THE INTERNAL COLONISATION OF THE SAN PEOPLES OF BOTSWANA

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Abstract

This discussion[2] critically examines the socio-cultural and linguistic condition of the San[3] peoples in Botswana from a postcolonial theoretical framework and an internal colonialism perspective. The San come from historical hunter-gatherers existence in southern Africa. The Bantu populations that later arrived systematically encroached into their lands, dominated them and exploited them as serfs. They were forced to abandon their languages, and have largely been assimilated by other dominant groups. Thus, there is nothing, at present that can help them to revitalize their distinct identity; they are, therefore, a highly endangered ethnic group in post-colonial independent Africa. This paper will argue that when the San clamour for language and cultural rights, for land and hunting rights, they express emotions that African societies expressed against European imperialism. It is the thesis of this paper that the socio-political hegemony exerted on the San people by mainline society is analogous to internal colonialism in a post-colonial state.

Keywords: Khoisan, San/Basarwa, marginalised ethnic groups, Botswana ethnic minorities, internal colonialism.

1. Background on Khoisan People and their Linguistic Classification and Identity

The ancestral habitation of the southern Africa sub-continent by hunter-gatherers, who are the modern Khoisan (Basarwa, Bushmen or San) has long been established by archaeologists (Dowson & Lewis-Williams, 1994) and historians (Mokhtar, 1990; Shillington, 1995), anthropologists (Hitchcock, 2002; Schapera, 1930; Dornan, 1917), and also linguists (Güldemann & Vossen, 2000; Köhler, 1981). As far back as the early 20th century, several scholars researched the linguistic and ethnographic distinction of the Khoe and San (Vossen, 1988, 1998, 2013; Barnard, 1992; Köhler, 1981). The combination of term Khoisan (Khoe and San) has, to non-linguists, taken a pejorative connotation often relegating the people to a class of human beings that did not fall into other population classes on the continent (Chebanne, 2002a, 2014; Schapera, 1930). It was only after Schapera (1930) that the term was transformed and given a validity beyond racial and physical characterization. The use of the terms 'Khoi' and 'San' remain complex in academia, as some scholars believe that the people should better be labelled

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2. Portions of this article are based on Chebanne (2014)

3. Used interchangeably with Khoi, Khoe, Khoekhoe, Khoisan, Basarwa, etc. Wherever the terms San, Bushmen, Khoisan, etc., occur, they are used advisedly as there is no suitable term that the speakers themselves accept.

"Khoekhoe" and "Non-Khoekhoe" (Vossen, 1988, 1998, 2013; Traill, 1986).

Regarding the misunderstanding that still exists for the terms "Khoi" and "San", Barnard (1992, p. 7) explains that 'Khoisan' is a cultural and linguistic label (Schapera, 1930; Köhler, 1981). On the one hand, Khoi (in old Nama orthography) or Khoe (in modern Nama orthography) means 'person'. It refers to South African and Namibian peoples who speak particular languages (Nama, !Ora, etc.) and have a pastoral culture (Barnard, 1992; Mokhtar, 1990; Shillington, 1995). On the other hand, San does not refer to any linguistic affiliation; rather, it is a collective term that refers to a diverse array of indigenous groups who speak the many dialects within the Khoisan language family (Barnard, 1992; Saugestad, 2001; Schapera, 1930). Further, it has been noted that the Khoisan groups are names that mean person or peoples: Khoekhoe (people people = real people), Kua (person), Tsua (person), Cua (person), Tu (person), Ju (person) (Traill, 1986). This naming and self-referring system is the basis of their ethnonyms. Linguists and anthropologists have also converged in their genealogical classification of the Khoisan (Hitchcock & Biesele, 2000). Accordingly, the Khoekhoe languages spoken by herders and those spoken by the hunter-gatherer peoples form a "family" of languages.

The generally accepted classification is shown in Figure 1 below:

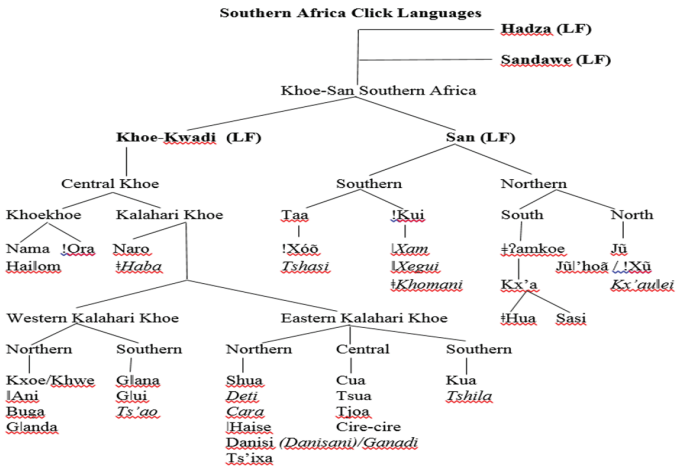

Figure 1: Khoisan languages classification[4]

The above classification confirms the linguistic and genetic diversity of the languages (Köhler, 1981; Traill, 1986). However, as Barnard (1992, p. 11) has submitted, the Khoisan include the Khoekhoe (the Nama, historically referred to as the Hottentots), the Damara (the blacks, Herero-type, who

4. The classification is adapted from Vossen, 1988, 1998, 2013; Güldemann et al., 2000; Chebanne, 2014). In the figure, 1) Khoisan has 5 language families; 2) the abbreviation *lf* stands for language family; and 3) the term 'language family" makes reference to historical linguistic differences that are found between the Khoisan languages. Hadza, which is found in Tanzania has evidence of some connection with Khoisan Southern Africa. Sandawe, also spoken in Tanzania, is now believed to be a vestige of Congo Forest Pygmy languages (Vossen, 2013).

speak a Nama-like language), the Khoe-speaking Bushmen (||Gana; |Gui; Naro, ||Ani, Buga, |Ganda, Kua, Tsua, Shua), and the non-Khoe-speaking Bushmen (!Xóõ, N|u, !Xũ, Ju|'hoasi, ǂHõã).

Figure 2 confirms the historical locations of the San (Khoisan) and their diversity in Botswana:

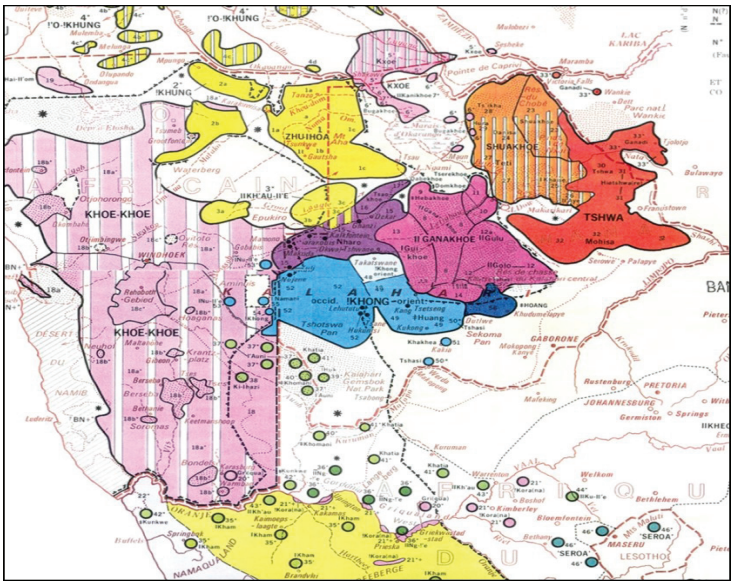

Figure 2: Khoisan peoples' locations in Southern Africa (Köhler, 1981)

Figure 3 shows the Khoisan language distribution across southern African borders:

Figure 3: Khoisan languages as cross-border culture (Kuru Family Organization, 2012)

As Figure 2 shows, Botswana is historically and colourfully Khoisan. There are more Khoisan ethnic groups and associated languages in Botswana than in any other country. Yet there is practically no strategy to preserve these ethnic groups through adequate cultural and linguistic policies. The main reason for this lethargy of not recognising and promoting these groups is that language and cultural identity belong to intangible heritage or third generation rights that even the Botswana Cultural Policy does not capture (Chebanne, 2014, 2015. In this regard, Hamel (1997, p. 2) states,

> Persistent biological metaphors – languages are born, grow, decline, and die – contribute to a general common-sense belief that there is nothing to plan, regulate, or legislate about languages since they exist like living beings whose life cycle is largely resistant to social ordinance ... that language laws as such have had little impact on actual language behaviour ...

This view overlooks the role of language and culture in the life of a people. Language and culture have the social and historical role of identifying a people and giving them the biological reason to live in a given geographical environment (Hamel, 1997; Colchester, 1995a; Chebanne, 2007; Barnard, 1988). Language, culture and land are, therefore, critical in creating a people's identity, and in determining whether they enjoy or do not enjoy human rights (Hitchcock, 2002; Hitchcock, 1993). From the onset of contact with the southward immigrating Bantu population, the Khoisan, who were perceived as culturally inferior, have been assimilated. As Shillington (1995, p. 155) puts it,

> During the [socio-historical] process of expansion ... the Khoisan-speaking hunter-gatherers and specialist pastoralists were gradually absorbed. The presence of the characteristic Khoisan 'clicks' sounds in the southern Nguni and southern Sotho languages is evidence of this process

The social history of the Khoisan in southern Africa responds to issues of internal colonialism that this discussion wishes to pursue. They exist as subalterns, under the mainline ethnic groups, not under their own identity and in their territory (Chebanne, 2014, 2015; Barnard, 1992).

2. The Internal Colonialism of the Khoisan

Howe (2002) discusses internal colonialism as an uneven development in which one group exploits another in a country. The unevenness in development occurs as a result of differences in language, culture, religion, geography, mode of food production, or cultural behaviour. These constitute factors that characterise the differences and inequalities. In Europe, the Gypsy wanderers, the Sami, the Euskaldunak, and Siberians have historically been under internal colonialism. Australian aborigines, Native Americans and Africa's hunter-gatherers are some of the topical internal colonialism cases.

But let us start with some theoretical issues. Piderhughes (2011, p. 235) states that:

> with the demise of Europe's system of direct colonialism, some have rushed to proclaim the death of colonialism and the advent of postcolonialism. In that narrative, colonialism, like its despicable cousin transatlantic slavery, is portrayed as only history. But postcolonial studies go in many directions. They may be anti-colonial or may ignore economic exploitation; they may be too radical or not radical enough; and they may or may not speak for the subaltern (Loomba, 2005, p. 1-6).

Writings on postcolonialism are awash with inconsistencies and confusion; and with problems of definition, scope and validity. Accordingly, Pinderhughes (2011, p. 36) further defines internal colonialism as:

> a geographically-based pattern of subordination of a differentiated population, located within the dominant power or country. This subordination by a dominant power has the outcome of systematic group inequality expressed in the policies and practices of a variety of societal institutions, including systems of education, public safety (police, courts and prisons), health, employment, cultural production, and finance. This definition includes the subordinated population - the colonized -and the land on which they reside within a former settler colony or settler colony system.

The above definition is important in that it focuses on post-modern intellectual discourses that entail responses to, and examinations of, the cultural heirloom of colonialism. In these discourses, post-colonialism covers a set of theories found in many disciplines such as philosophy, political science, human geography, sociology, feminism, religious and theological studies, film and literature. The discourse is geared towards the obliteration of colonial thinking as it manifests in culture, economy and social order (see UKessays.com, 2013). Often, post-colonialism in Africa is not an ideology that deals with extricating Africans from the yoke of colonial legacies. It is sometimes considered as moving from independence to an era of self-rule for a select elite. It has, rarely, been an era of mutual respect and understanding among African people. It does not create a conducive forum for multiple voices of the hitherto downtrodden masses. Importantly, also, it replaces the colonial master and maintains his vices (see Amin, 1969).

African colonialism was most often viewed as an exogenous phenomenon that African people underwent when European and Arab settlers imposed their political dominion and culture on the continent. The consequential effects of the scramble for Africa resulted in: colonial borders which did not respect ethnic and linguistic identities; traditional kingdoms and territorial bounds being disregarded; European customs and laws supplanting those of Africa; African religions being demonised and heathenised; African languages

being regarded as languages of ignorance with spurious claims that they are grammatically deficient; African cultures being regarded as primitive; and most importantly, Africans being rendered strangers in their own lands, as their lands were expropriated by the settlers. Indeed, African colonialism, with its settler ideology, was tragic to Africa because her peoples "did not qualify as subjects of international law" (Barume, 2000, p. 21).

Colonialism in Africa is a logical development from the abolition of slave trade and the creation of independent franchised states of the Americas. It was initially and essentially concerned with land resources and economic gains from conquered or claimed lands. Through colonialism, Africans became slaves in their lands. The exploitation of the Africans for labour and the exploitation of their lands for natural and agricultural resources created economic fortunes for the settler powers (Colchester, 1995b, pp. 10-11). Some European states such as Belgium, Portugal, France, and Spain intended that the claimed territories become extensions of their territories and that the indigenous populations become assimilated to their different national cultures (Bodley, 1990).

When the colonial socio-political conditions became unbearable, many African countries started liberation struggles which culminated in independence after the Second World War. In many instances, however, those who led the independence movements were themselves the assimilated, in the case of Mozambique and Angola and even in the French territories. They were people who wanted the political and economic benefits of their countries for themselves. In the British colonies, the educated and, therefore, the assimilated elite also led their countries. In other words, independence did not completely liberate the African mind, culture and language. Instead, neo-colonialism replaced colonialism.

Neo-colonialism is perceived as indirect colonialism; European powers perpetuated their hold economically (Shillington, 1995). It had and continues to have nefarious effects on African populations by maintaining those exploitation mechanisms on rural or uneducated citizens (cf. Bodley, 1990). The educated negotiate land deals with multinationals for natural resources exploitation in the lands occupied by the rural people. Multinationals exploit rural people as cheap labour, and, thus, the colonial cycle, this time, is perpetrated and perpetuated by African elites and governments (Barume, 2000). While for most of the population this pitiful situation is escapable through education and economic power, there are some population groups that remain in the vicious cycle of exploitation. The "indigenous peoples"[5] of Africa (Chebanne, 2014; Barume, 2000), are internally colonised. This label will be discussed further when some of the communities are identified.

This discussion, therefore, intends to argue that there are instances of internal colonialism in some African states. Unlike exogenous colonialism,

5. This concept, "indigenous peoples", is used advisedly to refer to those African ethnic communities that have remained in autochthonous modes of existence. Historically and culturally, they are regarded as primitive by their compatriots (Chebanne, 2014; Barume, 2000).

internal colonialism is endogenous. It affects communities that, for socio-cultural and economic reasons, have not benefited from the advancement that came with political and economic liberation that other citizens obtained after colonialism (Shillington, 1989). In southern Africa, such people are the BaTwa of the Congo, the Maasai of the Great Lakes/plains in East Africa, and the Khoisan of southern Africa (Barume, 2000; Chebanne, 2012). The word "Sarwa" derives from Twa in reference to the Congo BaTwa (Dornan, 1917). In Botswana, the term "Basarwa(s)" has been used to replace Khoisan and "Bushmen" (Dornan, 1917; Schapera, 1930). The labels "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, p. 18) observes, "Sarwa is a cover term ... so we do not know which particular Sarwa group or dialect is referred to in each case".

3. Aspects of the Internal Colonisation of the Khoisan in Botswana

The internal colonisation of the Khoisan ethnic communities can be discussed with respect to land ownership, language and cultural identity (Howe, 2002; Nyati-Ramahobo, 2002; Saugestad, 2001; Barume, 2000). In discussing the land and identity of the Khoisan, the main question has always been: "Are the Khoisan the only indigenous people?" (Saugestad, 2001, p. 52) (see also Hitchcock, 2002). The UN's International Labour Organization definition of "indigenous" is clearly articulated in Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political rights (UN ILO online). This text recognises that in various nations, there may be minorities that require protection because of their peculiar cultural, language and religious circumstances (Saugestad, 2001). In Africa, minority status has always been a problem, as the minority communities have been dominated by majority native settlers. The post-independence attitude has been that both the majority and minority groups are homogenous and that their socio-political situations are similar. In this situation, the idea of internal colonisation was not conceivable (Barume, 2000; Colchester, 1995a).

"Indigenous" as it is currently used is even more problematic from the historical and socio-political perspective. Ethnographically, it may refer to geographical autochthons or aboriginals, depending on the chronology of settlement or colonization (Eide, 1985). Thus, after independence, the term became ambiguous and its use confusing. This confusion led to an attempt to provide a working definition of who is indigenous in an African context. According to Saugestad (2001, p. 43), acknowledging Article 27 in the UN Charter, indicates that they:

- Have prior presence in the territory in question;
- Are subjugated and subjected to governance systems which alienate them from their culture, language, and religious practices;
- Have a traditional or cultural adaption to modes of subsistence using peculiar means of production that are different from those of the

majority that subjugate them;
- Have aspirations of maintaining their identity – habits, language, and culture different from those of their neighbours or their subjugators.

These factors define indigenous people as "first-comers" who maintain a peculiar life-style and who are exploited by subsequent settler communities. In arguing this position, Barume (2000, p. 32) indicates that indigenous peoples as the

> original occupants or prior inhabitants of a given land, who have become marginalized after being invaded by colonial powers or invaders who settled there and are now politically dominant over earlier occupants. Typical examples are the Indians of the Americas, the Aborigines of Australia, the Maori of New Zealand, the Inuit of Alaska, the Khoisan peoples of Southern Africa.

The African ruling elites, who wrestled power from colonial masters, do not accept that they could be practising internal colonisation on other Africans (Chebanne, 2002b, 2014). Some of the reasons for the denial are that the ruling class are Africans and that as Africans they have equal rights to land with any other population regardless of its purported prior settlement status. Chebanne (2002b, pp. 3-4) argues as follows:

> While the colonial discourse considered all black Africans (Khoe and San people included) indigenous, at independence, all African countries without exception proscribed the term because 1) it bore some colonial stigma; 2) if used, it could imply that some African communities had ancestral and historical rights to territories which were occupied by other African communities earlier in their history. In Botswana, saying the Khoe and San are indigenous would imply that there is recognition that they were here earlier and therefore they would be the rightful owners of the territories that make up the country of Botswana.

It is a historical fact that speakers of Khoisan languages are considered to be the later Stone Age hunter-gatherers (Mokhtar, 1990; Dowson & Lewis-Williams, 1994), and are thought to have been the direct ancestors of the Khoisan-speaking peoples who still inhabit some of the more remote desert regions of Namibia and Botswana (Shillington, 1995). Their physical traits and colour have also been debated biological, historical and anthropological issues. As Shillington (1995, pp. 34-35) puts it:

> They [Khoesan hunter-gatherers] are shorter and lighter-skinned than the black negroid peoples of central and western equatorial Africa. From linguistic and archaeological evidence, it seems that in the Later Stone Age times they lived right across the [Southern Africa] region. The practice of herding sheep and making pottery seems to have reached them from the early Bantu-speakers of western Zambia and Angola.

According to Hitchcock (2002) and Cassidy et al. (2001), the arguments that can be made about the Khoisan in Botswana is that their socio-historical status has always been one of inferiority and servitude. Exploited economically and socially, they have become assimilated into the cultures of the dominant groups (Hitchcock, 1993; Cliffe & Moorsom, 1980). As a result, they have lost their identity. This negative view of the San is dominant in numerous academic publications. Further analysis on their cultural heritage, as Saugestad (2001), Suzman (2001) and Wily (1982) have argued, may help to present them positively as contributors to the knowledge economy in the 21st century southern Africa.

4. Botswana's Socio-Political System as an Internally Colonising Agent

The pre-colonial, colonial and the post-colonial handling of the Khoisan as a minority group in Botswana is amply discussed by Bennett (2002). He argues that in the country's socio-political order the Basarwa occupy the position of serfs (cf. Chebanne, 2010; Cassidy, et al., 2001; Schapera, 1930). In this social order, the Basarwa did not even qualify to be members of a ward in a *morafe* (tribe) and, therefore, their rights in Tswana tribes were not recognised (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2002). How this situation of serfdom of the Basarwa developed is historically not clear, but, as anthropological studies suggest, it may be linked to agro-pastoralists' encroachment on the hunter-gatherers' lands (Barnard, 1992). Also, historically, the land use and ownership patterns of the Khoisan generally differed (still differs) from those of the agro-pastoralists who make material claim to the land they use. As Barnard (1992, p. 240) observes:

> In more recent times, states (first colonial and later national ones) have exerted pressure through redefining the areas in which Bushmen may live and what activities they may engage in. There have been anomalies in Botswana. The most obvious is the Central Kalahari Game Reserve. This was established in 1958 for protection of the Bushmen; but in the 1980s its designation as "game reserve" as opposed to a tribal territory, led to pressure from European wildlife organizations, as well as the authorities in Botswana, to empty the area of its human inhabitants.

Undoubtedly, this conduct is comparable to the colonial means by which people were disposed of their land in favour of what the settlers deemed economically viable or appropriate for the cause of the colony (see also Cliffe & Moorsom, 1980). Barume (2000, p. 20) reasons that the "contemporary situation of African indigenous peoples is shaped by the African political environment which since colonial times has refused to acknowledge communities' rights to existence as peoples".

Following Cliffe and Moorsom (1980), Chebanne (2014) has affirmed, the Khoisan communities in Botswana are an internally colonised group. The policies of the nation have adverse consequences for them. For instance, they

do not qualify as an independent tribe with rights to live in a land that could be designated as tribal territory (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2002; Bennet, 2002; Barume, 2000). They can only be allocated land that is under the control of other recognised tribes (Saugestad, 2001). Land that is occupied by communities that do not fall within what is defined by Act 2 of the Botswana Constitution (1966) is regarded as *terra nullius* (no-man's land). The land they claim, the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR), is now considered a game and tourism preserve. In effect, the land is considered unoccupied or as having an inactive or virgin status. As Barnard (1992: 241) aptly argues:

> The problem with recent notions of land rights in southern Africa is that the technicalities of feudal land tenure, and with them the doctrine of aboriginal possession in natural law (as interpreted by Roman Dutch theorists), have generally been discounted, in favour of a notion of the state as supreme authority.

Accordingly, the Botswana government can dictate the tribe under which the Khoisan community should fall. Consequently, the CKGR communities were divided and assigned to the Bakwena, Bangwato and the Bakgalagari tribes in the 1990s and 2000s. No ethnic community under the Tswana tribe can be subjected to this division and dispossession (Bennett, 2002; Hitchcock, 2002; Thapelo, 2002; Barnard, 1992). For the Khoisan communities, it seems that the country is against any process that would enable them to build tribal entities or constitute an identifiable ethnic group similar those of the Barolong in the Ngwaketse dominated Southern District and the Bakgatla ba ga Mmanaana in the Kweneng District (Nyati-Ramabobo, 2002). They can, therefore, not hold tribal land rights, as hunting and gathering do not lead to land rights (see Saugestad, 2001).

Barume (2000, p. 23) is of the firm view that:

> The second strategy for achieving maximum and easy access to resources required the use of force to crush any attempt at resistance. People were forced to leave their villages to be integrated into more heterogeneous groups, located alongside the routes of exploitation such as railways, roads or rivers…

The claims in the above quotation are not unlike what the Khoisan have experienced and continue to experience (cf. Mogwe & Tevera, 2000). Nyati-Ramahobo (2002), when discussing the question of ethnic identity and nationhood in Botswana, presents figures (Census Botswana Reports of 2001, 2011; Statistics Botswana, 2015) of existing ethnic communities and languages. Yet the country operates on the model of one national language, Setswana, and a foreign language, English. All other ethnic languages are disregarded. This disregard of other languages is the consequence of a socio-political ideal which seeks to reflect Botswana as a homogenous nation in which ethnic identities would vanish or lose import (Chebanne, 2014; Nyati-Ramahobo, 2002).

When one argues against this situation and agitates for an inclusive

dispensation in Botswana, the person is immediately branded a tribalist (cf. Bennett, 2002; Nyati-Ramahobo, 2002). This is similar to the strategy employed by colonial powers in Africa and elsewhere. As Berghe (1975, pp. 14-15) cited in Barume (2000, p. 23) observes, "... the colonial regime ... was absolutely opposed to any process ... which identified ethnic groups ... Primitivism was attached to the notion of ethnicity ...". While bigger and better organised ethnic groups were resilient under colonialism, the same cannot be said of the Khoisan communities whose small numbers and social organisations appear not to be as sophisticated as other African societies (Barnard, 1992; Cliffe & Moorsom, 1980).

5. Lack of Rights to Land, Culture and Language as Internal Colonisation

Some of the detrimental effects of internal colonisation of the Khoisan have been in the way that their environment, land, culture and language rights have been eroded in their interaction with the mainline society (Hitchcock, 1993, 2002). In a democracy, such rights should be the universal values that define freedom and dignified living (Cliffe & Moorsom, 1980). However, these rights and values do not seem to apply to the Khoisan in Botswana. Villiers (1997, p 8) observes that:

> In Botswana, regarded as the Bushmen's last sanctuary, the situation is equivocal ... Several Bushmen groupings have lost their land completely; among them are the Nharo of western Botswana, whose hunting grounds have been entirely colonised by cattle farmers

A San youth, Kuela, in his book: *Tears for my land* (2010), laments that nothing has changed for the good for his people, as they are landless, tribeless, and, therefore, considered as informal settlers in the commercial cattle ranching areas of the Ghanzi District of Botswana where they are exploited for cheap labour (Thapelo, 2002; Cassidy et al., 2001).

However, there exists a practical and human rights solution from neighbouring countries that can be used to resolve San problems in Botswana. For example, South Africa has made an attempt to redress the historical mistreatment of the San. One example is that the ǂKhomani San won a claim in 1999 that provided them with 38, 000 hectares of farming land that was taken away from them during the 1930s. The historic nature of the event was captured by South Africa's former president, Thabo Mbeki, who announced that the victory marked a step towards the rebirth of a people that nearly perished because of oppression and exploitation (Wilmsen, 2002). Mbeki's positive conceptualisation of African Renaissance embraces the San.

Legally, Botswana's constitution does not allude to third generation rights and does not facilitate social development within a framework of ethnic, cultural and historical land rights (Chebanne, 2014; Bennett, 2002; Nyati-Ramahobo, 2002; Barnard, 1988, 1992). Otherwise, the dispossession

of Khoisan land would not have arisen. To their credit, the British had actually envisaged creating a community for the Basarwa, but this was overtaken by events. Mogwe and Tevera (2000, p. 79) note as much:

> Of significance here is the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR) which is classified as State Land. At its creation on 14 February 1961, it was Crown Land. In its attempts to justify the establishment of the CKGR, the Bushman Survey Officer of the Protectorate Government, a certain Silberbauer, argued that the Game Reserve CKGR would be earmarked for use and occupation by the Basarwa people who had been living in the area for generations. This was consistent with official policy since other parts of the Bechuanaland Protectorate were being recognised as Native Reserves for tribes from dominant Tswana-speaking groups. By 1961, only eight of the twelve "tribal territories" had been recognized by the Colonial Administration.

The notion of Khoisan ethnic communities holding or owning land in Botswana appears to be an outrage (Villiers, 1997; Chebanne, 2014). It is generally thought that since they are neither cattle nor crop farmers, land granted to them would be of no value and would not contribute to any development (Cliffe &. Moorsom, 1980). Even where land can effectively be demarcated for them, the greedy elites will not even permit it. Mogwe and Tevera, (2000, p. 83) note, once again, that:

> In 1987, the Gantsi District Council attempted to utilize three freehold ranches for the benefit of the Basarwa but the then District Commissioner opposed the development. Similarly, when some NGOs were requested to develop the farms on behalf of the District Council for the benefit of the Basarwa, Central Government intervened on grounds that such involvement of NGOs was not acceptable. To date, Central Government and District Council have not been able to develop the farms. The underlying controversy about the reluctance of the District Commissioner to have the farms developed was that he and the Minister were interested in the farms.

Botswana's approach to nation building since independence has been to avoid the recognition of non-Tswana ethnic groups in its development programmes (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2002; Chebanne, 2002; Hitchcock, 1993). For instance, the population and housing census does not collect data on language or ethnicity (Statistics Botswana, 2015; Chebanne & Nyati-Ramahobo, 2003). This approach has been criticized by some scholars (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2002; Saugestad, 2001) for continuing to foster the myth of Botswana's ethnic homogeneity. Since 1978, the government has used the term "Remote Area Dwellers" to refer to people, the majority of whom are San, living in small communities in the remote and geographically distant areas (Saugestad, 2001; Cassidy, 2001). A Remote Area Dweller Programme

(RADP) revised in 2009 (Botswana Government, 2009) was established to address the needs of those who tend to be very poor, with no or inadequate access to land and water, and who are culturally and linguistically distinct. Saugestad (2001, 2004) has described such communities as having egalitarian political structures, but that are silent politically. Sometimes, the equality that is spoken about in official circles is not necessarily equity (Chebanne & Moumakwa, 2017). It only implies willingness to become similar to the mainline society. So people from the Khoisan communities can only be equal to the mainline society if they are assimilated (Chebanne, 2002a, 2002b, 2014; Nyati-Ramahobo, 2002). Thus, the Khoisan cannot have their own identity, but must assume a different identity altogether (Bennett, 2002; Nyati-Ramahobo, 2002).

The revision of the Remote Area Dweller Programme was an acknowledgement that a large proportion of the San are still facing abject poverty, insecure access to land resources, discriminatory treatment, marginalisation, and negative identity constructs (Hitchcock & Holm, 1993; Hitchcock, 2002; Thapelo, 2002; Cassidy et. al., 2001; Cliffe & Moorsom, 1980). These problems are compounded for the majority of the San in the Ghanzi and Kgalagadi districts by high unemployment, high rates of illiteracy, teenage pregnancy, high school dropouts, and excessive alcohol consumption, lack of access to health services and language communication barrier (Kuru Family Organisation Report, 2012). Recently, the government introduced a ten-year Affirmative Action Plan for the benefit of Remote Area Dwellers, thereby acknowledging that the San lag behind the rest of the country in terms of poverty. The intention is to establish a broad poverty strategy in which Remote Area Communities have an input (Sebudubudu & Bolaane, 2013).

6. Education as an Agent of Internal Colonisation

The Botswana education system recognises only English and Setswana as languages of education. All the children of various ethnic groups are required to use these two recognized languages on their first day of school (Botswana Government, 1994). While in Botswana policies of equal access are talked about, the lack of use of ethnic languages in education at an early stage testifies to inequity and inequality (Chebanne & Moumakwa, 2017). Consequently, the equality of access to education in Botswana is a myth as it assimilates other speech communities (Chebanne, 2015). This practice is perpetuated even by the language use policy in Botswana, a vague constitutional formulation that is deduced from various constitutional texts and administrative practices that indicate that English is a requirement in communicating official matters and that Setswana is a national language (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2002; Chebanne, 2002, 2015; Chebanne & Moumakwa, 2017). English together with Setswana is predominantly the medium of instruction, even from the first years of education. There is utter silence on other languages which do not have any role in education. Children from disregarded language communities arrive

at school not knowing the two languages of schooling ((Nyati-Ramahobo, 2002; Chebanne, 2015).

Education for Khoisan children is, therefore, an assimilating agent (Chebanne & Moumakwa, 2017). When they graduate from the education system, Khoisan children would have lost their languages, cultures and identities (Chebanne, 2015). As Botswana is a multilingual and multicultural society, the country should promote its multiculturalism and multilingualism as resources not problems (Chebanne, 2010). This promotion should not be abstract; it should be a concrete way to celebrate the rights of its diverse ethnicities (Chebanne, 2015; Nyati-Ramahobo, 2008). If it does not do so, then the country would be practising internal colonisation through education. Language and culture rights are human rights. When these rights are brought into the classroom, across the curriculum, children will relate to education as a right (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2008). Mother tongue education based on a multilingual framework and an ethno-culture curriculum for all language communities will make for the preservation of the Khoisan and their languages (Chebanne, 2015). Although multicultural education cannot be an absolute panacea for the already tragic socio-cultural situation of the Khoisan, nevertheless, Botswana must seriously consider social development models that refuse internal colonialism and that recognise the relevance and utility of other ethnic groups' presence in the country (Chebanne, 2010, 2014, 2015).

7. Consequences of the Internal Colonisation for the Khoisan

As Hitchcock (1993) argues, the San (or Basarwa) have lost a great deal over the years; currently, their ancestral environment has changed, their land has been deployed for other uses and their culture has been lost. In other words, the internal colonisation of the Khoisan has had tragic consequences for their existence as distinct ethnic and linguistic group. According to Chebanne and Moumakwa (2017, p. 80),

> Education is not just opening the admissions ajar for all to come in, as equals, but providing an equitable learning environment that every learner would find welcoming and relevant in life. Mother tongue education is the one important way to ensure that every learner finds less traumatizing learning experiences in education. Therefore, when one is seized with defining the objectives, outlines and the conditions of success of an education policy, the issues of equality, equity and quality are ever present, and equity is primordial.

As Barnard (1992) has also observed, hegemonic influences that are facilitated by the state in education and social policy cause minority languages' endangerment and death (Batibo, 1998; Chebanne, 2015). Botswana, as yet, has no legal and social guarantees that such tragedies would cease (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2002). Botswana has always escaped the scrutiny of Human Rights Organisations of the United Nations because of her apparent non-

racial ideology, widely acclaimed democracy, and concomitant freedoms enshrined in the Constitution. These provisions, however, have not offered the protection that the Khoisan direly need (Chebanne, 2010, 2015).

Botswana's Vision 2016, *Towards prosperity for all* (Botswana Government, 1998), is at best an idealistic compendium with statements such as "an educated and informed nation", "a tolerant, just and caring nation", "respect for linguistic and cultural diversity" and "a prosperous and innovative nation". A closer look at the vision reveals an illusion that perpetuates the socio-political status quo (Chebanne, 2006). Indeed, if the factors that define human rights are applied to the Constitution and Vision 2016, Botswana would easily trail the constitutions of Zimbabwe that recognises all linguistic and cultural rights (Government of Zimbabwe, 2013), South Africa which recognises all the ethnic groups and 11 languages (though Hindi which is spoken in Durban by over a million people is not included) and cultures and rights to land Government of South Africa (South Africa, 1994) and Namibia which recognises the ethnic, linguistic and cultural equality of its people and provides for their expression and manifestation in all national media and education systems (Government of Namibia, 1990). Saugestad (2001) correctly reflects the Khoisan situation by discussing their plight as "The inconvenient indigenous", and this attitude is demonstrated in many of Botswana's policies (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2002).

The question of which rights are important and fundamental has always characterised the debate in Botswana (Saugestad, 2001) and elsewhere (Eide, 1985). Botswana has always favoured liberty-oriented civil and political rights (freedom of speech, etc.). However, new constitutions in Africa recognise the social and economic rights that protect citizens from being deprived of basic necessities and elementary rights and that protect their social, cultural and linguistic identities. In Botswana, internal colonial attitudes have manifested themselves in the unwillingness of the government to grant mother tongue education rights to the Khoisan (Chebanne, 2014, 2015; Kamwendo et al., 2009). Without their languages codified and kept alive through formal instruction, the languages will surely die (Batibo, 1998; Chebanne, 2010, 2015). Neglect of language, culture and territorial rights are classical colonial methods to deny people their identity and to erode their sense of self-worth. Many African liberation movements fought against this colonial ploy, but they seem to have not understood cultural, linguistic and territorial values (Barume, 2000; Colchester, 1995a & 1995b).

In Botswana, the problem of internal colonialism has been exacerbated by the expropriation of ancestral land from the Khoisan communities (Barnard, 1992; Chebanne, 2014; Saugestad, 2001). The question of securing land rights for the San has been identified in various fora, including conferences and seminars, both national and international, as critical to their survival (Ng'ong'ola, 1997; Saugestad, 2004; Mogwe & Tevera, 2000). The Botswana government-initiated resettlement of the San outside the boundaries of the 581,730 square km CKGR in 1997 and 2001 has attracted

a lot of international debate. The High Court in Lobatse ruled in favour of the San applicants on the 13th of December, 2006 (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2006). This conferred on them the right to be recognised by the nation as a group that has ethnic rights, especially linguistic and cultural. In other words, their participation in socio-cultural activities of the nation can neither be diminished nor relegated to irrelevance. Regrettably, the country is not yet there (Chebanne, 2006).

The Botswana Tribal Land Act (Act 2) (Botswana Government, 1968) allocates land to different tribes according to territorial considerations enacted during the establishment of the Bechuanaland Protectorate. Only the eight tribes were registered as having tribal reserves in which a symbolic autonomy was practised (Bennett, 2002). The Khoe, San, Wayeyi, Bakalanga, Hambukushu, Herero, Nama, Subiya, and many others were included under the ethnic groups by whose name the tribal reserves were labelled. Therefore, administratively, they formed single entities with those ethnic groups that "had" land. Since all the recognised ethnic groups are Setswana speaking, the other ethnic groups under them were required to adopt the linguistic and cultural identities of the different Setswana speaking groups (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2002; Bennett, 2002).

It is instructive that Namibia and South Africa are the only countries that seem to have creatively freed themselves from the colonial and neo-colonial dominance of other ethnic groups by one or two main groups (Chebanne, 2014). Botswana, an independent and sovereign nation, which, to all intents and purposes, desires to uphold democratic ideals and values, seems not to be aware of how damaging to the existence and identity of the Khoisan its current socio-political policies are (Chebanne, 2014; UKessay.com, 2013). A mono-ethnic appeal to develop a national entity, as in the case of European nations, is not something that an African country can use for nation-building (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2002). The idea of resolving ethnic diversity by creating heterogeneous tribal entities where the recognised *merafe* are given authority to rule and decide the fate of other ethnic communities is not fair and does not make those surrogated communities free (Chebanne, 2002a; Saugestad, 2001).

Some advocacy groups have not been helpful to the cause of the Khoisan, as they have romanticised their identities and rights (Chebanne, 2010). Khoisan ethnic communities, like other human communities, live in a dynamic world that is constantly changing. They are capable of adapting when the socio-political and economic conditions are right (Barume, 2002). However, the general social development strategies that Botswana has put in place are not suitable for the enjoyment of Basarwa culture, land and language rights (Chebanne, 2014, 2015). As Pinderhughes (2011) has argued, the intractability of the internal colonialism problem calls for long-term insights, repeated assessments and re-assessments, and complex solutions, not merely a try-it-once-and-switch approach. Therefore, Botswana should consider and answer these UNCHR third generation human rights questions

in order to provide solutions to the Basarwa problem:

- Can the idea of human dignity for everyone everywhere help with the implementation of human rights, through progressive measures?
- Can it enable the vision of human rights to become a common standard of achievement for all people and nations?
- Can the idea of human dignity help reconcile competing human rights claims, and resolve tensions with other important national and social interests?
- Can the idea of human dignity provide insight into the nature of dignitary harms and identity politics in the midst of the conscience wars? (UNCHR, 2018).

Ethnic communities' linguistic and cultural rights are human rights (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2002, 2008). Such communities must enjoy the dignity of having their own unique identities; and of being respected as communities with their languages and cultures promoted in all spheres of their lives. Regrettably, the matter of human rights is still topical in the 21st Century in Botswana (Chebanne, 2010, 2015; Nyati-Ramahobo, 2002). Presently, there is no single policy of the nation that guarantees that Khoisan/Basarwa communities will continue to exist as themselves – a dignified human community with its linguistic and cultural identity (Chebanne, 2014, 2015). Indeed, for the Khoisan in Botswana, there are not many options for their survival.

> It is the manner in which Bushmen tend to accommodate themselves to their conditions, whether the conditions entail environmental limitations and opportunities or social ones. Adaptations to social changes can be relatively permanent, or more commonly (at least until recently), temporary ones (Barnard, 1988, p 12).

In contact situations among the ethno-linguistic communities that share a similar culture and linguistic affinity, harmonious co-existence is possible, but with pastoralists and other language groups, the Khoisan may retain their ethnicity and language for some time. However, eventually their languages will die and indemnities dissipate (Chebanne, 2010, 2015). This situation has also been lamented by anthropologists such as Hitchcock (1993) whose research found that the change of San people' s environment, occasioned by political development, which limits them access to their traditional resources, are factors that endanger and impoverish. All sorts of rights of the Khoisan (the Basarwa) have thus been infringed upon when they are governed from an internal colonialism perspective. Basarwa, the San, or the Khoisan, form a class of exploited and impoverished communities whose once pristine ecology has been demolished by new economic forces (Cliffe, & Moorsom, 1980).

8. Conclusion

In Botswana, internal colonialism is a practice that fails to recognise the fundamental rights of the Basarwa to land, culture, and their unique identity. This is a strong indication of the failure of democracy in Botswana. In brief, Botswana's socio-political model of governance on ethnic issues cannot preserve the Khoisan. The land issue for Khoisan communities cannot be ignored. The scheme of the policy makers to have the communities absorbed into settlements where they will lose their cultural identities as the Khoisan should not be used as a development option, as this constitutes an internal colonisation model. It is necessary to acknowledge that the Basarwa have been short-changed in Botswana's development agenda. They are increasingly and forcibly being de-Khoisan-ised, rendered paupers, and made to exist as dependants. This is a barbaric way of dealing with a human community, especially as ethnocide is tantamount to homicide. The dignity that the Basarwa need is that which will ensure their existence and the preservation of their ethnic, linguistic and cultural rights, like all other African communities after Western colonisation.

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