

Abstract

In Namibia and South Africa, tourism is an important strategy to empower marginalized Bushmen, ever more by the creation of joint ventures and the inclusion of the private sector. In these initiatives communities can create income and learn from a private operator how one should run a business. In this paper I analyze various case situations of Bushmen in and around farming and conservation areas and argue that in reality these educational and economic trickle-down effects hardly take place. On the contrary, the relation between Bushmen and the mostly white managers in tourism resembles that of *baasskap*, a concept from the colonial farms, which creates a status quo.

Stuck in the Bushman Baas nexus: Static power relations in Southern African tourism¹

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Introduction

Baasskap

Patron-client relationships were widespread in Africa in various forms, as social relations between unequal partners that are interdependent on each other. However, these dynamics are not merely top-down; to position oneself as a client creates a patron who, in return for the support of his client, needs to take care of his client while not making him/her independent (Van Beek 2011). The phenomenon of *baasskap* (literally 'bossedness') implies the natural role of whites as superiors, natural leaders and bosses of the non-whites. Although strongly related to apartheid in South Africa, such patron-client relations and the underlying assumptions go back a lot longer historically. They date back to the very start of colonisation in Africa and elsewhere and have been present ever-since. Indigenous Africans were automatically seen as second-class citizens in informal, often more remote, as well as in formalised, more settled areas. Apartheid then, was only an endpoint of this belief and its formal political translation. *Baasskap* was, and is, a social construction, that exists because of collective agreement among white South Africans of such white superiority, which implied great power to affect other people's lives for hundreds of years. Such collective agreement always finds expressions in material realities as well, that can feed back into the maintenance of the collective belief. Because most non-white South Africans were deprived of all but the most rudimentary education and never acquired decent jobs apart from those in the most menial positions, they might have appeared incompetent and poor in the twentieth century. However, apartheid, and *baasskap* as a central element in this political structure, *made* them incompetent and poor. This, in turn, fed back to the belief in *baasskap*. So clearly, *baasskap* is a social construction and a product of history *and* it continues to be an essential feature of contemporary human cultures as well. A social scientific understanding of South African culture would be impossible without taking into account the social construction of *baasskap*, which was at the heart of South African culture for a long time (Plotkin 2002) It is therefore incomprehensible that the phenomenon receives so little attention today in consultancy reports and implemented policies by governments and NGOs, almost as if it does not exist anymore now that we roam in a post-colonial and post-apartheid era. In reality, *baasskap* is a daily encounter for Bushmen working in tourism.

Scholars like Suzman (1995, 1999), Sylvain (2001), Guenther (Guenther 1996) and Dieckmann (2007) all mention how former hunter-gatherers named Bushmen in Namibia and Botswana have historically evolved into a paternalistic *baasskap* relationship with their white

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Afrikaner bosses on farms. Here *baasskap* consisted of patriarchal power by a single *baas* or father figure as a structure for interracial class relations, in which the *baas*, apart from being his subordinates' boss, also had to take care of his people. The *baas* provides for workers who would otherwise have nothing and therefore have to be grateful for what they receive (Suzman 1995, 1999, Sylvain 2001). Farms can be seen as relatively discrete socio-political entities that have developed historically with little state intervention, which has enabled farmers to attain a level of personal power. Patriarchy has an essential place in such a relationship. In Afrikaner ideology, the Bushmen are racially inferior and seen as a 'child race' who need to be raised by the *baas*. In addition, farmers consider it their duty to discipline their employees, thereby uplifting and protecting them. Many farmers claim to know the Bushmen because they have grown up with them, often even stating that they own them. However, hegemony cannot depend on domination alone and the subaltern groups need to accommodate as well for three possible reasons. First, this can be because of the 'habituation' of certain behaviour so that it is no longer seen as a form of control or not even seen at all. Second, accommodation can result from a collusion of interest between certain members of the subaltern and dominant groups, and third, there can be an accommodation based on a compatibility of ideologies. Bushmen can sometimes assist farmers in maintaining this paternalism and they regularly challenge it to turn it to their advantage in their struggles with a farmer based on reciprocity. A good farmer should not only help out with money – a salary for work provided – but also with in-kind payments such as food, school fees, clothes, livestock, clinic expenses, lifts to town and so on. These are not regarded as benefits by the Bushmen but as their due. Of course there are important gender and generational varieties based on class distinctions and ideological differences. Paternalism contains a wide range of behaviour, from discipline and punishment to benevolent care-taking. For many farmers *baasskap* reflected the natural order of relations and the Bushmen's subordination is a demonstration of their superiority, while for many Bushmen *baasskap* saw the farmer's authority not necessarily as natural but as an ability to control his workers using violence and their dependence on him (Suzman 1995, 1999, Sylvain 2001)

Encapsulation and commercialisation

When I spoke to an NGO worker from Botswana she believed that "[t]ourism has in its core the force of destruction what it is that we want to sell. So you want to sell this product, the beauty of it, while the capitalist world and culture and means that we bring in that they [Bushman] also want, that has the potential of destroying what we try to sell." Although I do not believe that a true 'destruction' is taking place, she does refer to processes of 'encapsulation' and, specifically, 'commercialisation'. As Fernando Coronil (2001:82) already wrote more than a decade ago, 'just as so-called local phenomena cannot be understood outside the global conditions under which they unfold, global phenomena are unintelligible when the local forces that sustain them are not accounted for'. Today, most hunter-gatherer groups participate in a mixed economy, engaging in cash transactions within the context of western capitalism. This means that so-called traditional activities are gaining new economic meaning, especially in tourism. Indigenous groups are increasingly being incorporated into the economic sphere of the globalised world, where they commoditise their produce to obtain essential items for consumption (Tadesse 2005: 6). The Bushmen's economy also fell under the influence of worldwide processes of encapsulation, which is "the general incorporation of groups into structures of larger and more powerful entities such as the nation state and international institutions" (*Ibid.*: 2-3). In the process of globalisation, most of Africa's participation was never simply a matter of 'joining the world economy' but was rather one of spatial and highly selective processes of encapsulation of global connections with many examples of exclusion and disconnection (Ferguson 2006: 14). An important part of encapsulation is commercialisation, which "is a key aspect of the economic dimension to encapsulation. It is often an important part of a conscious effort made by indigenous peoples to cope with the loss of economic autonomy" (Tadesse 2005: 4). Apart from the loss of economic autonomy, the subordination of a local economy to outside control is another aspect of commercialization (Lee 2005: 23; Sahlins 1972: 191-196).

The condition of full or partial encapsulation comes with the penetration of market forces into their small-scale, subsistence and exchange based economies (Lee 2005: 16). This results in values from the capitalist world, such as cash and commodities, that cross a permeable barrier and are converted into values of the 'traditional economy' of sharing. For example, a group of Ju/'hoansi Bushmen who worked in the Gold Mines of Witwatersrand in South Africa returned dressed in western clothes that they had bought with their wages from the mines. Within a few days of returning home, their wardrobes had been dispersed among family and friends through their cashless reciprocal exchange network (*Ibid.*: 24-25). This commercialisation takes place all over Africa and in development, structural adjustment programmes have been adopted, in which western economic terms are used as a prerogative as being necessary for concepts such as 'efficiency' and 'economic growth', that are rarely justified but automatically assumed to be 'economically correct'. In this terminology, institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) tend to focus on comparative advantages in Africa, which are there to be utilised efficiently so that economic growth and development take place. Recently, this logic of 'economic correctness' has been joined by the desire to 'get the politics right' (Ferguson 2006: 77-79). And although the role of the nation-state is still essential today, a clear shift took place among these institutions and the market changing the role of the state tremendously since the early 1990s. Today this shift from government to governance is shown because the traditional separation between the state, the market and civil society are disappearing and the relations between these spheres tend to exceed the nation-state. At the global and the local level, this resulted in new coalitions between civic organizations, market players and the state, in which the state today made room for an abundance of various local and global actors in continually changing alliances and different levels of power (Van der Duim 2011: 83-84; cf. Büscher & Dietz 2005).

Introducing neoliberal logic

After ruling South Africa for most of the twentieth century, the white Afrikaans-speaking minority handed over political power to the black majority in the country when democratic elections were held in 1994. Although it remains unclear who exactly counts as an Afrikaner, homogeneity was mainly based on ideology among Afrikaans-speakers. And while Afrikaners had acquired state power for many years, their economic and other ties with Europe were not as strong as other settlers often had in Africa. Still, they were able to consolidate economic and political dominance of white Afrikaans-speakers for a long time. So after 1994 they had to renegotiate their dominant identity after their white supremacy had become impossible, and they turned out to be able to maintain their economic and social power (Blaser and van der Westhuizen 2012). In this political and cultural process of finding a new place and identity Afrikaans-speaking capital elites have tended to embrace new neoliberal ideologies and globalization, thereby in many ways keeping a dominant position in the new South African economy, after losing their political power. They repositioned themselves within a strong material position and the less noticeable ethnic alliances have now created an affluent new Afrikaner elite and middle class, that knows how to capitalize on the new neoliberal economy. They do so undisturbed by growing white poverty, which also reflects that the new alliances are more of an economic process than an ethnic one. Neoliberalism allows the Afrikaner capital elite a platform to withdraw to exclusive spaces (Davies 2012). In fact, with the rise of neoliberalism income disparities have risen world-wide and capitalism was spread under the current global, neo-liberal manifestation (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001) , that is often presented as a process in which the 'old' processes such as transnational trade, worldwide migrations and colonialism have now turned into cultural homogenization and translocal integration. Critics look at it as more implosive in the sense that inferior peripheries are connected to established powers. In this latter view the global village is not a comfortable place as such but a divided world in which relations of domination prevail (Coronil 2001) . So although this rise of world-wide capitalism is often presented as 'a gospel of salvation with the capacity to transform the universe of the marginalized and disempowered' (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001:2), the reflective neoliberal citizen

strategises for her/himself among the various options in society, either political, social or economic (Blaser and van der Westhuizen 2012). Under neoliberal globalization flexible market forces tend to polarize social differences within and between nations, while exceeding national boundaries. The gap between the haves and have-nots widens everywhere and geopolitical units become more obscure (Coronil 2001) . The concept of 'class' under neoliberalism is a continuing part of social reality. Paradoxically, while class has become less plausible in reality as an explaining concept, the disparities in wealth and power are growing and issues such as gender, race, generation and ethnicity have become social beacons for identification and the mobilization of people globally (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001) .

Two decades after 1994 the South African economic transformation has not progressed as much as the political one. The adoption of a neoliberal economic policy was largely due to internal class power and the dominance of the most prominent business groups in the state and the economy, thereby creating space for the mostly white and Afrikaner capital elites at the heart of the reform program. This resulted in various Afrikaners being among the richest people of the world. Historically, these newest developments follow upon the post-1948 development of an Afrikaner identity and a long connection with capitalism. Part of this national alliance based on class, race and ethnicity were Afrikaner farmers, the petty bourgeoisie, labor and capital elites. These economic elites played a prominent part in the negotiations of the 1990s when the South African economy reconnected with the globalizing and neo-liberalising world economy. With their political influence they supported a neoliberal, market-oriented development strategy (Davies 2012) . As described by David Theo Goldberg in his book *The Threat of Race: Reflections of Racial Neoliberalism* (2009) , much of the architectural structures of whiteness in South Africa's current neoliberal society that was built up during the apartheid regime is still existent today. Whereas race is now something that is out of public administration in South Africa, it continues to be dominant in the public and private realm (Goldberg 2009) . In fact,

[d]espite certain interventionist measures, the government's economic policy continues to function within the constraints of the structural legacy of the apartheid era and globalized neo-liberal restructuring policies. [...] Despite policies aimed at transformation, contemporary South African society remains in large part distinguished by these 'inequalities of apartheid' [...] Given the persistence of racial differences in human capital attributes, as well as continuing discriminatory practices in employment, it is likely that the racial wage hierarchy will remain and may yet worsen (Davies 2012:400-401).

Although Davies' analysis was mainly based on a few sectors excluding tourism, this white-dominated industry cannot be overlooked with regard to these contemporary economic processes, especially now that tourism is so often considered an example of development. Today many (former) farmers or descendants of farmers work with Bushmen in tourism, especially in Botswana, Namibia and South Africa. Here I analyse one case study, that of the !Xaus Lodge joint venture, in the South African Northern Cape province, which is a very Afrikaner dominated area and I argue that the inherited relationship of *baasskap* creates a static relationship, which is not a good starting point if one wants to achieve empowerment of the subaltern group. This is interrelated with the neoliberal logic as applied by the dominant group. After showing developments and happenings at the !Xaus Lodge, I will add some examples from elsewhere in Southern Africa, to show that this is not something limited to one place but a wider Southern African phenomenon when Bushmen engage in tourism. It turns out that development oriented initiatives such as the !Xaus Lodge joint venture, in essence do not differ that much from 'normal' types of cooperation in private realms, at least not from the point of view from the Bushmen. This throws serious shadows on the various initiatives that are currently being undertaken in Namibia, Botswana and South Africa where a new trend is to connect Bushmen groupings to private sector partners, something that is heavily promoted by governments, NGOs, donors, consultants and the private sector. Such tourism initiatives should be

seen as an important part of the heavily criticized neoliberal conservation strategies dominating Southern African policies (see for example, Brockington et al. 2008, Büscher 2011, 2013, Büscher et al. 2012) . Clearly, the neoliberal logic at the micro-level of new tourist enterprises suits the current logic of neoliberal conservation. Still, what is overlooked is that *baasskap* patron-client relationships are essentially *static* that turns out to be crucial in tourism since this is why ‘development’ is hard to achieve in such relationships because development, however it is defined, tends to focus on *change* instead of a status quo. Still, strong neoliberal arguments based on the creation of jobs and money tend to be seen as development and, while not denying these material realities, I will argue that there are strong counterproductive powers at work as well in these processes that maintain and sometimes even increase class contradictions.

Bushmen, tourism and development

Kalahari tourism development

The majority of South Kalahari Bushmen worked as farm labourers in harsh conditions. Paternalism, surveillance and social control made them docile and dependent in an ultraconservative white farming community (Robins *et al.* 2001: 42). In the park, the Afrikaner staff held onto the old *baasskap* system. Belinda Kruiper, who came from the Cape, used to work in the park and would later marry into the Kruiper family, facilitated meetings between tourists and the Bushmen outside the park while the white employers in the park could not believe why she would do so, although the tourists seemed to enjoy it (Bregin & Kruiper 2004: 22-23). A vast body of work on tourism demonstrates that local communities in developing countries hardly reap any benefits from tourist projects and that they tend to lack power, control and ownership. Their voices are neglected in strategies for developments in the industry and they are not in a position to match the financial resources that external investors have. Still, there are examples of communities that have taken a certain degree of control and exercise power over tourist developments in their environments (Mowforth & Munt 2003: 211), but this hardly seems to be the case among the marginalized Bushmen. At least partly this depends on their agency which refers

not to the intentions people have in doing things but to their *capability* of doing those things in the first place (which is why agency implies *power*: cf. the Oxford English Dictionary definition of an agent, as ‘one who exerts power or produces an effect’). Agency concerns events of which an individual is the perpetrator, in the sense that the individual could, at any phase in a given sequence of conduct, have acted differently. Whatever happened would not have happened if that individual had not intervened. (Giddens 1984: 9, my emphasis)

So the action of an agent is dependent upon the capability of an individual to make a difference in the course of events, which means an agent can exercise some sort of power (*Ibid.*: 9-14). For an effective analysis of tourism, especially when tourism is inherently connected to concepts such as development, communities and sustainability, power relations need to be acknowledged, especially because tourism tends to take place in a context of inequality (Mowforth & Munt 2003: 44-45). Relations of power tend to be embedded in modes of conduct that are taken for granted by those exercising this conduct, mostly in routinised behaviour (Giddens: 169-176). The private sector in tourism is often considered by local Bushmen and sometimes by NGOs to be racist and supporting apartheid. As Belinda Kruiper, who lives with the South Kalahari Bushmen in South Africa, explained, “(n)inety percent of the time they (Bushmen) do not really say truthfully to a so-called white person what their hearts feel. They’re still intimidated by the very past, the white thing” (cited in Tomaselli 2005: 140). Indeed, “the issue of client-patron relations is never far below the surface” (Tomaselli 2005: 140). In my experience, racism goes far beyond the black-white division in Southern Africa but since tourism is white-dominated, this is what matters most here. An economic approach to development is still dominant and the Gross National Product is the main indicator of growth instead

of the quality of life, while the marginalized tend to be aware of exploitation but not in a position to change their conditions (Tomaselli 2009: 9)

While the governments of Southern Africa all promote tourism, Bushmen communities are often confronted by the tourist industry as it is one of the few available sources of income. Most tourist development plans are focused on tourist development instead of the development of people, assuming that if tourism gets up and running, it will automatically benefit the local population. Such plans tend to be top-down, often instigated by NGOs, donors and governments and run in cooperation with consultants. The different ideas of the local population (that is regarded a cohesive group) in the area where the tourism will take place are barely included. Examples elsewhere in Africa have shown that conservation projects and tourism are seen as a panacea for the local people in policies and consultants' reports, but they rarely generate significant income opportunities for local people and do not live up to the promise of income-generating tourist projects (Schmidt-Soltau 2005: 295). Such plans often lack the voice of the 'other', which should be heard in tourism planning practices (Van der Duim *et al.* 2005: 286). In the *Tourism Development Plan for the #Khomani San Community* (Massyn *et al.* 2010) the findings and recommendations are mostly based on private-sector ideas, such as lodge and campsite operators, tour operators, professional hunting companies and potential developers/investors, but what is lacking is a reasonable local perspective. In the report there is an almost complete absence of voice of the local Bushmen in 'their own' development plan because out of the 26 people consulted during this research, only one was a local Bushmen, namely the late traditional leader Dawid Kruiper (Massyn *et al.* 2010: 96-97).

The tourist sector in Southern Africa has typical branding strategies that tap into a semiotics of the image of the wild Africa, in which they show a romanticised vision of the continent as a spectacular place, sparsely populated by some western explorers and exotic people. The idea of a glorious Eden for wildlife fits the dream of a refuge from the technological age but tends to ignore the history of struggle and dispossession that has taken place in the rural areas, as if the African environment is devoid of politics (S. Ellis 1994: 54; Massyn 2008: 228). The African myth is that, in the European perspective, Africa and its people only get personality and meaning against the background of the physical landscape. This old European and Romantic view of African landscapes is still the dominant unique selling point in international tourism, where Africans have to fit the myth of the wild Africa, something that can severely limit, hinder and obstruct agency at the level of local communities. These essentialist representations of African wilderness are created and recreated by members of the new elite who have bonded with members of the old elite, often in tourism and other conservation-related activities (Draper *et al.* 2004: 346-347; 2007: 216). Maano Ramutsindela (2005: 2-6) considers protected areas a product of colonialism that emerged from western views of nature and as untouched by humans. The colonial practices around national parks are continuing in the post-colonial period. Tourism increases the financial value of nature, when conservation and capitalism are based on the same economic principles. And today local people "ally with safari hunters and tourist companies to sell the experience of new tourist products on the international market ... The lines between conservation and capitalism blur" (Brockington *et al.* 2008: 5-6). Most of the benefits from nature (conservation) that are meant for local people are constructed at the global level. Important questions concern the benefits and who defines them (Ramutsindela 2005: 106). Two important circumstances for the people in and around protected areas have to be kept in mind. First, benefits such as training and development projects are indirect, contrary to the immediate benefits that people could receive from the environment. This is an important distinction in poor communities where food insecurity is an issue. Second, displaced people are often not well absorbed into the market economy, while the concept of development is focused on the idea that people will move to market-based livelihoods (Brockington *et al.* 2008: 73-74).

Historical and spatial references

When working a few years in tourism for a tour operator in Kuruman (Northern Cape) in the late 1980s (Grant 2011: 97), the Kruiper family, a group of about thirty former farm workers, were 'discovered' to be Kalahari Bushmen. In 1991 an Afrikaner farmer of the Kagga Kamma Nature Reserve, a few hours north of Cape Town, invited them to stage a daily show for tourists (Robins 2000: 57-58). Dawid Kruiper explained that "*I am an animal of nature. I want people to see me and know who I am. The only way our tradition and way of life can survive is to live in the memory of the people who see us*" (cited in White 1995: 17, my emphasis). 'Seeing', in this case, can be taken as being entirely mediated by the market because they lived at a simulated hunter-gatherer camp and were invited by the owner of Kagga Kamma who urged them to dress traditionally for tourists and display their crafts (for sale) (Comaroff & Comaroff 2009: 10-11).

So the authentic Bushman image had become a trade product, but also an important aspect of their identity. The Bushmen at Kagga Kamma did not have a cash income apart from what they earned from selling crafts. The owners argued that they were provided with free accommodation and with limited rights to use the flora and fauna for subsistence purposes but the Bushmen were seen as incapable of handling money. In addition, they believed that Bushmen should not hanker after money or consumer goods if they truly wished to live traditionally. Some of the crafts are sold to the management who sell them to tourists for double the original price, but this is done exclusively in the form of credit to the store's accounts, which are under the control of the management. These working conditions led to resistance. Sixteen Bushmen left Kagga Kamma while others sometimes showed up late for performances or they performed poorly. They worked there because they lacked better options (White 1995: 40-46), which showed how Bushmen could also use their limited agency. The Kagga Kamma case shows something often overlooked in cooperation between the private sector and the Bushmen, namely that "(t)he Kagga Kamma owners were former sheep farmers, now businesspeople, not social or development workers; they could not ... have been expected to understand the finer points of representational or anthropological theory, ethics of tourism or development theory" (*Ibid.*: 26). The involvement in tourism at Kagga Kamma has provided some of the Bushmen with skills and capacities to engage with outsiders such as tourists, NGOs and journalists, but they were historically caught up in paternalistic client-patron relationships and their dealings with outsiders were shaped by dependency on farmers, tourists, donors and NGOs. However, they were not only passive victims of exploitation by film makers, the Kagga Kamma management and tourists, since for more than a decade they obtained an income from tourism, participated in a successful land claim and took their own decision to leave Kagga Kamma. So Bushman imagery based on primitivist and tribal discourse is not always imposed from above by the West on powerless victims. These are often reshaped and rearticulated from below (Robins 2000; Robins *et al.* 2001: 7-32). In line with this, the Bushmen at Kagga Kamma are neither 'untouched' hunter-gatherers nor are they isolated from modernisation and the industrialised world. They produce crafts and perform services for tourists, which shows that they actively participate in the global cash economy (White 1995: 25). After winning a controversial land claim, the Kruiper family moved back to the Kalahari in 1999 where they would continue to be involved in tourism. This particular family forms the core group of so-called 'traditionalist', who embrace the traditional Bushman image, as opposed to the 'westerners' who favour other development strategies.

Molopo Lodge is situated in the middle of the six farms where most of the South Kalahari Bushmen live since the land claim. Most people working at Molopo are whites and coloureds, the latter mostly working in lower positions. It is one of the few places in the area that offers work. Today locals are not allowed any further than the campsite or the bottle store and they are kept away from the restaurant, bungalows and the bar area. To the South Kalahari Bushmen, Molopo is an institute connected to the wider racist and oppressive attitude that they experience amongst Afrikaners, including the police, and some of them believe that they are still just cheap labour. In the end, the owner decided that teaching them discipline was necessary to allow Molopo to grow as a business, and in his view, paternalism and money are the keys to development:

(T)hey must be prepared to listen, and to listen, and to listen ... To get to their level you must drop big time. You know we are living here (raises hands), they are living there (lowers hands)! ... Otherwise they don't understand you, they don't think like you, they don't understand you ... You must appoint a custodian. Like me who lives here ... I know them better than anybody knows them ... Let them make money. You know, money gives you self confidence. But they need a custodian that can drive them or lead them in the right way.²

'Understanding', in this view, is undoubtedly a one-way process, in which Bushmen have to understand 'us' (whites, westerners, capitalists or similar people who 'know how the world works'), not the other way around. This view is a clear example of a combination of a strong neoliberal approach interwoven into *baasskap*. In the community, money is often seen as a synonym for development, just as the owner reasons in the above quote. Still, Bushmen do not profit from Molopo financially which is a necessity in the way the owner sees development. Sussie Aries at SASI explained that it is difficult to work with Molopo and that the current owner is not really interested in the Bushmen but happy to make money out of them. In other words, she believes that in this relation of *baasskap* the control is in the hands of the *baas*, who is interested in converting the Bushmen's symbolic capital into economic capital. To him money is a key to development, but according to some Bushmen there are various other benefits that could be afforded by Molopo, such as a good relationship or a place for entertainment. During visits to the Molopo bar I noticed quite a macho culture based on hunting, racism, drinking and sexism. This does not mean Molopo was unfriendly towards me as we felt welcome but local Bushmen complained to me, wondering why the whites could get drunk there and misbehave, and they cannot. I could only sympathize with their arguments.

!Xaus Lodge

Joint ventures

In joint ventures a community cooperates with a private tour operator that has the investment, management and marketing expertise to run a business. This creates possible benefits for the community, such as cash, employment, infrastructure and skills. The two common forms are when a tourist lodge is established by a private operator on communal land under a formal agreement with the community or when a community has control over a hunting quota in a demarcated wildlife area that it can lease to a trophy hunter (Ashley & Jones 2001: 407; Haug 2007: 7). Since the 1990s a growing number of lodges have started marketing themselves as (partly) Bushman attractions but so far no Bushmen community owns or runs its own lodge. There are examples of early joint ventures, such as the Intu Afrika Lodge in Namibia in the mid-1990s (Suzman 2001a: 135-136; Garland & Gordon 1999: 276-277; Guenther 2002: 49). The Bushmen working there felt it was not a choice as they felt pressured into it by their poverty and unemployment. They complained of social tensions, unfulfilled promises of land and a tourist levy by the owners. And the labour conditions led some workers to explain that they were just a duplication of those found on commercial farms (Sylvain 2002: 1080-1081).

From an economic point of view, joint-venture operations tend to be more successful than other tourism projects such as community based campsites, based on a business attitude, marketing and promotional skills. Especially regarding trophy hunting, joint ventures tend to generate more revenue than photographic tourism, while photographic tourism has a higher economic multiplier because it creates jobs and wages (Spenceley 2008a: 179). Still, the private operator tends to make most decisions in many joint venture agreements and the community mainly gets money, goods and jobs, while it could be more useful to have joint ventures in which the private operators and community trusts share the risks and responsibilities (Hitchcock 2001a: 48). The commitment of private operators to community aspirations is essential and partners have to be chosen carefully

² From an interview conducted by Keyan Tomaselli that I attended.

(Murphree & Taylor 2009: 113). One of the main tasks of the private operator is to empower the people and help with capacity building, but this does not always work out as planned. In post-independent Namibia, white South Africans dominate the (eco)tourist industry (Ramutsindela 2005: 58), just as in South Africa. Throughout my fieldwork I spoke to many young, talented and educated Bushmen who did not feel attracted by joint ventures or other private lodges. Consequently, I felt justified in wondering if there is enough capacity in the white community to empower the Bushmen. It seems as if having business capacities is simply not enough, there is 'something relational' at stake here that is a lot more important. Some elements of *baasskap* in the relationship between the (mostly white) managers at lodges or hunters and the Bushmen seemed to limit the pool of Bushmen who were willing to work at these lodges. Ironically, the Bushmen that could truly make a difference by being able to run such a place were the ones who preferred to go their own way in life instead of working for a *baas* in an 'old-fashioned' environment. This obviously limits the possibilities for empowerment and the chances of truly owning the lodge in the end (although the latter is often one of the set goals).

Different cultures or ideologies – subsistence culture and capitalism – work together in joint ventures as if symmetrical, while basic power differences in which capitalism defines the dominant code of conduct are overlooked. Even if local communities can acquire large sums of money and thereby opportunities for economic development by selling their resource rights, the community is also giving away power, ownership and the opportunity for sustainable development. Joint ventures have the potential to turn local communities into passive, dependent participants left on the periphery of the tourism sector (Haug 2007; Mbaiwa 2004). Often a contract gives the local group official ownership of a lodge but in reality there is no sense of ownership. In addition, private operators do not take development or capacity building seriously or they simply do not know how to put it into practice. For example, a spokesperson for Wilderness Safaris explained at a workshop on joint ventures that NGOs have a role to play in establishing trust with communities for the private sector. This shows a tendency to believe that NGOs are closer to the community than the private sector, while in reality the manager of the private enterprise works with the trainees every day. So a private operator needs to spend time and energy on establishing this trust himself, as was the idea of joint ventures in the first place. By saying that this is an NGO's duty, the private partner is denying its own responsibility in the creation of mutual trust with the community. Such processes, however, are long and complicated, and require expertise.

!Xaus and development

After the land claim, South Kalahari Bushmen and their neighbouring Mier group could together offer a concession to private developers for a lodge in the park. Together with SANParks, they decided to establish a 'cooperation lodge', which is similar to a joint venture, and concessionaires were invited to build and operate the lodge (Ramutsindela 2005: 114). After the construction showed many development failures, the appointment of a commercial operator in 2006 created a shift in paradigm from a modernisation top-down to a participatory bottom-up approach (Dyll 2009: 48-49). Transfrontier Parks Destinations (TFPD) negotiated with the Bushmen and the Mier and they agreed that the cooperation lodge should be managed by TFPD, a so-called "black-empowered Lodge Management Company" (!Xaus 2012a) on behalf of the ≠Khomani and the Mier. What this means stays unclear, since 'analysis suggests that, despite its redistributive intentions, black economic empowerment (BEE) has proven doubly conducive to the interests of large-scale (white) capital and entrenched economic interests in key sectors' (Davies 2012:399). The Bushmen's relations with the daily management are a lot more important because that person will be their new *baas*.

The focus of !Xaus is on international tourists, contrary to the rest of the area where domestic tourism is dominant (Massyn *et al.* 2010: 39). Apart from providing jobs to both communities, the lodge provides a monthly rental based on turnover to community-representing organisations. Donor funding is owned by the lodge and therefore by the communities, while the lodge also assists in channelling funds for spin-off projects in the communities (!Xaus 2012a). The

jobs offered by !Xaus are permanent instead of seasonal, thereby offering long-term employment and in addition to wages employees receive transportation, work clothing, full board and housing as well as pension funds and death and disability benefits. Of course, employees also receive trainings (Dyll-Myklebust & Finlay 2012: 135; Mezas & Fakhreddin 2013: 4-5). Although most employees are Mier, recently the number of ≠Khomani has increased (Tomaselli, pers. comm.). Although TFPD has a strong focus on community development, they do not want to show this for commercial reasons. They are afraid that the concept of 'community tourism' will keep tourists away. Indeed, they "aim to attract tourism by offering worldclass operations and a high quality experience on par with comparative commercial lodges" (O'Leary, email, 12 May 2011, in Dyll-Myklebust 2012: 180). One of the activities for tourists is a visit to the Bushman Craft Village, a recreated cultural village where Bushmen make and sell their crafts and demonstrate some traditional games (!Xaus 2012b). Although the Bushmen and Mier own !Xaus, a takeover of the lodge is still a far-off dream. To date, the Bushmen were 'just' the 'traditional' Bushmen and the better educated Mier got most of the other jobs, which makes sense since the idea of 'cultural tourism' is based on the ≠Khomani culture (Finlay & Barnabas 2012: 137-140). The lodge has a house fund, which gives the workers the option of saving part of their salary to build a house. Abraham de Klerk, the newly appointed manager, explained that this can help the Bushmen because in their sharing culture if one makes some money and goes to the shop, the others will come and ask for a share.

A lot of !Xaus revenue was spent in the area to create an 'economic multiplier effect' on local crafts and curios but most of it went on operational costs in Askham and Upington (Dyll-Myklebust & Finlay 2012: 135-136). The multiplier effect is especially evident in the wider Gordonia area, where !Xaus invests lots of revenues into the local economy. For example, they buy firewood from the local community and they use small businesses such as the Kalahari Supermarket in Askham and the Orange River Cellars for supplies, as well as a sewing cooperative (Vezokuhle) in Upington for their fabric items (Mezas & Fakhreddin 2013: 5-6). Here I want to stress that this economic multiplier effect does not automatically benefit the local South Kalahari Bushmen, since they often lack the power positions needed to profit from it. It is unlikely that serious amounts spent in the area on operational costs will benefit the Bushmen financially and thereby reduce social inequalities and contradictions. Although members of the cash economy, in the end most Bushmen fall more or less completely outside the formal economy, so it is unlikely that a substantial amount will reach them. When the management of !Xaus Lodge buys supplies in the Kalahari Supermarket in Askham, this supports first of all the store itself and only if a Bushman would be working there (s)he would in that way 'benefit', although benefiting in this case would mean receiving a salary for the work done. Due to the current inequality in the area, it is more likely that the spending helps the owners of the shop financially thus *increasing* the financial contradiction between the haves and have-nots. A trickle-down effect is all too often assumed to happen automatically but this is hardly ever the case, precisely because the poor have fewer possibilities to benefit from this money and they are active more in informal economic activities with relatively small amounts of cash circulating. In addition, it is doubtful if many Bushmen indeed realise they own a ZAR 11 million lodge (with the Mier) and, if so, what the consequences of this will be in the community. !Xaus is regarded a white-run enterprise where some community members, and only if you are a profound traditionalist, can make a bit of money by being there and selling crafts. Therefore, apart from these financial injections into the local economy, the question arises as to whether a certain level of empowerment can also be reached in the relationship between the Bushmen and !Xaus, in which "(e)mpowerment does not simply mean the involvement of community members in aspects of the project; it means that they should be actively engaged in discussion and implementation of knowledge and ideas" (McLennan-Dodd & Barnabas 2012: 142). In the end !Xaus Lodge is a luxury lodge and therefore it requires more skilled staff compared to other tourist ventures in the area (Grant 2011: 257). This is exactly what creates such a contradiction: Luxury tourism ventures are introduced amongst the most marginalised where, due to this marginalisation, such staff is limited. It is therefore a doubtful

strategy to start joint ventures amongst such marginalised and disempowered groups as the Bushmen. Instead of closing the gap, they tend to magnify the contradictions.

'Forever he will stay a boy': Bushmen perceptions of !Xaus

When we, a group of fellow researchers, received a visit one evening from the departing manager of !Xaus at the community campsite on the farms, this was to become an interesting event. The manager arrived with a (white) tour guide trainee and a young Bushman employee. Our group was talking quietly but after the arrival of the !Xaus people, the atmosphere changed. The manager, who I thought was close to being drunk, was loud and making jokes and the young Bushman was also drunk. The manager's humour was macho and sometimes sexist, focused on drinking and full of stigma about 'life in the bush' (having met many tour guides in Southern Africa I had become quite familiar with such rhetoric). What I found interesting was that many of the manager's jokes involved the young Bushman who had to answer questions, and he also talked a lot on behalf of him, and the Bushman did exactly what the manager asked of him. This was *baasskap*. The encounter created interesting opinions in our group about working relationships at !Xaus. Someone described the young Bushman as the manager's little boy, and someone else even said it is a master-servant relationship, explaining that Bushmen and whites were not capable of maintaining an equal relationship in this part of the world because in reality the boss will always be the boss, especially in the bush. Empowerment is therefore the big challenge and the question is whether the 'masters' are truly teaching the 'servants' at joint ventures, and if they are even capable of doing so. Others, especially those who were acquainted with the manager from previous trips, were milder. When I later checked this with local people on the farms most would complain about the manager's racism and swearing. The !Xaus workers said they see no other possibilities for work but that they are afraid to speak to the manager directly. A young woman who would later start working for the local Bushman NGO SASI, explained that this was the reason why she did not want to work there herself:

I was going to work there as a tour guide, I am a qualified tour guide, but me and him (the manager) we had a meeting and in this meeting I could see that I could not work together with him. The manner, it's the boss attitude and the power, all have to listen to him and that's it. I feel it does not work like that, we should all be equal. (Interview 107)

A young Bushman explained that he used to go to !Xaus for tracking and making crafts but that he does not do so anymore because of the manager, with whom he frequently clashed. He said that he is one of the few who is not afraid to speak out, while most remain silent because they are afraid. So when he heard that another manager would take over he felt delighted and this gave him more confidence in a future for !Xaus. More talented young people did not want to work at !Xaus for this very same reason (in addition to the distance and the time one had to stay away from home). One of the few young English speakers could not stand the manager's swearing and left, adding that most people simply accept a lot because there are very few other job opportunities. Some of the road-stall attendants also told me they do not want to go there anymore due to the manager's behaviour towards them, which they claim is lacking in respect. Some other Bushmen thought the manager was not as bad, and explained that the cursing is just "a *boer's* language when he gets angry". They received many complaints about this behaviour but thought there is not a lot they can do because the TFPD chooses the manager. This will logically increase the feeling of exclusion from one's own development, and it seems as if !Xaus is not felt to be owned by the Bushmen but just as non-cooperation lodges it is a place where one can get a job in a *baasskap* relation. It is almost unimaginable from a Bushman's perspective to be a (part) owner of the lodge. Bushmen simply do not own lodges.

What I found at the farms, where most !Xaus employees live, was a strong feeling of exclusion from the lodge, even by the people who work there. Amongst workers and their family members, the general tendency was that people simply work at !Xaus because there are hardly any

other options, not because they enjoy it. They believe their salaries are too low and the manager's behaviour is rude and disrespectful, although a change of management was taking place during my fieldwork time. This was welcomed by most people. A young woman explained that "many work there for a while and then they come back and they do not want to go there anymore". In addition, the feeling that the Bushmen are (part) owners of !Xaus is very limited. Even Dawid Kruiper needed to be told again when I asked him who the owner was, but he does realise that the Bushmen *are* an important tourist attraction for the lodge. He was well aware that the Bushmen's traditional image was commodified by the lodge. Another Bushman told me that "we are the advertisements for !Xaus". !Xaus' cultural tourism is focused on the Bushmen and their website and promotional materials are built on the South Kalahari Bushmen represented as traditional hunting and gathering people (Finlay & Barnabas 2012: 142-143, cf. Finlay 2009). Still, various Bushmen told me they regard !Xaus not as 'development' but more as a place where the old patron-client relationship is re-established, as it was during apartheid. Therefore they do not understand how the Bushmen could ever own !Xaus. One man said that

(y)ou do not feel as if you are in control, you are just under the boss, as in the old days. This is what hurts me. All these people who are educated in various projects, mostly tourism, they cannot reach that level of self-sufficiency. Forever he will stay a boy.

This reflects a broader feeling amongst the South Kalahari Bushmen, that !Xaus is simply there but people do not see it as development. In their perception, !Xaus is an important project that establishes the importance of the Bushman identity, or the ≠Khomani brand, in tourism, and creates the feeling that the Bushmen are seen, that they are the real Bushmen. And this is an important benefit for various Bushmen. However, they tend not to see !Xaus as something they possess in the western sense of the word. This was also illustrated when I spoke to a group of young men after the position of the main guide at !Xaus was taken by a young white man, an outsider, which created frustration and confusion amongst them because they believed they were better guides. The new manager later told them that this new guide is better with books and that they are better in the field, and that they should help each other.

Conclusion

The South Kalahari Bushmen tend to remain dependent on others in the highly competitive world of tourism.

Initially, !Xaus started off as a failed government initiative and the private sector was called in to rescue the project as a joint venture with the Bushmen and the Mier. The private operator TFPD did indeed rescue the project but the South Kalahari Bushmen lack a feeling of ownership and are not empowered, while *baasskap* dominates relations and the Bushmen feel excluded from decision-making, despite private-sector partners identifying themselves as Bushmen do-gooders who know what is best for them. And although !Xaus might become a financial success, Bushmen are barely profiting from it apart from a few jobs that require them to stay traditional and keep them enclosed in the Bushman myth. The ≠Khomani brand is thus an important, even an essential, enablement, for cultural tourism, but it also keeps Bushmen, according to Dawid Kruiper, as 'animals of nature'. This still enables them to be seen, just as it did at Kagga Kamma. In addition, various young, educated South Kalahari Bushmen explained that they did not want to work for the previous manager at !Xaus and left or did not start working there because he treated them badly or they expected that this would happen.

Bushmen have clearly adapted well to a western capitalist mindset, in which there is often a very simplistic belief that money will solve all problems, an idea that is prevalent amongst local Bushmen, ministries, NGOs, private operators and donors. However, money can also become a source of conflict and influences the agendas of the various stakeholders. The focus on money as a synonym for development, as happens with various institutions and Bushmen, is therefore a limited

vision. Interestingly, whereas money is often seen as development, some people believe that Bushmen are *not* in need of money, tourists, NGO workers or private-sector employers, based on the authentic image of a primordial hunter-gatherer *or* on their image of the drunkard who only wastes money. In this way, these myths severely decrease agency because money is an affordance in today's world that *can* increase agency.

They are getting a 'new' identity and need to become a 'brand'. The South Kalahari Bushmen are politically constructed and have turned into a product. The representation of the so-called ≠Khomani at the structure level was mostly done by and for the traditionalists, together with the media, scientists, the private sector, consultants and NGOs who all embrace traditionalist behaviour. For the traditionalists, these myths have instigated the idea that they will, at a certain point, return to 'life as it was', which they hope to achieve in Kgalagadi after disappointments with their new farm land, which is the last myth in a long chain.

Some of the younger Bushmen have now been through western education and are attracted by such ideas and want to build their lives on them. Interestingly, many of the most talented ones, often with some experience in tourism, choose not to work in this sector in the end, not because they are not capable but because power relations demotivate them. The government, NGOs and the private sector all play an important role in this.

Today the focus in tourism and development has shifted from the community-based approach to private-sector involvement in joint ventures as the new panacea for development. While Bushmen are frequently criticised for not yet being ready to manage tourism enterprises themselves, we saw that it is at least equally true that the more powerful private sector is not yet ready to fill a position in which they would have to play a developing role. An automatically assumed trickle-down education effect in relation to tourism is not taking place at such lodges because *baasskap* is a static and hierarchical patron-client relationship that is little focused on change, and therefore not on development. However, the South Kalahari Bushmen showed to feel disempowered themselves and they tend to rely on NGOs or private sector partners to make decisions for them and in this way *baasskap* is an important social construction that also provides some solutions where they lack the capacity to solve their own problems. Still, such solutions then automatically imply the dominance of the white decision-makers. At !Xaus Lodge, the Bushmen are supposed to become empowered but they hold only formal and hardly any emotional ownership. It seems as if the dynamics of joint-venture initiatives are not essentially different when compared to privately owned lodges that cooperate with Bushmen. Such as Kagga Kamma and Molopo. In all three cases, *baasskap* dominated relations and there is the tendency to focus on material benefits alone as *the* standard for success, clearly influenced by neoliberal logic. The relationship is strongly top-down, assuming that 'they' have to learn from the operator and there is hardly any attention for what the operator or the manager in the field could learn from and about the Bushmen he works with. However, it is not my intention to suggest that Bushmen are not in need of more expertise concerning tourism as a business because in today's environment they are. But in the private sector there is a tendency to boast about how well one knows 'them', often argued with examples of traditional knowledge of the Bushmen based on the idea of a static culture of nature and the myth of the traditional ecologists, while the increase of the Bushmen's agency stays very limited. One of the reasons for this is precisely because there is a strong tendency to consider the commodified Bushman myth as the standard, representing the Bushmen as if that is what they really want. It thus makes sense that Bushmen do not feel any ownership of the joint-venture lodges or the processes surrounding them. In their own perception, Bushmen simply do not own lodges, and practically *baasskap* is in the way, rooted in a history of inequality. Although apartheid was formally banned, it is all but gone and the white economic elite (private operators, some donors and NGOs) is bonding in some cases with the black political elite (government departments, NGOs).

What matters most is the *relationship* with the *baas* and because in most of these relationships the Bushmen's agency is severely constrained, the young and educated are turning their backs on tourism projects, although they would love to work with tourists. Private operators

tend to do what they are good at: They develop tourism, which is essentially different from assisting Bushmen in a process of development. So now that the increasing involvement of the private sector is a response to disappointing results of community-based tourism and CBNRM programmes, interestingly the focus has changed from community tourism projects to expensive, luxury lodges, where the contradiction with marginalised Bushmen is enormous. This way the already strong contradictions in tourism only increased deeply rooted ideas about the haves and the have-nots. To start a process of tourism and development by involving Bushmen in the luxury tourism sector is a strategy that benefits various outsiders, such as private operators and the conservation movement, while Bushmen continue to dwell in the margins. In addition, there is a conflict of interest in joint ventures for a private operator to hand over a lodge because once it is up and running and making profit, it would go against sound business principles to hand it over, not only because they would lose a profit-making enterprise but they would also create their own competition. For a private operator, a static situation, in which *baasskap* dominates and the Bushmen's agency remains limited, suits his interests best.

A trickle-down effect, both economically and educationally, is often assumed to happen but in reality this has proved hard to achieve. The Bushmen themselves have now become a part of the tourist bubble, where they use their agency to create and commodify their image of natural ecologists, thus enabling themselves to benefit from it at times. However, their role in the bubble is constrained by the rules and regulations set by the image that was created historically. The South Kalahari traditionalists tend to have *become* their product, the #Khomani brand, and they still long for the past and have set it as their goal. What seems to be really trickling down is not capacities or finances, but neoliberal logic.

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