucleus; should the numbers of a given nucleus drop, there may be competition for their loyalties.

The social control of insiders is especially difficult. Where all are ostensible equals, decisions about hunting and poaching get made by an often lengthy discussion and debate process. Yet the equality is rhetorical; there are major differences *within* the group. Some members are simply better hunters and trackers; others have more knowledge of the outside world and are better able to negotiate on behalf of the nucleus. Decisions are arrived at on a consensual basis that takes these differences into account. One is reminded of the decision-making process of the !Kung camp described by Richard Lee (1984:87-90).

One method of controlling the behaviour of members and maintaining a boundary vis-à-vis other nuclei is the development of a highly specialized argot that refers to a particular group's experiences. Such an argot is replete with undefined references that are incomprehensible without knowledge of the group's history, for example: "Do you remember where X sat when Y shot the deer two years ago? We'll go a couple of hundred yards past that to where that old tree fell down and watch there. The deer will probably be coming from over the rise" (fieldnotes). That communication is impossible for any outsider to understand.

Other methods of control are the usual teasing and joking, with mock threats, and discussions of possible consequences of hypothetical acts. Inside such groups, detailed information is also passed around, particularly by permanent residents when talking to their temporarily visiting kin. The two or three days before a hunt are usually filled with recounting of the past year's activity. This occurred in the Judas case mentioned above, and information was passed on in great detail, with instructions that extreme care must be taken in the future. Furthermore, hunting areas were shifted to regions that were least likely to come under observation because they were so distant from even minor roads, and were located on locked private property.

Another control mechanism is ostracism and expulsion from the local community. In the season immediately following the Judas case, post-hunt activities included discussions of opportunities to poach that were not taken because of increased surveillance due to the case. Judas was the subject of much threat and pejoration. Apparently the same kind of discussions took place in nucleus X, because gossip had it that a fellow nucleus member distrusted him and used a "hot-line" to turn him in. This was adjudged appropriate treatment for a Judas. The process took about two years, but it was apparently effective. He not only lost his place in his own nucleus, but in the entire community, for no other nucleus would take him in, and he left

the community. This incident occurred in the early 1980s, and recent contact with the nuclei reveal that the individual is still gone, and that no one has heard from him or tried to maintain contact with him. The case continues to be part of the exemplary lore of the area (fieldnotes 1980-88).⁵

Another form of control is the use of outright lies. The following case illustrates the process. I had been invited to go hunting with a family nucleus who were my relations and friends, but with whom I had never been hunting. Before the hunt, I was informed that X was an untrustworthy "old fart" who would tell anybody anything. Yet he was a family member and therefore included. As we were hunting on line stands, individual members were separated by several hundred yards and hills and ravines. Line stands require that hunters form a line at right angles to deer trails, separated from each other by a "safe" distance. Deer drift through, and by the end of the hunt the persons on the last stand would walk back through and pick everyone up. "X" was on the first stand, and I was on the second, with the others strung out in order. I heard a few shots further "down" the line. When the group reached my position, they said that they had gotten a doe, but not to say anything about it because they didn't want X to know, and that they would come back and pick it up that night. I said nothing and we ended the hunt with the usual few beers and supper. When X left, I asked if they needed my help to go and get the deer. At that point, they told me that they really hadn't shot a deer but were just fooling around and teasing me. As a hunter, I joined in the laughter and bought another round of beer. As a sociologist, I know that they were testing my trust in the hunting situation. I was invited back several times so I know I passed *that* test, because further forms of game law violation were revealed. X didn't pass, and although he was allowed to hunt, no further information was revealed to him nor was he allowed to witness poaching. He eventually withdrew from hunting, voluntarily, a few years later (fieldnotes 1978-89).

Such information control and explicit testing often takes place over lengthy periods of time and it is rare for complete strangers to be taken in. One simply must have some prior stake in or connection with, the group. Even then, trust is only gradually developed. It is as if there are only two extreme levels of sanction involved in control. The lowest level is simple joking, teasing and nicknaming. If these methods are employed, a member can come to be progressively and gradually trusted and given more responsibility for maintaining secrecy and involvement in poaching. One's involvement can be halted at any level, as in the case of X. The highest and ultimate level of control is banishment.

In summary, internal and external problems must be handled by the subculture. External problems are handled on a trial-and-error basis, and mostly solved by technology or modifications in hunting practices. Internal prob-

lems are a more delicate matter, because they deal with basic values and membership in the network, yet there are few techniques for dealing with them. Fission of a group, be it voluntary or involuntary is an ultimate outcome, but this disrupts the balance of the entire network and violates the basic value of communal sharing.

Conclusions

In this paper, I have described a sub-culture that is based in an extension of values and hunting practices originating, at the latest, in the early 1800s in a pre-industrial agrarian era. It has its analogues in other parts of North America. Many of the values have remained the same over nearly two centuries.

Comparisons with the !Kung suggest that some of the same cultural values and internal problems also occur in small-scale societies. What has changed is that the hunting practices have become deviant by virtue of the emergence of an increased level of complexity which includes not only game laws but game law enforcers. Self-consciously, the sub-culture's members have responded in ways that allow them and their culture to remain in existence. Technological changes provide one dimension along which such changes have occurred. Perhaps more deeply divisive has been the response of the sub-culture to its social milieu which now includes potential informers who, in previous eras, would have been neighbors. This change has led to an increased need to screen carefully any new members and to guard boundaries somewhat more closely. It is also possible that increased fission will lead to the demise of the sub-culture.

I suggest that sociologists and anthropologists should study deviant sub-cultures historically, and that some of the changes in these sub-cultures can be traced to the "new" locations of these groups in more recently evolved, organizational levels of complexity. Thus I argue that a sub-culture cannot be fully understood by an analysis of its existence in a given present. Hunting/poaching sub-cultures have had a long history and are clearly able to adapt to new milieux. This adaptability, and the viability of the extended family in a rural context leads me to argue that this sub-culture is not moribund, but vital.⁶

Notes

1. Because of the nature of the data in this chapter, we shall use composite cases constructed from scenes and characteristics from different locales and time frames (Brymer and Farris 1967:315-316).
2. A similar problem arises in the work of E.P. Thompson (1975). His work on hunting and poaching in the early 18th century in England uses data drawn largely from legal and other archival state records, and he notes the difficulty in making inferences as to

- the organization of the poachers themselves. I might note that there are similarities in the patterns he locates and mine, but there are many more differences.
3. In line with my assertion that this sub-culture has deep pre-industrial roots, note how closely it matches Sahlins' analysis of generalized reciprocity (Sahlins 1965:147 and, *passim*, 186-200).
 4. See Okihiro (1989) for a strikingly similar description of contemporary outport Newfoundlanders.
 5. The lack of a concrete and definitive resolution of this case is very similar to that of case of Jean in McPherson's chapter in this volume. Even though they were not resolved, they both entered the cultural memory of the groups.
 6. The death of all hunting has been predicted, for England at least, by Thomas (1983). I will address this comparison in future work.

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