TIME OF TRANSITION
THE EFFECTS OF CHANGE IN HUNTER-GATHERER SOCIETIES

By: Victoria Goodman, Undergraduate: Arizona State University

ARGUMENT

Contemporary hunter-gatherers are experiencing great external pressure to convert to agriculture or pastoralism; however, the structure of the hunter-gatherer society may prevent this transition from happening easily.

ANALYSIS

EXTERNAL STIMULI THAT PRESSURE HUNTER-GATHERERS TO ADOPT AGRICULTURE OR PASTORALISM:

1. Trade and Exchange
2. Government Policy
3. Environmental Degradation from Agriculturist and Pastoralist Land Use

HOW EXTERNAL STIMULI INFLUENCES CHANGE TO AGRICULTURE OR PASTORALISM

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PREDICTED RESULTS FOR THE GROUPS

ACTUAL RESULTS FOR THE GROUPS

Based on external pressure, the Khoi San should have the greatest investment in agriculture, followed by the Hadza; the Oikie should have the least commitment to agriculture. This predicted pattern, however, does not match what is actually occurring.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The more hunter-gatherer resource use is similar to agriculture and pastoralism, the better hunter-gatherer groups are socially and economically in a position to transition to agriculture or pastoralism.
2. If adopting agriculture is essential to survival of some hunter-gatherer groups, attention must be paid to the social implications of such changes.

GROUPS STUDIED

APPROACH

1. Predict the likelihood for a hunter-gatherer group to convert to agriculture or pastoralism based on the degree of external pressures.
2. Determine where the groups studied fall in line with the predicted results. If they do not, why not?

THESE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PREDICTED AND ACTUAL RESULTS RAISE VARIOUS QUESTIONS:

1. Why have the Oikie converted to agriculture and pastoralism when there was little external pressure to change?
2. Why have the Hadza remained hunter-gatherers in the face of continual, strong pressure from outside groups?