

The Social Development Policy Mismanagement of the Khoisan Ethnic Affairs

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Abstract

This paper uses the post-colonial theoretical perspective to analyze the social situation of the Khoisan or San ethnic groups in Botswana. Due to their social history of hunter-gathers, these minority communities in Botswana have been dominated and marginalized through the actions of current social policies which excluded them from specific social and cultural developments that should sustain their existing as distinct ethnic communities. They do not have rights to their language and culture, and do not have any development policy consideration for a reservation of land where they could exercise and enjoy their rights as people that bear their ethnic identities. The egalitarian approach used by the government has no guarantee that the Khoisan can preserve their identity, language and culture. The argument of the paper is that when such policies are applied to people, their socio-cultural affairs are mismanaged. This social condition is akin to post-colonialism and its consequences is that in modernity, ethnic groups such as the Khoisan can experience death of their cultures and languages.

Keywords: Botswana; Social policy; Khoisan, ethnic group identity; hunter-gatherers

Introduction

While nothing much is known of Khoisan languages speaking communities' ancient history (cf Denbow 1986), their location in Southern Africa, shown by archaeological effects and coupled with some ancient rock art paintings (cf Dowson and Lewis-Williams 1994) makes them ancient southern Africa ethnic and cultural entities. Their linguistic classification shows that in Southern Africa, there are at least two language families within the Khoisan (Güldemann and Vossen. 2000). This linguistic difference also creates their internal inter-ethnic identities and attitudes towards each other.

Ancient ethnic and linguistic contact situations have been postulated where stronger ethno-linguistic and cultural communities absorb weaker and less organized ethnic and linguistic communities (du Plessis 2009). Modern Africa history is replete with accounts of their interaction with other Africans, but little about among themselves (Boden 2007). This history is also presented from a contact perspective, that is, in relation to the socio-historical and socio-economic activities that other African and non-African groups initiated in their interaction with the Khoisan speech communities (cf Brenzinger *et al.* 1991). Contact situations have ramified Khoisan identities, and their own internal Khoisan ethnic attitudes (Boden 2007 and Weinberg 1997).

According to research from various disciplines, San ethnic communities currently live as herdsmen and laborers (Banard 1992:3; Cassidy *et al.* 2001; Chebanne 2008) and mainly for other ethnic groups. In Botswana, this situation has put these groups under the socio-economic and socio-cultural control by other groups (Thapelo 2002; Batibo 2008; Batibo 2000). These socio-cultural and socio-economic conditions are very fateful and tragic as Chebanne (2020) and Thapelo (2002) have argued. As demographic minorities and issuing from a hunter gatherer mode of living, they are easily disposed of their land, and the domination by more powerful and better organized communities

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subject them to forced assimilation and exploitation of all sorts (Chebanne 2020; Boden 2007; Barnard 1992).

Aim of the discussion

Social policy on development in Botswana has invariably targeted developmental issues of poverty, economic empowerment and social equality (Jeffris 1997). The generalizing approach to social policy in Botswana has hidden behind the concepts of equality the reality of social difference and inequality. In this manner, critical issues of marginalization have been overlooked, in particular the distinctive needs of minorities, especially Khoisan, who come from the hunter-gathers background (Chebanne 2020; Chebanne and Moumakwa 2017; Chebanne 2006). This article aims to discuss the handling of developmental issues of the minority Khoisan ethnic communities by going beyond the confines and generalizations of current Botswana social developmental policy by aiming:

- (i) To discuss Khoisan ethnic history and identity.
- (ii) Present their current social situations and the background to negative attitudes.
- (iii) To critical examine the effect of social policy for development and how it impacts the Khoisan ethnic communities.
- (iv) Characterize their inter-ethnic relationships, and how that supports their collective bargaining for access to development and affirmation of cultural, and language rights.
- (v) Assess their socio-linguistics situations in view of the broader language dynamics of Botswana.

The article will conclude that Khoisan issues are inappropriately handled by the development policies of the state, and this results in mismanagement of their social issues. This is what accounts for their cultural and linguistic dearth and death.

Theoretical Framework

The paper assumes that the social policy mismanagement in Botswana creates a social conflict condition that local and international researchers have already reported on (Saugestad 2001 and Thapelo 2002). This quickly refers to the conflict theory which is based on the Marxist ‘dialectical materialism’ developed by Karl Marx. The conflict theorists believed that it is the conflict between individuals, classes, groups, institutions, etc. that bring change in the society (Stark 2007 and Lenski 1966). This change can be positive or nefarious. In Botswana, the Khoisan are situated at the bottom of social stratum (Osaki 2001), and therefore this conflict is characterized by domination and exploitation. (Chebanne 2020; Saugestd 2001; Thapelo 2002). From a postcolonial theory, the paper argues that the Khoisan ethnic groups in Botswana live in abject poverty that has disreputable consequences such as losing the fabric of culture, their languages and putting in desuetude their self-worth and identity as a people (Chebanne 2020; 2105; Thapelo 2002). The antithesis of this condition is a community that has no identity or developmental direction (Thapelo 2002; UKessays.com 2013).

Within these theoretical considerations the argument presented in the paper is that, to manage Khoisan ethnic issues, the option, in Botswana as elsewhere, the developmental choice should not be between remaining with an old lifestyle or assimilating into the dominant society’s culture (Nyati-Ramahobo 2002) but exploring strategies for culture and language preservation for the Khoisan (Chebanne 2020; Chebanne and Moumakwa 2017). Indigenous people want to participate in development on their own terms, not to reject development as argued by (Saugestad 2001). A living

culture's chance to survive and develop itself depends on its ability and opportunity to control the introduction of technologies and other modern elements, not to turn them down (Chebanne 2015; Bodley 1990). To achieve this, values codified by the minority must be recognized as complementary to the codification of the majority culture. In other words, minority culture should be accepted as "different from but equal in value" to the dominant national culture (Saugestad 2001:64). These theories mean therefore that the Khoisan are talked about, and policies are made for them without them (Ledman 2015).

The Khoisan in Botswana

Botswana is a vast semi-arid country in Southern Africa that has a great majority and diversity of the Khoisan hunter-gathers (Chebanne 2020; Güldemann and Vossen 2000). This reality is not often acknowledged in social research and social policy because the Khoisan are not recognised as a distinctive and peculiar ethnic grouping (Boden 2007; Weinberg 1997; Villiers 1997; Weinberg 1997). In his research Barnard (1992) submits that the San people were found south of the equator and in present-day South Sudan. Most of these groups were wiped out or absorbed by the "intruding" groups, such as Nilotes, Cushites, Eastern Sudanics, Sog Sudanics, and later Bantu speakers. Bernard (1992) also suggests that many San groups remained in the dry Kalahari area and swampy Okavango because the Bantu farmers and herders were not interested in those areas because of their dryness and the pestilences of swampy environments.

The Khoisan in Botswana and Southern Africa have sometimes been referred to as autochthonous (Chebanne 2002), that is, people who remain in historical social settings in terms of lifestyle, without necessarily desiring to engage new developments. According to Eide (2001:5-6) what is normally held to distinguish indigenous or autochthonous peoples from other groups is their prior settlement in the territory in which they live, combined with their maintenance of a separate culture which is closely linked to their particular and peculiar ways of using natural resources, and remain attached to the rudimentary modes of existence (Chebanne 2020 and Boden 2007). Further, they are historically characterized by adaptation to the desert and maintaining small vulnerable groups in contact situation (Chebanne 2008; Saugestad 2001). Historically, San were hunters-gatherers and lived in small communities of closely related individuals (Barnard 1992; Tlou and Campbell 1997). This situation might have been dictated by competition for food sources, and also the need to have cohesion in the group for ease of community management (Boden 2007).

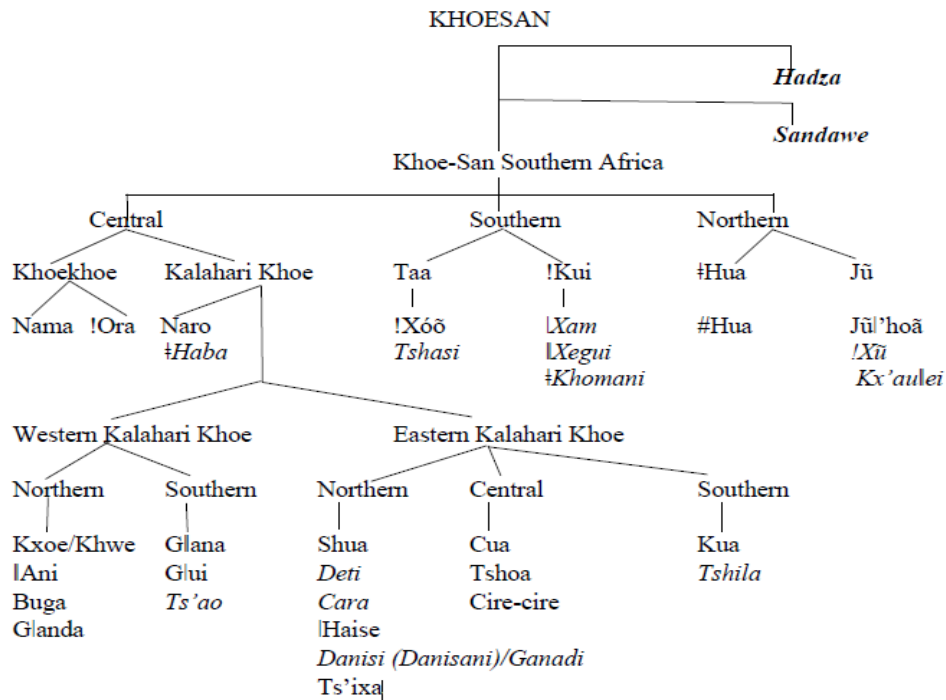
As alluded to in the introduction of the paper, San ethnic languages of Botswana fall into two language families: 1) the southern San comprising the Taa and the !Kui, and 2) the northern San comprising the ǀHoa and the Ju. The Khoe-Kwadi, is yet another family of languages (Nama, Naro, Buga, Shua, Gǀana / Gǀui, Cua, Tsua, Ts'ixa, Shua, Tciretcire) that are linguistically distinct, albeit most of them maintain hunter-gatherer mode of cultural existence. Most of the time when the Khoe and the San refer to themselves, they use names or words which when translated mean, "person/people": The name Jul'hoansi means "people"; the singular, "person", is Jul'hoan. Words such as Khoe, Tuu, and Taa mean "people". The word that is found in History books, Khoi-Khoi, comes from Khoe-Khoe, meaning "the real people" (Güldemann and Vossen 2000). The Khoe and the San believe they are "the people". Other ethnic communities are given specific names (lhoõ (white person in Naro); Quini (Ngwato person in Tshoa); Gubuu, (Kalanga person in Shua); and Poto kua, (Ndebele person in Cua) (Chebanne 2020:2014). The Khoe who are now generally taken as a linguistic sub-family are now the most widespread Khoe-San community in Southern Africa, and the majority, in terms of the number of speech communities, as in Botswana. The Khoe and their

languages have historically also been referred to as Hottentots and Bushmen, respectively. Kohler (1971:1-2) cites earlier anthropologists using the Khoisan as a racial term referring to the two groups as belonging to “a second species of the genus homo”. This term has taken a pejorative connotation (Boko 2002 and Mazonde 2002) to non-linguists, often relegating these people to a subhuman class.

The culture of these people also makes a distinction between the “people’s habits/ways /manners and the “foreign people’s habits/ways/manners” (Boden 2007). While Khoe-Khoe communities (Nama and others around the Sua Pans (Makgadikgadi Salt Pans) have been known to be pastoralists (Parsons 1993), non-Khoe-Khoe (or the San that took Khoe languages) seem to have been reduced to a life similar to hunter gathering of the San (the case of Glui) (Chebanne 2008). Most of the non-pastoralist Khoe communities are found in Botswana, comprising the Central Khoe (Glui, Glana, Naro), the Eastern Khoe (Khua, Cua), and the Northern Khoe (lAni and Buga) Chebanne (2006 and 2008).

Diagram 1 shows the ethno-linguistic classification of the Khoisan (Chebanne 2020), is based on the classification of the Khoisan by Güldemann & Vossen (2000) and refined by Güldemann (2014).

Diagram 1: Khoisan linguistic classification



According to the diagram above, branch (1) represented by Sandawe has an unlikely relationship with Southern Africa Khoisan. Güldemann (2014) hypothesizes that Sandawe might be related to languages that were spoken by Pygmies of equatorial Africa. Branch (2) which has Hadza and Khoe-Kwadi, under Central Khoisan make a possible genetic relationship. And branch (3), Southern San languages are also possibly genetically related. Diagram 1 summarises the nature of the linguistic relationship of Khoisan, though it cannot be regarded conclusive in the present stage of linguistic research (Du Plessis 2016). However, other linguistic and social features need also to be considered

and the following notes can be made.

Construction of Social Attitudes towards the Khoisan

In contact situations, the Khoisan experienced cruelties and genocidal tendencies perpetrated against them. The callousness of the people San called “potoko |ua”, the bone breakers, or those who break bones is exemplified by this historical account:

We had almost reached the bank of the principal feeder of the Sua, called the Nata, where salt may be most readily procured, and where the Matabele are sent by their rulers every year to collect it. The Bamangwato king was aware of the marauding habits of these parties, but did nothing to control them, although they perpetually disarm any Bamangwato they may meet, and delight in breaking the legs of the Masarwas (Holub 1881:61, quoted in Hitchcock *et al.* 2015:4).

This wanton brutality against the Khoisan is further graphically presented by Bryden (1893:142) who said that the San in 1890 were “in a state of absolute slavery and of hopeless degradation”. He went on to point out that:

Woe betides him if the hunting season has been bad, or if the wild beasts have made havoc with flock and herd. He and his family must answer for it, in such a case, with heavy stripes, not seldom, indeed, a brutal death is the penalty. Even his children and women folk are not his own but may be and are seized and carried away into domestic servitude or concubinage (Bryden 1893:143, quoted from Hitchcock *et al.* 2015:4).

It is the contribution of some anthropological research on San or Khoisan, notably Hitchcock and Biesele (2000) which has contributed some transparency on the question of these ethnic communities’ cultural identities and their social condition in Botswana. Other research by Maruyama (2018) and Boden (2007) have provided their current situation regarding their relationships with other major ethnic groups in contact situations. The historical challenges of the Khoisan in their social interaction with other Southern African ethnic communities is also well documented by Mokhtar (1990) who argue that settle ethnic communities dominated them or caused them to leave their historical land to avoid difficult contact relationships. Chebanne (2020) likened the Khoisan past and present socio-political conditions to colonialism, because they remain dominated and marginalized; and importantly, under these situations, they undergo persistent linguistic and cultural assimilation (Batibo, 2010). In the testimonies gathered by Boden (2007), the San lamented the attitude of Batswana to want to enslave them, even to give them to White farmers as slaves. Thapelo (2002) assessed their socio-economic and revealed a post-colonial condition of exploitation and misery. Historically, even before European colonialism, Khoisan were regarded by governments (colonial and postcolonial) as Bushmen and wild, as this excerpt by Haynes (nd:86) notes:

“Wild” Bushmen were encouraged to be domesticated by active government policy: and during severe droughts many roaming Bushmen found themselves camping at traditional water refuges in competition with cattle ranchers. The Bushmen had to be forcibly trained in new habits, given new foods to eat, and taught new ideas, such as wage from laboring that irreversibly made them underclass participants in the revised economies of the colonial era.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, African farmers and herders compelled Bushmen to herd cattle and work in the fields for no pay, in return for living space, some food, and water. The Bushmen did not seem capable of protesting, and no government tried to emancipate them (quoted from Hitchcock *et al.* 2015:5).

Except for the Nama, there are not many other Khoisan ethnic communities that have survived (linguistically and culturally) contact situations for a long time (Chebanne 2020; Güldemann and Vossen 2000; Köhler 1981). It has also been noted in Chebanne (2008) that in Khoisan languages inter-ethnic contact, Khoe languages prevail over Non-Khoe such as the Ju (Northern San) and !Xõõ (Southern San) (Chebanne 2020). It is also possible that internal to the Khoisan speech communities, the sociolinguistics dynamics favored some groups, especially pastoralists, such as the Khoekhoe (Nama) and fishermen (the Okavango Khoe, Buga and !Ani) (Güldemann and Vossen 2000). In this situation it was most likely that the Khoekhoe language was passed on to Khoisan speech communities that were non-Khoe, as in the case of G!ui (likely genetic affinity with !Xõõ (Traill 1986). But in this unknown history and sociolinguistics dynamics it is also possible that the Khoe speakers adopted and developed phonological and grammatical features of their neighbors (cf Du Plessis 2009). Whichever way the situation is viewed, the extensive spread of Khoe languages speakers may be explained from these probable sociolinguistic assumptions which are that these languages were spoken by culturally and economically powerful people (Chebanne 2020; Güldemann and Vossen. 2000).

As it is evident from the Köhler (1981) research which provided maps of Khoisan geographical distribution in Southern, and clearly showing that Botswana is the heart of their habitation, it would have been expected that Botswana would have devised social policies that cater for these ancient as Mokhtar (2000) describe them. However, it is in Botswana that there is not even a single ethnic policy that is formulated to promote and preserve the Khoisan linguistic and cultural affairs. In Botswana, where research has that for Khoisan communities, it is the last sanctuary; social policy is knotty as Weinberg (1997:8) laments:

In Botswana, regarded as the Bushmen's last sanctuary, the situation is also equivocal. Several Bushmen groupings have lost their land completely; among them are the Nharo [Naro] of western Botswana, whose hunting grounds have been entirely colonized by cattle farmers (Riaan de Villiers, quoted from Weinberg 1997:8).

Chebanne (2020) and Barnard (1992) argue that in their social interactions with other southern Africa populations the Khoisan cultures have transformed, and their languages lost in the processes, and the results of these may be transformed cultures and lifestyles observed in the current situation (Chebanne 2020 and Chebanne 2015). Importantly, most of the Khoisan/San/Bushmen/Basarwa according to current research live as herdsmen and exploited labourers (Thapelo 2002; Barnard 1992; Cassidy *et al.* 2001; Chebanne 2008) mainly by other ethnic groups. In Botswana, this situation has put these groups under the socio-economic and socio-cultural control by other groups (Chebanne 2020; Batibo 2008; Osaki 2001).

Evidently, therefore, the social problem of the Khoisan ethnic communities is not just historical but can also be found in the modern development discourse. Rantsudu (2015:18) put the problem of Khoisan in Botswana social policy as the idea that in Botswana the mainstream society discourse is that "we are all indigenous". Rantsudu (2015:19) further argues that:

Indigenous populations elsewhere in the world, as with the San [Khoisan] population in Botswana, constitute a small minority that is not able to influence the State and its democratic institutions through the ballot and the vote, hence the need for international instruments for their protection.

It is sometimes this use of international instruments that seem to irk the Botswana government (Saugestad 2001). Officially, in Botswana, the Khoisan are called Basarwa, a term that is considered derogatory by the ethnic groups themselves. This term 'Basarwa' could be deduced from the phonology of the Setswana language, in which the *-rwa* should be considered a phonological evolution from the Bantu *-Twa*, meaning 'pygmy' or hunter-gatherer. This *-twa* is also found in the designation of the cardinal point of south in Setswana, "bo-rwa". It can therefore be further deduced that there was an intermediary stage when there was "Ba-Rwa", Southerners, and later, "Ba-sa-Rwa", "people of the despicable manners of the Southerners". This would then not make "Basarwa" a term that can be rehabilitated for Khoisan as it has the semantic value of the 'Bushmen' or the "uncultured". The Sa-Rwa would therefore be a derogatory designation of what was the "*-Twa*" among Sotho-Tswana. This could explain the continued negative social attitudes towards the Khoisan (Chebanne 2020).

Generally, therefore, the use of the term Basarwa or "Bushmen" in Southern Africa's is no longer regarded part of correct discourse, it is interpreted by anthropologists as having derogatory connotations (Hitchcock and Biesele 2000; Barnard 1988). In Botswana, the term "Basarwa" was adopted officially (Batibo 2000 and Batibo 1998), but among the communities there is no unanimity of its usage. Therefore, this explains current and continued use of conventional generic term, "Khoisan" that equates to what some regional countries call "Basarwa" (San) (cf Cassidy *et al.* 2001:1) with reference to people coming from hunter-gatherer lifestyle, and should not be construed as a single community, linguistically and ethnically (Güldemann and Vossen 2000; Traill 1986). The San or the Bushmen communities (and these labels, historically, refer to cultural practices of hunter-gathering), have had relationship with other inhabitants of the subcontinent, both Black (Bantu and Nama) and White, that have always been difficult and tragic (Boden 2007). Bushmen were exterminated by both White and Black settlers (Mokhtar 1990), who often regarded them as little more than pests: at best, they were exploited as slave labor (Boden 2009; Chebanne 2020; Thapelo 2002). In the process, the Bushman population as a whole was decimated, and entire groups eradicated (Riaan de Villiers, quoted from Paul Weinberg 1997:7).

In Botswana, speakers of Khoisan languages are called "Basarwa". The term "Basarwa" to designate Khoisan speech communities appears in early ethnographers and anthropologists' writings (Dornan 1917) to denote what was variably called "Bushmen" and later Khoisan (Schapera 1930). The terms "San", "Bushmen" and "Basarwa" have been used to refer to people with a long history of hunting and gathering in southern Africa (Weinberg 1997). As Vossen (1998:18) observes, "Sarwa" is a cover term...so we do not know which particular 'Sarwa' group or dialect is referred in each case".

Consequences of Mismanagement of Ethnic Socio-cultural Affairs by Government Policies

In his pioneering research, on the fate of minority Languages in Botswana, Batibo (2000 and 1997) described a situation where the Khoisan lose everything, culture, language, and identity, and they assimilate into the mainline society. Ten years later (Batibo 2010) clearly demonstrated that the Khoisan were fighting a losing battle and were losing their identity. He made this conclusion assessing the impact of mother-tongue education advocacy in a hostile environment in Botswana.

This hostile environment is the one that refuses to treat Khoisan languages as languages and their culture as anything that could be promoted or feature in the curriculum (Chebanne and Kewagamang 2020; Chebanne and Moumakwa 2017). This tragic and pitiful situation has resulted in Khoisan (San/Basarwa) relocated to settlements (Maruyama 2018) where they could be assimilated as they are brought into the mainline society without any defences to protect their languages and cultures (Chebanne 2015:136). As history has shown, the Khoisan relationship to other inhabitants, both Black and White, has been and will always be difficult and tragic (Chebanne 2020; Batibo 2010; 2000; 1997; Villiers 1997). The Khoisan indigenous communities were exterminated by both White European and Bantu settlers, who often regarded them as little more than vermin: at best, they were exploited as slave labour as the following quotation illustrates:

The Tswana people (society) included the Kgalagadi tribe and the Bushmen, who lost their own land in the slave class.... The Bushmen were put in the lowest class even under the Kgalagadi. It should be pointed out that the root of various problems Bushmen are facing these days is traced to the traditional class-based social structure of the Tswana (Osaki 2001:34).

This tragic situation is perpetuated in a country that purports to uphold democracy and human rights (Nyati-Ramahobo 2002). The following quotation further illustrates some of the consequential situations that these Khoisan groups have experienced in the recent history of regional countries such as Botswana where social policy maintained historical and cultural attitudes of the conqueror:

In the process, the Bushman [Khoisan] population as a whole was decimated, and entire groups eradicated (Riaan de Villiers, quoted from Paul Weinberg 1997:7).

Those that come from servitude and forced assimilation, adopt the attitude of the oppressors towards other Khoisan groups (Chebanne 2020; Batibo 2010). Assimilated Khoisan ethnic communities in the semblance of the majority society's identity have no tolerance towards those who still maintain Khoisan linguistic and cultural identity (Chebanne 2020; Barnard 1988). This inter-ethnic relation situation is also corroborated by the oral history that Osaki (2001) collected among the G|ui and the G||ana of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR), which clearly shows that the G|ui ethnic community consider itself the real "Bushmen/Basarwa" and that the G||ana are their usurpers and oppressors, in the manner of the Bakgalagadi and Batswana. These are inter-ethnic social attitudes that come into prominence because social policies of development do not empower social-cultural affairs of ethnic communities (Chebanne 2020).

General discussions of issues and a way forward

The foregoing discussions clearly demonstrate that in conditions where population groups irk for living, competition for resources is also one reason that a social group may opt for a small and highly mobile community (Maruyama, 2018). This explains Khoisan (Basarwa,/San) ethnic communities' distribution in the current situation (Maruyama 2018; Chebanne 2008; Weinberg, 1997). But it is also possible that smaller groups with fewer possessions would stand a better chance to escape impactful enemy such as the organized Bantu groups (Chebanne 2020). The root of various problems the so-called Bushmen are facing these days is traced to the traditional class-based social structure of the Tswana (Osaki 2001:34). In their analysis, Ledman (2015:160) also acknowledge that, in many indigenous contexts throughout the world, research has a history of being primarily beneficial to the

majority society, rather than the Indigenous peoples themselves. This, therefore, explains even the policy bias as the research focusing on indigenous issues has functioned to establish and promote the notion of identity that the majority society has (Nyati-Ramahobo 2002 and Ledman 2015).

To redeem the inappropriate development programmes for the Khoisan, who are lumped together as Remote Area Dwellers, the Government has introduced an affirmative action (Diouf and Mmopelwa 2021). This programme is important in that it acknowledges that some communities may remain behind development despite all that could be done for them. It also means that the Remote Area Dwellers programme has some inadequacies that may not be addressed with the programme (Republic of Botswana 2014; 2009; 2000). The remoteness was never a problem, but the generalisation of the remote area dwellers who are culturally and socially not at par was the problem (Maruyama 2018). Without a fundamental ideological shift from the monolithic and hegemonic policy, affirmative action may not necessarily redeem the plight of the Khoisan in Botswana (Chebanne 2020 and Chebanne 2010). Development policies for the Khoisan should focus on what these communities can do better for themselves. The Republic of Botswana (2002) Revised *National Policy on Destitute Persons* is also a testimony that remote area dwellers have also social conditions that are different and are economically stratified. Such policies should, therefore, be based on capacity building than imposing development programmes on communities that cannot readily integrate in the mainline social dynamics (Chebanne 2020; Maruyama 2018; Saugestad 2001).

The described social situation of the San in Botswana confirms the conflict theorists' perspective that social policies will favour the more powerful and exploit or oppress the less privileged members of the society (Stark 2007 and Lenski 1966). It can, therefore, be said that it is the way Khoisan ethnic communities (Bushmen/Basarwa) tend to accommodate themselves to their conditions, whether the conditions entail environmental limitations and opportunities or social ones or imply adaptations to social changes can be relatively permanent, or more commonly (at least until recently), temporary ones (Barnard 1988). To move out of the internal colonial situation that Chebanne (2020) strongly argue against, as such neo-colonial institutions and their policies facilitate marginalization and negligence of ethnic communities' cultural and linguistic affairs. Botswana needs to ensure that a bill of rights and judicial review system is put in place to guarantee minority rights. In this system, all persons – the majority and the minority have their rights to language, culture, territory and all other human rights that individuals may feel entitled to (Nyati-Ramahobo 2002). As has been demonstrated elsewhere, democracy based solely on majority rule does not achieve equity (Saugestad 2001).

As the research by Chebanne (2020) demonstrated, in contact situations minority ethno-linguistic communities such as the Khoisan (or San) become victim of culture and language loss and eventually identity loss as they are assimilated into the mainline society. In that condition, the Khoisan [Basarwa] become victim of progress or development as Ledman (2015) and Bodley (1990) argued for these marginalized ethnic communities. The ideal situation will be what is happening in Namibia where the peculiar situation of the Khoisan is acknowledged as policies are designed to facilitate their cultural and linguistic well-being. Research has shown that where the Khoisan are facilitated to share experiences with communities with similar culture and linguistic affinity, harmonious co-existence is possible, but with pastoralists and other language groups, the Khoisan cannot retain their ethnicity and language for a longer time (Chebanne 2015). Khoisan ethnic communities in Botswana, as the conflict theory (Stark 2007; Lenski 1966) would assess, are pitiful victims of modernity and social and economic programmes, and this situation has been observed elsewhere in Africa (Ledman 2015 and Bodley 1990). Homogenizing social programme predicated on the philosophy of equality as the surface has far-reaching tragic consequences for the Khoisan

who are a social minority. They lose all, their languages, culture and identity. It is like the loss to death (Chebanne 2020 and Chebanne 2015).

A way forward is that Botswana's social development approach since independence (1966) to nation building has largely been neo-colonial towards the Khoisan communities (Chebanne 2020 and Chebanne 2015). Rather than addressing issues of the management of ethnic and cultural concerns, there is an approach of avoiding the recognition of non-Tswana ethnic identities in its development programmes (Nyati-Ramahobo 2002: 17; Chebanne 2000). For instance, the population and housing census do not collect data on ethnicity but language knowledge, even as it is evident that anyone can learn any language outside his or her language community (Chebanne and Kewagamang 2020; Chebanne and Nyati-Ramahobo 2003). The idea is that all are equal and that ethnic identities are not important for the unity of the country or state (Chebanne 2020; Chebanne and Moumakwa 2017). To some extent this generalist development model has been criticized by some scholars (Nyati-Ramahobo 2002; Batibo 2000; 1996; Saugestad 2001) for continuing to foster the myth of Botswana's ethnic homogeneity which evidently leads to mismanagement of ethnic issues especially those of the Khoisan, who are a demographic minority and have no means to assert their existence or presence, politically and developmentally.

Ledman (2015) in his research makes the argument that social development policy research should turn from the mainstream society to pay particular attention to the needs of the marginalized – the Khoisan. This is important as social programmes that have been designed to be national and for the advancement of all on equal basis have not benefited the Khoisan (Saugestad 2001; Cassidy *et al.* 2001). The reasons and arguments that Chebanne and Kewagamang (2020), Chebanne and Moumakwa (2017), and Marxist conflict theorists (Stark 2007 and Lenski 1966) advance are that equality does not entail equity. Khoisan do not engage development programmes on equal terms even as they desire development (Saugestad 2001). For instance, the research of (Cassidy *et al.* 2001) and Maruyama (2018) revealed that destitute programmes benefited people from the mainline society than the San. Indeed, Boko (2002) argued that integrating the Basarwa (San or Khoisan) under Botswana's Remote Area Development Programme (RADP) resulted in marginalisation than in empowerment. All these are clear demonstrations that Khoisan issues are mismanaged and cannot be resolved using current social development policies. Supportive social development policies that can effectively manage ethnic affairs start with true constitutional democratization that individuates and personalize right (Boko 2002).

A call for better strategies is in order. Ledman (2015) calls upon researchers to turning the gaze from the mainline society to the minorities as a way to responding to challenges in the mainstream society and its attitude towards marginalized Indigenous ethnic communities, such as the Khoisan (San/Basarwa). Objective research on Khoisan can positively inform policy on development programmes. On their own, these communities are fighting a losing battle (Batibo 2010), and without a targeted and specific social development policies, the consequences of their future existence are bleak, if not tragic (Chebanne 2015). In their research Barume (2000), Saugestad (2001) and Chebanne (2020 and Chebanne 2010) call upon government to put in place policies that will facilitate these ethnic communities' enjoyment of fundamental rights to culture, land and language, so that they engage development from their own terms, not imposed state decisions. One critical area that can contribute better to social policy management is education, as Chebanne and Kewagamang (2020) have suggested, because it can help to retain Khoisan languages and culture and provide better understanding for engaging modernity and development.

Officially, therefore, Botswana, in its developmental planning model for the society has no

peculiar indigenous people or minorities such as the Khoisan (Basarwa) that may be qualified that way (Chebanne 2020). The country has what the official discourse would qualify purely in terms of access or lack of it to developmental amenities (roads, clinics, water, electricity, and economic participation). A convenient term of “Remote Area Dwellers” is in currency to refer to less privileged communities, who almost always would be the Khoe and the San (Khoisan). However, in areas targeted by government schemes for poverty eradication (Republic of Botswana 2014; 2009 and 2000; Diouf and Mmopelwa 2021) it is these other groups than the Khoisan who eventually succeed to use those resources to their benefit. It is a cultural question because other groups make choices because of common civilizational values (Chebanne 2020:14). There is some unease in Botswana social policy which from independence guided the way social affairs would be handled, and this is theoretically typical of social policies that are designed to exploit and oppress (Stark 2007; Lenski 1966). For the Khoisan, the following excerpt provides clarity:

In 1978, after being renamed the Remote Area Development Programme (RADP), the target of this programme was extended to include not only the San but all people living outside organised villages or settlements. The RADP encouraged these remote-area dwellers, known as RADs, among whom the San were majority, to relocate to government-planned settlements with water supplies, schools, clinics, and income generating projects (Maruyama 2018:179).

Social development policy when they bear on ethnic groups, are mismanaged by design as the country’s political perspective in development is homogeneity (Nyati-Ramahobo 2002), and whether this approach negatively impacts the culture and languages of other communities is not much of a concern (Chebanne 2020; Batibo 2015b; Nyati-Ramahobo 2002; Saugestad 2001). The concerns raised by Barnard (1988) on the pitiful situation of Khoisan ethnic communities’ cultural identity, ethnicity, and marginalization among are persisting (Chebanne 2020), but decades later, and decades to come nothing will redeem these ethnic communities (Batibo 2010; Chebanne 2010; Chebanne 2020). Social policy to manage ethnic affairs requires an ideological and philosophical context where development is democratization (Saugestad 2001), and where social diversity is celebrated as beauty (Chebanne 2010).

When the Botswana *Vision 2016* call on for equality and equity to realise prosperity for all in all social domains, the *Vision 2036* reverts to homogeneity which benefits the majority and therefore hegemony.

Conclusion

The Botswana social policy and its management of ethnic and cultural affairs entrenches neo-colonial tendencies as it accommodates imperialistic tendencies that are contrary to the ideals of democracy, as conflict theorists have predicted. In the situation whereby *Vision 2036* contradicts *Vision 2016* it is not possible that ethnic identity, cultural enjoyment, and language promotion can be realised.

The current situation will continue to be characterized by institutionalized cultural assimilation, that give way to language and culture loss to the detriment of the Khoisan indigenous communities, and this will be happening through social development that generalizes and homogenizes social developments to reflect the mainline society. It is not the number of people but the value of democracy to protect the poor, the powerless, meek and the marginalized minority. No person can socially be left with no right to live his or her life the way he or she wants to identify, cherish culture and language.

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