

The San of the “Central Kalahari Game Reserve”: Can nature be protected without the indigenous San of Botswana?

Andy Chebanne¹ and Eric Glon²

Abstract

Historically, San people have occupied the territory that is now referred to as the Central Kalahari Game Reserve. In this semi-desert area, they have, over generations, adapted to the dry environment and learnt to survive from its natural resources. The geography of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR) compelled the San to develop indigenous knowledge systems that ensured their survival in this harsh environment. Recently, the San were forcibly relocated from the Central Kgalagadi Game Reserve, which is considered their historical land and a place that ensures the preservation of their indigenous knowledge and ancient cultures. Their removal from the CKGR means that their indigenous knowledge, cultures and livelihoods have been affected. This article problematizes the relocation of the San by asking this question: can nature be protected without the indigenous San? It argues that moving the San to geographical areas that do not help them maintain their survival skills, cultural and ethnic identity is a recipe for the destruction of their culture. The current policy on protecting nature and its biodiversity in the framework of protected area is based on profits that tourism can generate, and not on the protection of the indigenous San and their cultures. In the areas the San have been relocated to, they are made to compete against each other, and with more powerful ethnic groups, for space and resources. The protected areas where they came from thrive with tourism businesses operated by wealthy foreigners. Mining activities have also started there, and this has contributed to Botswana’s image as a leading gem diamond producer in the world. Local indigenous people’s (lack of) participation in these socio-economic ventures signals a paradigm shift in nature conservation. The article concludes by suggesting that if gaining this natural capital depends on economic factors and international commerce, political choices need to be made to ensure the inclusion of the San people in the economic activities taking place in their ancestral lands.

Keywords: Basarwa / San; Central Kalahari Game Reserve; Indigenous people ecology; Tourism; environmental protection; San relocation

¹ Professor, Department of French, University of Botswana. E-mail: chebanne@mopipi.ub.bw

² Université de Lille-sciences et Technologies UFR de Géographie et Aménagement e-mail : eric.glon@univ-lille1.fr

Introduction

The term ‘San’, as currently used in various socio-political literature of Southern Africa refers to communities associated with hunter-gatherer cultures. The term is also used in the sociopolitical discourse to reflect their discrimination and marginalization. “San” does not refer to any linguistic affiliation or identity, but to traditional or autochthonous ways of life (Chebanne, 2010). The label ‘autochthony’ describes communities that in the recent past depended on rudimentary means of existence. They have not yet completely made a transition to modern lifestyles. In Botswana, the indigenous San communities are the only ones that qualify as autochthonous (Chebanne, 2010). While the term autochthonous may be not common in the region and in social policy, it better defines the Khoisan. It also obviates the confusion that often arises when the term “indigenous” is used in Africa. There is a strong position that there is no ethnic group that is more indigenous to Africa than others (Chebanne, op.cit.). The term autochthon was first defined in the 1980 by the UN, and more specifically the High Commissioner for Human Rights (HCHR), following “the invasion” of the land that belonged to indigenous communities:

“...indigenous communities, populations and nations [...] consider themselves different from other segments of the community now prevailing on their territories or parts of those territories. At present, they form non-dominant segments of the society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations, their ancestral territories and ethnic identity, which constitute the basis of their continued existence as people, in accordance with their own cultural models, their social institutions and their legal systems” (Cobo, 1986).

This is the position put forward in 1986 by the rapporteur, José Martínez Cobo, following a study by HCHR (Glocewski, 2007; Battiste & Anderson, 2000). In this study, the Working Group on autochthon populations defends the rights of autochthonous people and their territories. The autochthons’ intimate knowledge of nature was disrupted by decades of rejection of the indigenous communities’ lifestyle. This led to their assimilation into the mainstream society, which resulted in the disappearance of their cultures and ethnic identities. The declaration made by the United Nations Organization (UN) in 2007 on the rights of autochthon people makes reference to these historical injustices and insists on the need to return the lands lost during colonisation, and to grant autochthons access to natural resources in those territories. The San were not only excluded from their historical lands that became protected areas, but also from the management of such (Héritier & Laslaz, 2008). At the same time, the number of protected areas is increasing worldwide (Depraz, 2008; Descola, 2008). It seems that in addition to dispossessions and the socio-economic disadvantages they experienced, the indigenous communities have also suffered in other ways. They have experienced marginalisation of their ethnic and linguistic identities through non-inclusive social policies. These discriminatory policies are contrary to the position adopted elsewhere where indigenous populations are considered as repositories of indigenous cultures and intimate knowledge of nature that need to be preserved.

In such a social policy context, we ask how one can analyse the exclusion of the San that is taking place in the *Central Kalahari* in Botswana. We also interrogate why Botswana is lagging behind when internationally the recognition of the rights of the indigenous peoples seems to signal a new paradigm shift. We also examine the situation of the San, and the reasons of their eviction from their ancestral territory which is the central Kalahari Game

Reserve (CKGR). The question that underlies this discussion is: can nature be protected without the involvement of the indigenous San? This question seeks to understand how one can interpret the eviction of the San from the CKGR while the paradigm of the indigenous communities' participation in protected areas is growing internationally. We argue that it is not possible to say that we can conserve and preserve Botswana's wildlife resources without the involvement and inclusion of the San. We claim that such exclusion constitutes contradiction, and creates resource competition to the detriment of the San whose intimate knowledge of the environment and territorial culture offers very strong particularities, yet does not guarantee opportunities for generating profit for them (see Cassidy, 2001: 25). This paper therefore attempts to address issues that have characterized the actions of the state and the arguments that the UN has upheld to defend indigenous populations of the world.

Methods

This paper is solely based on a review of selective literature about the San and the international documents relating to the protection of indigenous people. It is not a comprehensive literature because the author set out to put forward an argument based on the main question addressed as mentioned above. In the following pages, several subthemes are elaborated on starting with the conservation paradigm as internationally accepted. Then the roles of indigenous people in conservation are looked at before dwelling on specific issues about the San people in the Kalahari.

Protecting nature and indigenous people: A conservation paradigm at the global level

At the international level, measures taken by different stakeholders such as the UN increasingly indicate a growing concern for the rights of autochthons, especially during the 1980s. United Nations documents on indigenous peoples insist on these people's access to their ancestral territories, natural resources found in these territories and to their indigenous knowledge. Indigenous peoples are therefore defined by a territorialised culture that is based on different types of adaptations to the natural environment. UNESCO declared, as early as 1972 that it is necessary to return "this unique and irreplaceable property, to whatever peoples it may belong". The proceedings of the UNESCO conference mention the importance of "safeguarding autochthon cultures" (UNESCO, 1973). The reflections made by the sub-committee of the United Nations within the HCHR led to the creation of a Working Group on autochthon populations in 1982, which became a permanent judicial tool in 2000. The committee was entrusted with creating an inventory of issues pertaining to the evolution of their rights in the world, and to make proposals on this matter. In the meantime, the report entitled "*Our Common Future*" published in 1987 specifies that indigenous people must have access to their lost territories, and to locally organize themselves in order to manage these territories according to their culture. The International Labour Organisation (ILO), which advocates for decent working conditions in the world, also supports the rights of indigenous people. The Organisation, through Convention 169 of 1989, insists on the need to recognize the peculiarity of their cultural and customary practices. The argument made by these advocacy initiatives from the UNESCO and ILO is that defending the link between nature and indigenous cultures is an important undertaking as it gives the indigenous people rights to their ancestral lands and the enjoyment of their cultures.

Designed to combat poverty and exclusion, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) helps indigenous people with economic, environmental and cultural micro-projects. It recognizes vernacular knowledge and the sacred interpretation of indigenous people's relationship with nature, and the importance of their languages in the

transmission of this knowledge (Collignon, 2005; Ingold, 2000). In 2003 UNESCO also recognised the need to protect indigenous people and their cultures within the framework of the Convention on Intangible Heritage of 2006 following the one on Cultural and Tangible Heritage in 1972. The United Nations' declaration on the rights of indigenous people extended these protective measures in 2007. After revoking discriminations and historical injustices to which autochthons were subjected, the UN resolved that indigenous peoples had the right to their territory and cultural re-appropriation, including self-determination. One hundred and forty-three (143) countries supported this declaration which has no decision-making powers and the four opposed countries (the United States, Canada, Australia, and New-Zealand) ended up accepting it. Eleven countries abstained and 34 were not present to participate in the vote. While ecosystems and the ways of life of the indigenous people evolve in highly variable and uneven situations, the question of their condition and their status is increasingly becoming globalised (Gagné *et al.*, 2009).

What role do indigenous communities play in protected areas?

Numerous international texts make reference to the role played by these populations in the protection of the environment and its biodiversity. "The best way to deal with environmental issues is to allow the concerned indigenous communities to participate" (UN Earth Summit, Rio Declaration, page 10) in the affairs of their ancestral lands. This was noted in Principle n° 15 of the Declaration of the Earth Summit organized in Rio de Janeiro by the United Nations Environmental Development Commission (UNEDC) in 1992. The same year, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) admitted that the way of life of the indigenous people contributes to the protection of the environment. Researchers have also argued that the exploitation of natural resources must be subject to equitable benefits sharing so that these populations are not deprived of the resources in their own lands (Wynberg *et al.*, 2009). However, in respect of legislation of countries and their interest, this principle is ignored.

On the initiative of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), a world congress on national parks is held every ten years and brings together NGOs, state representatives, scientists and private and public institutions concerned with protection of nature. The Caracas congress in 1992 agreed with the CBD that policy on protected areas must defend the interests of autochthon people. The Biosphere Reserve, created in 1976, insists on the role of autochthons and that of the local population as a whole in sustainable development initiatives. Just like the Parks Congress with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the World Congress of Nature in Montréal, established in 1996, encourages the establishment of a co-management policy which includes indigenous people in the management of protected areas situated in their lands. In 1999, the IUCN made a proposition on the issue of these populations in regard to their implication on the conservation of nature (IUCN, 1999). These ideas were reproduced in the framework of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (UNEP, 1999). WWF pointed to a link between autochthon territories and areas of great ecological interest in a study published in 2000 (WWF, 2000). In that study, indigenous languages are seen as an essential tool in the transmission of knowledge related to nature. Together, these issues partly explain why a new idea about protected areas appeared during the World Congress of Protected Areas in Durban in 2003. This idea is also social in perspective and places a lot of emphasis on the participation of local and autochthon populations.

If this new paradigm gradually appears within international laws, particularly those related to the UN, it is because countries are also putting in place related co-management

policies. The idea of giving rights to autochthons in their own territories was introduced in the Kaladu Park with Aborigines in Australia in 1979 (Depraz, op. cit.) and further developed in Canada in 1982 and the United States in the early 1990s. It has also been found that establishing nature reserves in the ancestral areas of indigenous people contributed to the disappearance of their cultures (Spence, 2005). So to avoid this, these populations should be involved in the discussions and decisions regarding their cultures and nature. Following the emergence of participatory democracy in the 1960s, indigenous people are increasingly organising themselves to manage their ancestral areas. They continue to struggle for the right to their land (Bacqué, Sintomer, 2011). They are seeking to empower themselves in order to develop projects and make propositions for the development of their communities. But the remaining issue is how far this participation can go, and what importance is given to their initiatives or “empowerment” (Pontig, 1997; Trudel, 2008; Warren, MacCarthy, 2009). Such participation has been found to be incomplete (Héritier, 2010). However, this does not invalidate the fact that the call for the involvement of indigenous people in nature conservation signals a new paradigm in the protection of natural resources, especially wildlife. However, the situation of the San in the “Central Kalahari” Reserve seems to contradict international trends in the approach to the management of protected areas. This is shown in the inexplicable expulsion of the San from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, considering that Botswana signed the UN declaration of 2007.

The San as ‘undesirables’ in the Central Kalahari

Botswana, is a parliamentary democratic state and is presently considered by OECD as “the least corrupt country in Africa” (OECD, 2006) and has had “one of the most dynamic economies in the world for over 25 years” (ibid.). This dynamism relies largely on diamonds, of which Botswana is the world leading producer in terms of value. But this success is accompanied by real difficulties. Apart from the AIDS pandemic, poverty is endemic, especially in rural areas, and particularly among the San, whose population is estimated at about 100 000 in Southern Africa (Deacon & Deacon, 1999) with a population of 8500 in South Africa, 4500 in Angola, small communities in Zimbabwe and Zambia, while Namibia, 35 000. Botswana has 55 000 San people, which is the highest population of the San in any one country in Southern Africa (Wynberg *et al.*, 2009). As hunter-gatherers, the San traditionally lived in the Kalahari, a vast desert of about 900 000 km² that runs from Namibia to the north of South Africa and covers 2/3 of Botswana’s 582 000 km² surface area. This vast plateau is semi-arid, particularly on the side of Botswana, which is why it is dominated by prickly shrubs and acacia savannah and an open forest in the north. Low and irregular rainfall (300 to 400 mm/year), dry season from May to September, the intensity of evaporation and transpiration explain the rarity of surface water. These conditions, combined with sands as deep as 400 metres, explain the slow groundwater recharge. The San have an intimate knowledge of nature in the Kalahari, and this intimate knowledge of this vast sandy area is the reason why they have been able to survive in this harsh environment.

Different San people, organised in scattered groups composed of small numbers of individuals from several families, friends and those admitted as visitors, live by exploiting their natural environment. They depend on what nature offers and on the rhythm of the rainfall. Each group moves within a more or less defined territory bounded by their hunting threshold. Belonging to a group also implies sharing of resources (Barnard, 2007). The relationship of the San and their land is more than just ownership; it is about the right to access a territory and a tacit code of good conduct to satisfy the needs of all. The San can also share their territory or negotiate its boundaries with other groups. This intimate and in-depth

environment-oriented culture, transmitted orally through “clicked” languages, is based on a mental map where spiritual elements are of very great importance. Preserving the territory and its resources constitutes maintaining a link between the San, their ancestors and their gods (Olivier, Valentin, 2005).

The colonial period and the post-colonial Bantu state have strongly reduced the living spaces of the San and their access to certain lands. Because of this displacement and the growing frequency of prohibitions, they are hardly able to pass their culture up to the present generation. For example, in 2009 several San were arrested while bow hunting in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve. This reserve was established in 1961 under the Bechuanaland Protectorate to preserve fauna and allow the San to live according to their traditional practices because their way of life was declining. The CKGR which covers an area of 53 000 km², larger than Switzerland at 40 000 km², has experienced a gradual but systemic removal of indigenous San communities since the 1980’s. The San communities, it seems, are undesirables in their ancestral areas as demonstrated by their eviction from the CKGR.

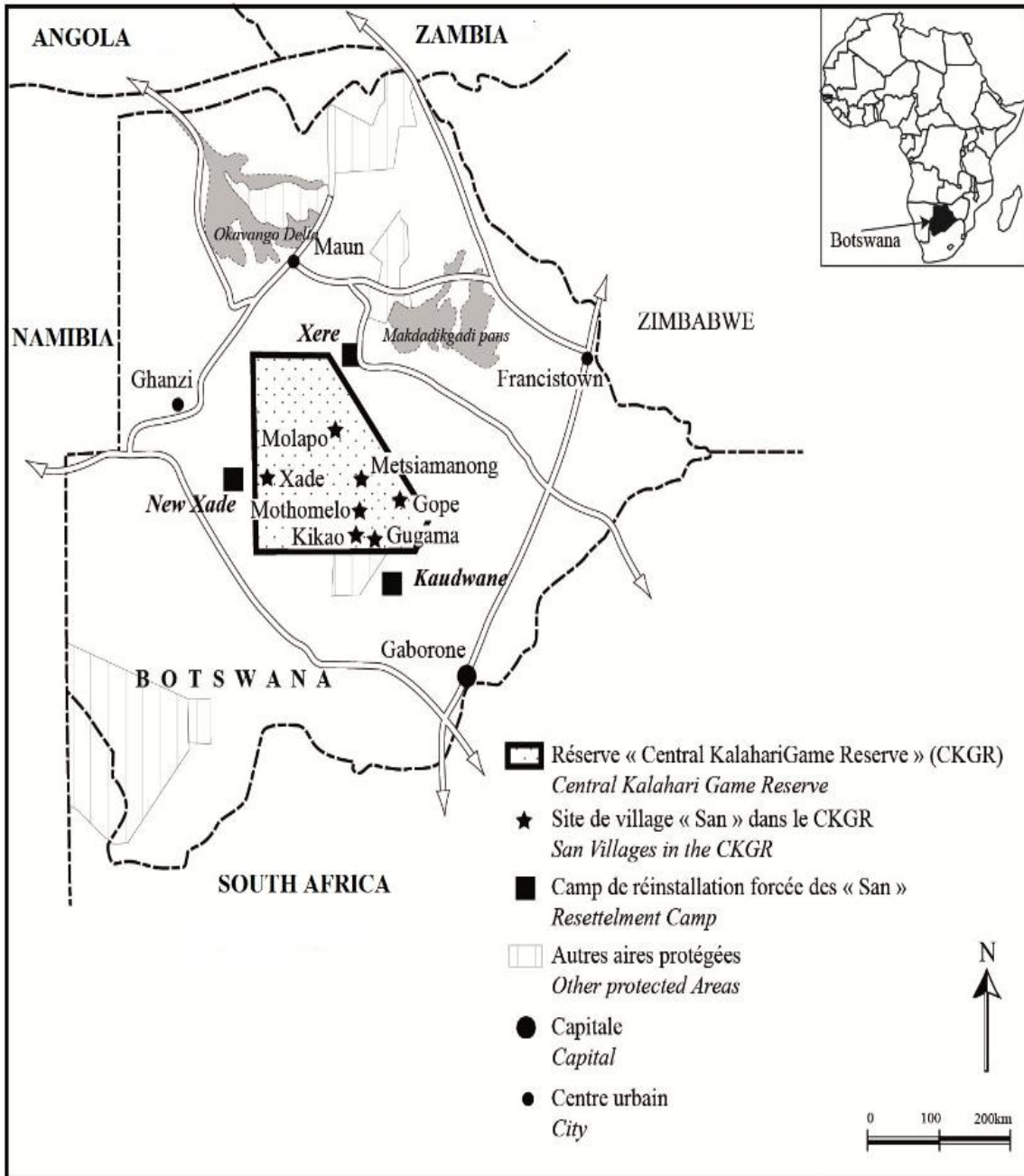
Wildlife preservation and protection at the expense of the San

From 1979, the Botswana Government has systematically settled the San living in the CKGR through the “*Remote Area Dweller Development Program*”. The idea is to provide services (schools, clinics, water points etc.), promote salaried employment of the San and direct them towards goat farming, or selling of hand crafts. However, most of the San continue to organize themselves in small groups, and to hunt and gather fruits. In the face of this resistance, the State questioned the presence of the indigenous in the CKGR in the late 1980’s (Chebanne, 2007). But it is from 1997 that the evictions, organised in three successive steps, took place. The first step in 1997 marked the transfer of the population to forced camps in Kaudwane, Xere and New Xade. The second one, in 2002 included confiscation of herds of domestic animals, destruction of villages and prohibition of access to water in the CKGR. Hunting and gathering of fruits were also prohibited. In 2006 more than 200 San filed a law suit against this eviction at the Botswana High Court and won the case. This meant that these communities could go back to the CKGR, to live their traditional lives with access to water points. However, the authorities continued to harass those who tried to go back to the CKGR and denied them access to the CKGR (see Saugestad 2001; Chebanne, 2007; 2010: 101). The San had no other choice but to take refuge in the forced camps. The third eviction took place in 2005. It is only in 2011 that the court allowed the San to access wells and asked the Government to sink new boreholes in the CKGR. The court ruling appears at least to have been applied from September 2011 according to the NGOs such as Survival International and the First People of Kalahari.

Although there is a regular population census in Botswana (CSO, 2010), it is difficult to gauge the situation in the new settlement camps established to settle the San refugees and of the villages within the CKGR. The San are untrusting, and even opposed to any official survey because of the cultural and ethnic persecution that these communities have endured. The communities living in Molapo and Metsiamaanong said that they would not respond to the census held in 2011 as long as the San’s rights were undermined in their own land. It is only through integrating data from NGOs (Kuru Family of Organisation or KFO, First People of Kalahari or FPK, WIMSA: Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa in Botswana), as well as from the San Research Centre at the University of Botswana and the University of Cape Town over a period of two years that it was possible to have some statistics on ethnic communities. The information collected on the CKGR and New Xade was

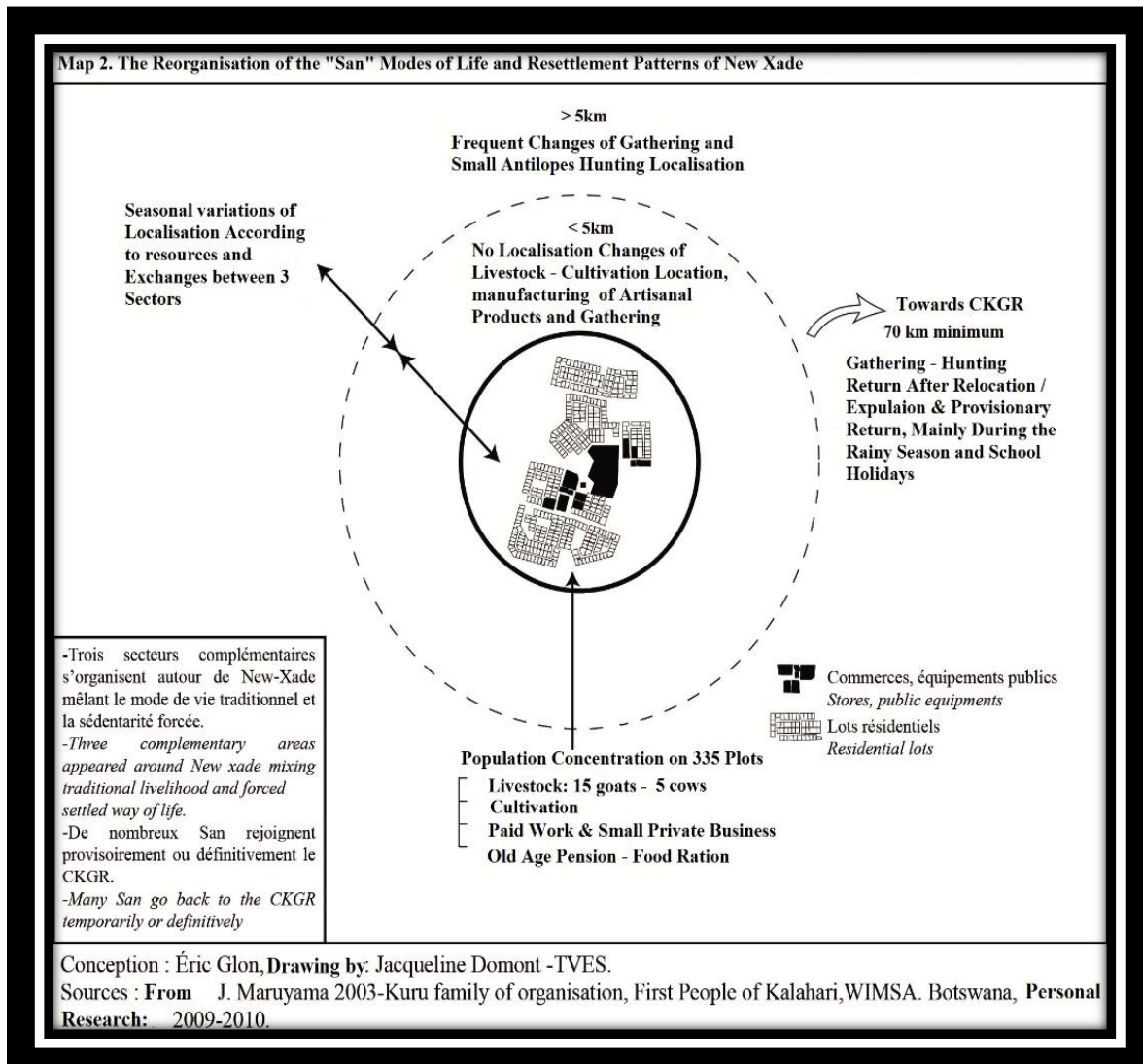
from official and semi-official communications and interviews with the Ministry of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism at the Ghanzi District level or with community representatives. At New Xade, contacts with local councils under the control of the government, clinics or even displaced families would not have been possible without the help of NGOs like KFO and FPK. The KFO management attempts to assist the San by developing micro-projects in order to help them achieve some kind of autonomy. The FPK is more radical, and is opposed to the eviction of the San from the CKGR, which it equates to ethnocide. It works closely with Survival International, an NGO based in London. The map below shows the starred areas which are historical locations of the San and the squared settlement is the New Xade, which is the resettlement area.

Map 1. Central Kalahari Game Reserve and "San" Relocation Settlements



Conception : Éric Glon, drawn by : Jacqueline Domont -TVES.

Sources : Kuru Family of Organisation, First People of Kalahari, WIMSA. Botswana, **personal research**, 2009-2010.



In 2009, there were between 360 and 450 San in 5 of the 7 villages they occupied prior to the evictions. Two villages, Xade and Kikao, were unoccupied. The population of the three forced camps (map 1) oscillates between 600 and 1000 in Xere and Kaudwane and between 1500 and 2000 in New Xade, which is by far the largest settlement. It is this settlement that is the focus of this paper.

New Xade was created in 1997 by the Botswana government, and it has several public facilities such as a school and a hospital. Services at these facilities are free. The hospital is a little more than a clinic. Other facilities include offices for social services, culture, local and rural development, and the police. The school accommodates 540 children who do not all reside locally. The government created 50 jobs in this settlement, but they are all occupied by non-San people. In 2009 the State also increased salaried employment, set up businesses and helped create private micro-enterprises and created 170 employment positions for the San.

It is difficult to tell precisely the nature and the number of jobs because not only are they usually occasional, part-time and seasonal, but also several jobs are held by few individuals. For example, a person can find a job in the construction sector or occasionally work in a workshop which manufactures and sells baskets. Agriculture is unprofitable because of lack of water. Maintaining commercial and private micro-enterprises activities is also difficult. The grocery shop was closed in 2009 as well as the local handicraft shop. The one in

Ghanzi sells jewels and crafts made by the San from New Xade, the number of which is unknown because this activity is irregular and informal. The vegetable area which is supposed to employ 15 people in order to introduce them to agriculture (growing maize and melon using drip irrigation) was not operational in 2010.

In order to compensate the people for their eviction and deal with these difficulties that the Botswana government provided food aid, old-age pensions and 15 goats or 5 cattle to San families. A piece of land was allocated to each family to cultivate (Cassidy et al., 2001: 25; Chebanne 2007). But the San are neither livestock farmers nor arable farmers. New Xade is a forced village with a centre being the main focus of activities. There are 335 plots measuring 25x40 metres where the San families were settled. They San groups settled here include the Glui, the Glana as well as the Bakgalagadi, people of Bantu origin who generally live alongside them, as was the case within the CKGR. In new settlements, the Bakgalagadi have better survival strategies and manage to maintain dominance over the San who are seriously handicapped by a sedentary mode of existence. For the San are more vulnerable to poverty and exploitation, and indeed to the ravages of disease and alcoholism as they have been taken out of their familiar natural environment (see Cassidy et al., 2001:15). This situation is not new and characterizes the San in contact situations with other culturally powerful ethnic groups elsewhere who exploit them for labour (See Chebanne, 2007: 150; Cassidy et al., 2012: 19). Osaki claims 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).

Other researchers on San communities have observed that the San constitute the largest proportion of Remote Area Dwellers (RADs), yet they are hierarchically the lowest ethnic group in terms of resources, power and influence. A RAD is a community that comprises diverse groups of people, all of whom have different motivations for resource use and employ differing livelihood strategies. What they have in common is that they live far away from more developed parts of the country, hence the remoteness. Other RADs such as the Bakgalagadi sometimes discriminate against and dominate the San. As a result of these inter-ethnic attitudes, development packages that sometimes work successfully to empower non-San RADs fail for the San, even within the same community. The Wildlife Management Area programme is a case in point (Cassidy, et al., 2001:61).

The San never totally accepted this forced settlement and integration to the new market economy (see Glon & Chebanne 2012 a, b). However, they quickly adapted to their new living conditions in this forced new territory. But many of their plots have never been developed (Photo 3), which is why it is often difficult to conduct population or employment censuses in New Xade. But empty plots do not necessarily mean that they have been abandoned. A family can live elsewhere, ask their neighbours to watch their plot and come back to the plot to receive food rations and pensions. In fact the San are often hostile to large groups such as the one in New Xade, so they reorganised themselves into small-sized dispersed groups. They also reintroduced their practices while organizing themselves in three complementary zones (map 2). The first one is the perimeter of the forced camp, 2 km² with its 335 units where people live on government introduced activities, such as livestock farming and arable farming. They also live on food rations and state pensions. Beyond this perimeter and up to 5km from it, several groups with relatively little mobility have established themselves and are undertaking agricultural activities, livestock farming, manufacturing of handicraft products and food gathering.

Table 1. Employment resources and the San at New Xade in 2010

Types of employment	Number of establishments/enterprises	Number of San employed
- Civil service employment comprising :	4	Entre 9 et 11
Teachers	1 primary school	0/20
Nurses	1 dispensary	0/4
Police Officers	1 community centre	0/6
Judiciary officer	//	0/2
Social workers	//	0/2
Village Chief/members of village development committee	1	9/13 and 2 in charge of the horticultural project
Community horticultural project (3 hectares)	1 (not operating in 2010)	15 (not operating in 2010)
-Other employment services : salaried community employments	Short duration <i>Ipelegeng</i> community projects (building maintenance, roads, and grounds...)	60 with 3 months rotation
- Businesses (with State funding support) comprising:	8	46
Tuckshops	3	15
Butchery	2	12
Bakery	1	4
Alcohol sale	3	15
- Private businesses (sale of sweets, tobacco, airtime and SIM cards, basket making and sale of baskets and artifacts, and textile/fabric sales)	6	60
		Total : 177

Source: Various Research sources on New Xade 2009, 2010- University du Botswana, First people of Kalahari, Kuru Family of Organization, Botswana. University of Cape Town, South Africa

As shown by a study by Maruyama (2003) a third zone was formed beyond these 5 kilometres. Groups in zone three frequently change where they live, and mostly survive by gathering food and hunting small antelope. Seasonal movements from home areas as well as

food and information exchange take place between the three zones. The prevailing situation in the years 2009 to present remains that of extreme poverty, alcohol abuse is prevalent. The AIDS problem is real, but it is difficult to know its extent because of the mistrust of the San regarding the screening and the onerousness of ART. Seventy-three people were being treated for HIV at the clinic in 2009, following an increase in prostitution. The study undertaken during this period also revealed two developments over the past few years. There are occasional departures from New Xade to the CKGR– which is just above 70 kilometres from New Xade. This movement involves 200 individuals each year, especially during the wet season and school holidays. Those on return migration to the CKGR want to re-join group and family members who remained or returned to the village inside the CKGR (between 360 and 450 individuals). By breaching prohibitions, the San maintain their presence in the CKGR because it is the territory of their ancestral spirits, where their intimate relationship with nature was forged. Movements around New Xade as well as to the CKGR explain why there are population brackets for the forced relocation camp, and why data concerning the number of individuals in the villages inside the reserve is uncertain.

The New “marketability” without the Indigenous San People

After establishing their first colony in 1652 south of southern Africa, the Dutch met nomadic livestock farmers, the Khoikhoi or the Nama (Richards, 2005). The colonists, indifferent to clicked languages, called them the Hottentots, that is, “those who stutter”. The Dutch included the San in that group even though they were hunters-gatherers. For a long time the Hottentots were considered to be the last stage of human evolution, meaning that they were closest to the monkey, in particular the orang-utan (Tinland, 2003). With regard to the San, their rejection was not uniquely a European doing. The Tswana, people of Bantu origin, are powerful in modern day Botswana. These cattle farmers have historically associated the San with the Pygmies (Rwa which comes from the word Twa, in Bantu) whom they came across during their migration to southern Africa; the people (*Ba*) of inferior beings (*Sa*) resulted in the name Basarwa (Chebanne, 2008). This term shows the profound contempt that the Tswana people have for the San. Because they are nomadic, they were never recognised as owners of the land. In 2010 Botswana president Ian Khama, who belongs to a dominant Tswana ethnic group, said that the San were leading a backward life:

In an astonishing outburst, Botswana’s president has today described the Kalahari Bushmen as ‘primeval’, ‘primitive’ and ‘backward’. Speaking at the country’s largest diamond mine, President Khama accused the Bushmen of living a ‘life of backwardness’ ‘a primitive life of deprivation co-exists alongside wild animals’, and ‘a primeval life of a bye [sic] gone era of hardship and indignity’. <http://www.survivalinternational.org/news/6754>: (Botswana president in racist outburst against Kalahari Bushmen, 10 December 2010)

Traditional hostility towards the San is common in Botswana (Saugestad, 2001). Despite being considered the oldest inhabitants of southern Africa and ancestors of humanity [Deacon & Deacon, *op. cit.*], the San have been cast aside. The Ministry of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism considers the practice of maintaining indigenous people in protected areas as a threat to nature conservation and tourism (see Saugestad, 2001; Cassidy et al., 2001: 10, 12). The Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs, which responsible for indigenous populations echoed the view of the Ministry of Environment:

Six Kalahari Bushmen in Botswana have been arrested and jailed, charged with hunting inside the Central Kalahari Game Reserve....
(<http://www.survivalinternational.org/news/4806>)

It seems curious that international advocacy groups such as Survival International are only concerned about the fate of approximately 4000 San in the CKGR and its immediate surroundings whilst the country has 50 000 San and other indigenous people. But the point made here is that rights to land, culture and language constitute human dignity, and therefore they are human rights predicated on a principle that should not be violated. Indeed, only the San are treated with contempt in the CKGR which is part of their traditional ancestral territory. The re-allocation of the San since 1975 has been unfavourable to them, and this has been done systematically through various land use policies. One policy in mind is the Tribal Land Grazing Policy. The Tribal Land Grazing Policy (TGLP) was introduced in 1975 and had considerable practical consequences for thousands of Basarwa living in affected areas (Saugestad 2001: 130). This policy resulted in removal of the San from their ancient hunting territories and their resettlements in areas that did not suit their traditional hunting and gathering habits.

This redistribution of land, which equals privatization under the guise of better management of land resources was done by the State at the expense of tribal communal lands, and has led to the displacement of 28 000 to 30 000 San (see Saugestad, 2001). The San communities are discredited (Suzman, 2001). They sometimes work as agricultural labourers, employed in big ranches. In some cases they illegally occupy private land where they can be evicted at any time. This traditional ethnic marginalisation of the San has inspired policies that are hostile to the San, and explains the force used to evict the San from the CKGR.

Dispossession and commercialisation of major areas of nature at global level

In addition to the ordinary situation where communities endlessly redeploy their activities to the geographical environment, there is one special development in the form of protected areas which are increasing in number (Glon, Hinnewinkel, 2009). Some of these areas are major eco-tourism areas which must be seen within the framework of globalisation. While these preserved areas are developing, they do not offer immediate commercial opportunities for locals; mainly global capitalists benefit from them (Kelly, 2011). In order to guarantee profit opportunities for all, the conservation of natural environment should have characteristics of a standard product which is the protected area itself. The natural environment it presents - an omnipresent and authentic nature protected from the ravages of human activities, with wild fauna, flora and creates a particular ecosystems- are what characterise the protected area. These make the CKGR a prime area for global tourism. The outdoor recreational activities are supposed to be built in such a way that they don't damage or alter the natural environment. To ensure profit opportunities in one area also entails integrating these generic characteristics into tourism enterprises. It also entails offering specific infrastructure according to the standards of other tourist destinations (Harvey, 2008, 2010). This is the case with the CKGR which offers natural features that make it unique and allow for its identification for global profit opportunities.

The Central Kalahari Game Reserve is a unique source of tourist adventures with its vast areas of sandy savannah. Spending an evening around a fire at the end of a day after ride in a 4-wheeler on dirt roads add a touch of authenticity. The indoor accommodations in luxurious "lodges", a bar, a restaurant and a swimming pool are situated within the boundaries

of the CKGR, and guarantee the colonial ambiance that tourists seek. Tourist packages often include visits to some of the 3 national parks and 5 wildlife reserves. A tourist can get close to hippopotamus, elephants in the Okavango delta or observe a herd of springboks coming to drink at water points as well as see giraffes in the Kalahari. Several residences offer an opportunity for tourists to live an authentic indigenous experience with evening dances or a walk in the bush with some San who help identify certain plants and animals (see Glon & Chebanne 2012 a, b).

One of the problems arising from the uniqueness of this reserve is its remoteness from the accommodation areas. To partly resolve this problem, the Botswana government accepted the establishment of a luxury “Safari Camp” belonging to the “Wilderness Safari” enterprise within the CKGR. Opened in 2009, this camp which can accommodate 16 people is enclosed in a fence within which bungalows, halfway between a colonial tent and a luxurious shelter, stand alongside a restaurant, a swimming pool and transplanted palm trees. While this environment offers comfort to tourists, the San people have been evicted from the reserve, and those who remained or return are regularly denied access to water. The capitalist logic is compatible with this type of contradiction: building the uniqueness of the CKGR for tourists and excluding the San (see Glon & Chebanne 2012 a, b).

The Kalahari: Diamond of Botswana?

The marketability of protecting nature is sometimes related to hidden profit opportunities (Harvey, 2010, op. cit.). The CKGR holds substantial diamond reserves, and there is a link between the granting of licenses for their prospection and mining, and the eviction of the San. The first kimberlitic pipe was discovered outside the CKGR at Orapa, soon after Botswana’s independence in 1966. Later it became evident that the whole CKGR was a rich diamond reserve. To ensure that the CKGR remained pristine, in 1986 the government put in place measures that consisted of ceasing the provision and maintenance of infrastructure such as schools, hospital, water pumping station, and services such as food distribution in the San villages within the CKGR, particularly in Xade. That decision came five years after the first diamond prospection in Gope by Falconbridge-De Beers in the eastern part of the CKGR. Mining began shortly after the first eviction of more than 1500 San. Whilst orchestrating two other evictions and increasing prohibitions of the indigenous San, authorities carried out cartographic and geological surveys to facilitate mining activities. In 2011, Botswana authorised Gem Diamonds, a British company, to develop a mine in Gope.

The value of diamond reserves was estimated to be more than 3 billion dollars in 2010 (see Glon & Chebanne 2012 a, b). According to some NGOs (Survival international, First People of Kalahari), no negotiation with the San took place even though the mine is in their ancestral territory. Although Gem Diamonds seems to be open in dealing with the neighbouring San communities, and has provided them with water, all those who were living in the Gope area, about 200 individuals, were evicted in 2002. It would be interesting to see how the interaction with a sizeable number of San around Gope would affect Gem Diamonds operations. Fifty 50 San flouted the ban and went back to the CKGR and were still present in 2010. The creation of a camp where 1000 people will be lodged during the construction work and between 400 and 600 for mining (Marsh, 2010) is a real possibility. No discussion with the San has been mentioned in all these preparation for mining. Nothing is said concerning the San people involvement in the project even though the 2007 UN’s declaration is striving to promote participation of indigenous communities when developments take place in their ancestral territory (see Glon & Chebanne 2012 a, b).

Protecting the natural environment guarantees “marketability” but not to the point of overshadowing profit opportunities offered by diamond mining. Botswana is focusing on both the production of diamonds and preservation of nature tourism using the same space, the CKGR. The argument that where the San are relocated they stand better chances of accessing amenities has not been proven (see Chebanne, 2007). They still live in poverty and their illiteracy rate is one of the highest in the country. History clearly shows that the situation of the San in Botswana is tragic, as researchers have observed,

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. (Riaan de Villiers, 1997:8)

By not protecting the San in their land, Botswana has created conditions that will annihilate them. While historically the lands that San occupied were territories that were increasingly encroached upon and wrangled from them by the Tswana ethnic groups’ through their pastoral land tenure system, the modern land management policies that create game reserves by evicting of the San therein effectively banishes them from their ancestral land (see Glon & Chebanne 2012 a & b).

Conclusion

The participation of locals and indigenous San communities seems to signal a paradigm shift in the conservation of the natural environment and natural resources internationally. However, the situation of the San in the Kalahari is in stark contrast to international trends where indigenous communities are considered as critical for the conservation of natural resources. The removal of indigenous communities from their ancestral lands constitutes the destruction of their indigenous knowledge systems and prevents them from enjoying their traditional cultures and livelihoods. Relocating them to areas that do not help them to maintain their ethnic identity may be viewed as an annihilation of such communities, as their removal leads to the loss of their language, their ethnic identity, and their culture as well as their survival strategies. Botswana has in the past thirty years, accelerated the removal of the san from their ancestral lands, and this spells doom for them. The current policy on protecting nature and its biodiversity under the protected area programme is meant to promote tourism opportunities for the profit it can generate for non-San capitalists. The indigenous San communities are therefore made to compete against each other for the same space and limited resources and against wealthy foreign tourism operators. This leaves the San in poverty and underdevelopment. The operation of mining activities without any policy on affirmative action to force companies to put some of their profits directly into San empowerment is likely to make the situation of the san even worse. Therefore tourism and mining, which have placed Botswana among the greatest in the world, have been pursued at the expense of indigenous communities, who have paid heavily through relocation. As a result it does not seem as if indigenous culture is of any value for Botswana. But if this creation of value of this natural capital depends on economic parameters and international practice, political choices need to be made to ensure that profit from minerals and tourism do not blindside the government’s responsibility to protect the very people needed to sustainably manage the environment upon which tourism depends..

References

- Bacqué M. H., Sintomer Y. (2011). *La démocratie participative*. Paris: La découverte.
- Barnard A. (2007). *Anthropology of the Bushman*. Oxford: New-York: Berg Publishers.
- Battiste M., Yougblood A.J. (2000), *Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage*, Saskatoon, Purich.
- Cassidy, L., Good, K., Mazonde, I., & Rivers, R. (2001). An assessment of the status of the San/Basarwa in Botswana. *Regional Assessment of the Status of the San in Southern Africa. Report Series No. 3 of 5*. Windhoek, Namibia: Legal Assistance Centre.
- Chebanne, A. (2010). The Khoisan in Botswana: Can multicultural discourses redeem them? *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*, 5(2), 11-29.
- Chebanne, A. (2008). A sociolinguistic perspective of the indigenous communities of Botswana. *African Studies Monograph*, 93-118.
- Chebanne A. (2007). The relocation of the Basarwa: Why the promised land is not appealing. *Journal of African Studies*, 20(2), 140- 149.
- CSO-Census Botswana Office (2011). *Population and housing census*, Gaborone: Central Statistics Office.
- Cobo, J.M. (1986[1987]). *Study of the Problem of Discrimination against Indigenous Population*, Geneva, E/CN.4/Sub.2/1986/87, 1-4 UN publication n° E.86 XIV.3.
- Collignon, B. (2005). Que sait-on des savoirs géographiques vernaculaires ? *Bulletin de l'Association de Géographes Français*, 3, 321-331.
- Deacon, H.J., & Deacon, J. (1999). *Human beginnings in South Africa: Uncovering the secrets of the Stone Age*. Cape Town: DP publishers
- Depraz, S. (2008). *Géographies des aires naturelles protégées*, Paris: A. Colin.
- Descola, P. (2008). À qui appartient la nature ? *Laviedesidées.fr*
- Gagné, N., Martin, T., & Salaün, M. (2009). *Autochtonies: Vues de France et du Québec*. Québec : Presse Universitaire de Laval.
- Glon É. & Hinnewinkel C. [dir.] (2009). Protéger la nature, est ce protéger la société?, *Géographie et Cultures*, 69, 143
- Glozewski, B. & Henry, R. (2007). *Le défi indigène*, Montreuil : Aux lieux d'être.
- Good, K. (2003) Bushmen and diamonds. Public Administration Studies Seminar, University of Botswana, September 19th, 2003.
- Glon, E., Chebanne, A. (2012 a), Une nature protégée sans les peuples autochtones ? – l'exemple des San dans la réserve du Central Kalahari (Botswana), *Espaces Populations Sociétés*, 1, 89 – 102.

- Glou, E., Chebanne, A. (2012 b). Peuples autochtones et patrimonialisation de la nature protégée- les San indésirables dans le Central Kalahari (Botswana), *Vertigo - la revue électronique en sciences de l'environnement* [En ligne], Hors-série 16 | juin 2013, mis en ligne le 30 mai 2013, consulté le 01 juillet 2013. URL : <http://vertigo.revues.org/13669> ; DOI : 10.4000/vertigo.13669
- Harvey, D. (2010). *Géographie et capital*, Paris : Sylepse.
- Harvey, D. (2008). *Géographie de la domination*. Paris: Les Prairies Ordinaires..
- Héritier, S. (2010). Participation et gestion dans les parcs nationaux de montagne: Approches anglo-saxonnes, *Revue de Géographie Alpine*, 98,145-181.
- Héritier, S, Laslaz, L. (2008). *Les parcs nationaux dans le monde*, Paris : Ellipses.
- Ingold, T. (2000). *The perception of the environment*. New York: Routledge.
- Kelly, A. B. (2011). Conservation practice as primitive accumulation. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 38(4), 683 – 701. DOI: 10.1080/03066150.2011.607695
- MARSH (2010). *Gope mining project*. Johannesburg: Marsh.
- Maruyama, J. (2003). The impacts of resettlement on livelihood and social relationship among the Central Kalahari San. *African Studies Monograph*, 223-245.
- Molopo, M. G. (2001). L'enjeu foncier au Botswana. In D. Compagnon et B. Mokopakgosi (dir.), *Le Botswana contemporain*. pp. 189-208. Paris: Karthala.
- OCDE. (2007). *Le Botswana*. Paris: OCDE.
- Olivier E, Valentin M. [dir.] (2005). *Les Bushmen dans l'histoire*, Paris: CNRS / Éditions
- Osaki, M. (2001). Reconstructing the recent history of the G|ui and the G||ana Bushmen. *African Studies Monographs Supplement S26*, 27 – 39.
- Oudot, D. (2001). Les ressources en eau et leur gestion. In D. Compagnon, B. Mokopakgosi (dir.). *Le Botswana contemporain*. pp. 209-231. Paris: Karthala.
- PNUE. (1999). *Cultural and spiritual values of biodiversity*. London, UK: Intermediate Technology Publications.
- Richards J. F. (2005). *The unending frontier: An environmental history of the early modern world*. Los Angeles: UCP.
- Saugestad, S. (2001). *The Inconvenient indigenous: Remote Area Development in Botswana, donor assistance, and the First People of the Kalahari*. Uppsala, Nordic Africa Institute.
- Suzman, J. (2001). *Regional assessment of the status of the San in Southern Africa*, Windhoek: African Studies, Legal Assistance Center.
- Spence, M. D. (2005). *Dispossessing the wilderness. Indian removal and the making of National Parks*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Tinland, F. (2003) (1ère édition 1968, Payot). *L'homme sauvage*. Paris : L'Harmattan,

- Trudel, F. (2008). *Self-governance in Arctic Societies: Dynamics and trends*, Québec: Université Laval, CIERA.
- UNESCO (1973). *Actes de la Conférence générale, résolutions, recommandations*, Paris : UNESCO
- United Nations (1992). The United Nations conference on environment and development. The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992), Rio de Janeiro from 3 to 14 June 1992. Access July 2016: http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/RIO_E.PDF
- Warren C., MacCarthy J. (2009). *Community environment and local governance in Indonesia*. London: Routledge.
- Wynberg, R., Schroeder, D., Chennels, R. (2009), *Indigenous peoples: Consent and benefit sharing*. London: Springer.
- WWF, Terralingua (2000). *Indigenous and traditional peoples of the world and ecoregion conservation: An integrated approach to conserving the world's biological and cultural diversity*. Glan: WWF.