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## **Land, Livestock, and Labor in Rural Botswana: The Western Sandveld Region of Central District as a Case Study**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Since the time of its independence in September, 1966, the Botswana Government has been concerned with enhancing rural development and promoting economic opportunities for all of its citizens. In the 1970s, over half of the country's population resided in the rural areas, and sizable numbers of people derived income from rurally based activities such as agriculture, livestock production, natural resource exploitation, and various small-scale industries. While Botswana's economic performance over the period since its independence in 1966 has been impressive, there are still problems to be overcome, one of the most important of which is rural poverty (Nteta, Hermans, and Jeskova 1997; Ministry of Finance and Development Planning 1997).

The Botswana Government's policies are founded on four national principles, one of which is self-reliance (*Boipelego*). In order to achieve its goal of social harmony (*Kagisano*), the Botswana government established four major planning objectives: (1) rapid economic growth, (2) social justice, (3) economic independence and (4) sustained development. Balanced, sustained development is attainable in Botswana only if careful planning is done and an equitable distribution of benefits is achieved in both the urban and rural sectors.

Botswana has put its national planning principles into practice in innovative ways. In the early to mid-1970s, for example, the country embarked on an accelerated rural development program (the ARDP). This program, which lasted from 1973 to 1976, served to increase social and physical infrastructure in rural parts of the country, enhance decentralization of decision-making, and expand development project implementation capacity at the district level (Chambers 1977: 37). Unfortunately, as Chambers (1977: 38) pointed out, the ARDP did not confront a central issue in Botswana's development: what to do about raising the living

standards of the rural poor.

One segment of the population of Botswana that was identified in the poverty study by the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (1997) as needing additional attention was the people who lived in remote rural areas, those known as Remote Area Dwellers (RADs). Since 1974, the government of Botswana has had a Remote Area Development Program (RADP) which was targeted on those people living in remote places outside of established villages. Housed currently in the Ministry of Local Government and Lands, the Remote Area Development Program provides services and aims to promote socioeconomic development among those groups who are relatively isolated geographically and whose access to assistance is not as great as those people living in villages of 500 or more people.

Some of these groups occupied communal areas, those segments of Botswana which fell under the category of tribal lands, which together made up some 71% of the country. There are also people living on freehold farms, such as those in the Ghanzi, Tuli, Tati, and Lobatse blocs, which together comprise some 5.7% of Botswana. In addition, some people reside in cattle post areas, such as those in western and northern Central District, southern and western Ngamiland, western and northeastern Kweneng, northwestern Kgatleng, central and western Ngwaketse District, southern Ghanzi District, and parts of Kgalagadi District (e.g. those areas west and south of the Matsheng Villages). These areas include both communal land and land that has been designated as commercial under such programs as the Tribal Grazing Land Policy (for a discussion of issues relating to land tenure for San in these contexts, see Taylor 2004).

An examination of the socioeconomic system in Botswana reveals that there are several groups who have significant numbers of people living at or below the Poverty Datum Line (PDL). This figure is equivalent to the "minimum income needed for a basic standard of living," and is used by some economists as a means of determining household socioeconomic status relative to other households. These "vulnerable groups," include Remote Area Dwellers, female-headed households, freehold farm and cattle post laborers, people living in villages or towns who do not have jobs or sources of income, the elderly, the infirm, and people who are ill, including those living with HIV/AIDS. Poverty levels have declined over time in Botswana. If one compares the 1985/86 Botswana Household Income and Expenditure Survey with that of 1993/94, one can see that the percentage of households living below the poverty datum line declined from 46% to 33%.

A fairly substantial number of the households in remote areas of Botswana lack some or most of the necessary means of production. Some households have too little land to provide for their needs. Others lacked livestock, which were crucial to making up a plowing team as well as providing milk and other products. Still other households did not have sufficient cash to pay for inputs such as seeds and fertilizers. The lack of male labor is also an important variable in some of the households lowest on the income scale (Ministry of Finance and Development Planning 1997). Many of the households living below the poverty line depending on

income that is provided in kind (e.g. in the form of goods such as food obtained through drought relief and food-for-work programs).

Freehold farm workers and cattle post laborers in Botswana tend to have relatively low incomes, uncertain access to land, small numbers of domestic stock, low levels of literacy and education, low to moderate health standards, and limited access to development assistance (Childers 1976; Hitchcock 1978; Mogalakwe 1986). Many of the people on freehold farms, ranches, and cattle posts are at least partially dependent on livestock owners for their subsistence and income. Some households supplement their income through foraging, doing temporary work in towns, or selling handicrafts, meat, thatching grass, and firewood.

In 1975, the government of Botswana began a large-scale land reform program in the rural areas of Botswana, focused in part on the commercialization of grazing lands and the establishment of leasehold ranches (Hitchcock 1980, this volume; Peters 1994). In the process of doing the surveys for the zoning of the land into categories (commercial, communal, and reserved, in line with the White Paper on Tribal Grazing Land (Republic of Botswana 1975), it was found that there were sizable numbers of people residing in the areas where there were water points, either wells or boreholes, and livestock. In surveys done in the 1970s in the western Central District, the northern and western Kweneng District, the north western Kgatleng, Ngamiland, Ngwaketse, Ghanzi, and Kgalagadi Districts it was found that there were sizable numbers of people living on cattle posts that were in areas considered likely for conversion from communal land into commercial leasehold ranches (Hitchcock 1978; Wily 1979, 1980, 1981).

Cattle post owners in a number of cases relied on local laborers to watch their livestock, take the animals out to pasture and water them, usually once or twice a day, and to do other jobs that were required around the cattle post, such as branding of cattle, attending sick animals, and fixing kraals (corrals) where the animals were kept at night. In exchange for their labor, cattle post workers received good in the form of milk and sometimes 25–50 kilograms of mealie meal (maize meal) per month. In a number of cases, the laborers received cash wages.

Some cattle post workers were allowed to make use of the livestock they were tending, having them pull plows for agricultural purposes. The products of the cattle that died or were killed by predators (meat, horns, hides, hooves) were either saved for the cattle post owner or were utilized by local people. Cattle post workers in a number of cases had their families with them, and sometimes family members also worked for the cattle post owner; wives of cattle post laborers, for example served as domestic workers, and children sometimes took care of the calves, goats, or other stock.

With the introduction of the Tribal Grazing Land Policy, questions arose about what was to happen to the people living in areas that were designated as leasehold ranches. In some cases, people who were not working on the cattle post or ranch might be asked to leave. In other cases, they were allowed to stay, but their activities were restricted; for example, some cattle owners would not allow them to

plow and plant fields (*masimo*) on the land. There were also cases where the work on the cattle post was professionalized, and skilled livestock laborers with extensive knowledge of livestock management were brought in from the outside, and local people who had been on the cattle post, sometimes for generations, were let go.

As commercialization of the livestock industry proceeded in the Kalahari Desert region of Botswana, unemployment increased among certain groups, notably among San (Hitchcock 1980, this volume; Wily 1981). While local people attempted to appeal their firings to local and national authorities, they generally had little luck getting reinstated in their jobs, receiving back pay, or obtaining compensation for their loss of access to land and assets.

### **LIVESTOCK, WATER POINTS, AND WATER RIGHTS IN BOTSWANA**

One of the most significant changes that occurred in the Kalahari region in the past two millennia was the introduction and expansion of domestic animals, notably small stock (sheep and later goats) and large stock (cattle, horses, and donkeys). There is archaeological evidence of small stock and large livestock in central Botswana such as along the Botletle River and at Toteng in the vicinity of Lake Ngami dating over 2,000 years before present (Robbins *et al.* 2005). Sites near Toteng include both remains of livestock and wild animals as well as Bambata pottery and microlithic tools and bone link shafts or projectile points.

It is likely that over time the numbers of livestock in the central and eastern Kalahari expanded and contracted, depending on climatic conditions, disease outbreaks, predation by both wild animals and humans, and technological innovations. People dug wells by hand and, during the late 19th and into the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, using dynamite. An outbreak of rinderpest in 1896–97 saw large scale die-offs of both livestock and wildlife. There were also outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease, as occurred, for example, in 1933. Droughts had impacts on livestock populations, with sizable numbers of cattle dying in the 1930s, the 1960s, and, to a lesser extent, in the early 1980s. Tsetse fly control measures in the Okavango Delta region had effects on the livestock populations, allowing people to expand into areas with their domestic animals that in the past had more or less been off limits.

Fences were erected in a number of places in Botswana in order to curtail the movements of livestock and wildlife that might potentially be carriers of disease (Hitchcock 2002). Veterinary cordon fences were erected in the central and eastern Kalahari regions in 1954 and additional fences were constructed in the 1980s and 1990s in various parts of the Kalahari. The construction of cordon fences was a controversial subject in Botswana, particularly in the 1980s (Campbell 1981; Owens and Owens 1984). Well-digging and fence construction, along with the introduction of veterinary services (e.g. providing immunizations and supplemental feeding for livestock) contributed to the expansion of the livestock industry. The availability of laborers to help manage the livestock was also a factor in the success of livestock enterprises in the Kalahari region.

A sizable number of the cattle posts in remote parts of the Kalahari were overseen by San, and it is not too far-fetched to suggest that some of the Tswana states (e.g. the Bamangwato) existed primarily because of the availability of San labor. Without the San and other groups such as the Bakgalagadi, it is likely that the cattle population of Botswana could not have expanded as it did. At the same time, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, thanks to the assistance of governments such as Great Britain and the United States and international financial institutions like the World Bank and the European Development Fund, the livestock industry was able to expand considerably in the latter part of the twentieth century.

The digging of wells in grazing districts was a crucial factor in bringing about changes in land management and administration patterns. Under Tswana customary law, open surface water was free to be used by anyone who wished. Where water was obtained through the expenditure of capital or labor, as in the case of construction or well digging, people were able to keep their water for personal use. They had to seek permission from grazing district overseers (known as *badisa*, like the term for herder), but once they had done so, they had *de facto* access to the land surrounding the water point. As Peters (1983: 112) points out, water was a crucial factor in centrality of Tswana political control. It was also crucial in Tswana thought and ritual; the term *pula* (rain), for instance, is used as a positive statement at the end of all chiefly or political addresses.

In a semiarid ecosystem such as that of Botswana, water is a critical natural resource. Traditionally, there was only a limited sense of private ownership of water resources. As was the case with land, water sources generally were associated with social units (families, wards). Open surface waters such as rivers and springs were available for domestic use by individuals and groups (Schapera 1943: 243–246). In grazing districts, on the other hand, use of surface water in the past was supposed to be confined to the wards granted access to those areas. Individuals belonging to other wards who drove cattle through the grazing areas were allowed to water their animals only after seeking permission from the *modisa* (overseer) or local ward heads. People who water their herds in another group's grazing area run the risk of having their animals confiscated. Trespassing was seen as an infringement on the rights of local grazing resource users. There were instances in which families or syndicates (groups of cattle owners who invest in a borehole or well) charged other people for rights to use the water. Some chiefs (e.g. Khama III of the Bamangwato) resented this type of action and declared that water must not be sold but rather than it must be given freely or not at all (Schapera 1943: 246).

There were cases, of course, of conflicts over access to water resources. In some cases, these conflicts were resolved through negotiation; in other cases, the people involved in the disagreements took their case to traditional authorities (chiefs, headmen) or to the government of the Bechuanaland Protectorate Administration or, after 1966, the government of Botswana. After 1970, Land Boards in existence, and people could appeal to them or to their parent ministry, the Ministry of Local Government and Lands (now the Ministry of Lands and Housing).

The rights to use and control water resources in Botswana are somewhat complicated. On the one hand, individuals had the right to use surface water for domestic purposes, while on the other hand, groups could restrict access to water resources of specific types or in certain places. Wells were owned privately but could be used communally. In order to ensure continued access to water sources, one needed to ensure that positive social relationships were maintained. Solway makes an important point along these lines when she states:

Although numerous wells have been dug throughout the twentieth century, not all kin groups own one. In addition, wells collapse, dry up, and vary enormously in their yield and salinity; so for the majority of households it is necessary at most times to obtain water at wells belonging to other agnatic groups. In order to have access to another's well, proper social relations must be maintained, and these social relations find their basis in kinship. Kinship, however, only allows for their existence; in order to secure long-term access to water sources, social relations must continually be renewed. Renewal takes many forms: daily sociability and interaction, marriage relations, political interaction, and economic exchange (Solway 1986: 75).

In times of stress, people called on their alliances in order to ensure access to water. A rule among Tswana and other groups in Botswana is that individuals in dire need of water for themselves or their animals should be granted access to it.

Major shifts in patterns of user rights to water resources came about with the introduction of boreholes. Individuals and groups that sunk boreholes had to invest substantial amounts of capital and labor in this endeavor. Those individuals with the resources to have boreholes dug were able to gain *de facto* rights over the water and the grazing surrounding the water point. These water points were controlled by the families who developed them, and they could deny other people access to that water and nearby grazing.

Besides open natural surface waters, wells, and private boreholes, there were also water sources that were available to the public. In the Kgatleng, for example, a Kgatla chief, Isang, raised money through a levy and had a number of boreholes drilled which were then made available for use by the Kgatla (Schapera 1943: 247, 1970: 40–41, 99; Peters 1994). The Bechuanaland Protectorate Administration also had boreholes drilled, mainly in villages. It is important to note that the Resident Commissioner recommended the imposition of certain rules regarding use of the new water points in order to prevent overgrazing (Schapera 1943: 247–248, 1970: 99). These rules included the stipulation that the chief could establish limits on the numbers of livestock kept at each water point. Another suggestion was that limits should be placed on the amount of water pumped and the size of water storage tanks. In grazing areas, individuals watering their cattle at tribal or Protectorate Administration boreholes were supposed to pay fees for the privilege (Schapera 1943: 244–248, 1970: 99). The money generated was supposed to go to the Tribal Treasury, which then used it to maintain the pumps and to pay for people to take

care of the facilities.

Borehole drilling in drier areas of rural Botswana (e.g. the east-central Kalahari) facilitated expansion of the number of livestock that could be kept. It also ensured that water was available year-round, whereas in the past it usually was available only seasonally. The rising numbers of livestock and the reduction of their mobility contributed, according to some analysts, to a process of overgrazing and environmental degradation (see, for example, Botswana Society 1971; Arntzen and Veenendal 1986; Dougill 2002). At the same time, it should be noted that there are on-going debates over the severity and nature of environmental degradation as a result of livestock grazing (Behnke, Scoones, and Kerven 1993; Sporton and Thomas 2002).

Approximately 5.7% of the land in Botswana was held under freehold tenure at the time of independence. In the 1970s, some land that was designated as state land was allocated to individuals under leasehold under, as was the case, for example, with the Nata Ranches north of the Makgadikgadi Pans. The implementation of the Tribal Grazing Land Policy in the 1970s saw grazing land transformed into commercial leasehold land. The largest area of commercial land that was recommended by a land board and district council was that of the Western Sandveld region of Central District. Other sizable ranching blocks were planned in the Hainaveld in the south eastern part of North West District and in the north eastern Kweneng District.

If one examines the history of large-scale livestock development projects in Botswana, it is apparent that the transformation of land tenure linked to commercial ranching was a major objective. Several of the livestock development projects were funded by the World Bank (see Table 1). Botswana's First Livestock Development Project was carried out in the Kgalagadi and Ghanzi Districts and was aimed at establishing fenced ranches, karakul sheep farms, marketing, and fattening facilities (Carr 1980; Hitchcock 1981). The Second and Third Livestock Development Projects were national in scope and provided funds for the development of commercial ranches, management and administration, trek routes, and railway handling facilities. A basic goal behind all of these livestock projects was the promotion of commercialization of the livestock industry in Botswana while at the same time enhancing range conservation.

In the case of Livestock II, there was much debate about the impacts of

**Table 1** World Bank livestock development projects in Botswana.

Project	Title	Dates	Finance
LDP 1	Livestock Development Project 1	1972–76	\$5,400,000
LDP 2	Second Livestock Development Project	1977–1982	\$13,400,000
LDP 3	National Land Management and Livestock Development Project	1985–1988	\$17,800,000
TOTAL	3		\$36,600,000

commercial ranches on the populations that were residing in areas zoned as commercial land. The government of Botswana recommended initially that people living on the land could stay there, but that idea did not hold sway with cattle owners or land board members. An alternative suggestion was that communal service centers be created to handle the 'excess' population (see Hitchcock, this volume). In the Western Sandveld region of Central District, one service center was established, Mmaletswai. In the case of the Hainveld in North West District, a single ranch was set aside as a communal service center. These service centers were relatively small, ca 10,000–20,000 hectares in size, much smaller than the areas which foraging and small-scale agropastoral populations generally utilized. The average size of the ranches that were allocated was 6,400 hectares (8 by 8 kilometers) although some were slightly larger.

In the 1990s, under the fencing component of the National Agricultural Development Policy (Republic of Botswana 1991), people who had boreholes on communal land were granted permission to fence the lands around their boreholes. There were several hundred commercial ranches either in place or in the planning stages in the early 1990s. As the pressure to fence communal lands picked up pace, concerns over what was to happen to the residents of both commercial and communal areas began to mount.

In 1991, with the permission of the government of Botswana, a detailed population and land use survey was carried out in the Western Sandveld region as part of a larger effort to assess areas that might be affected by a Norwegian Government and Botswana Government joint development effort known as the Accelerated Remote Area Development Program (ARADP). Initiated in 1988, the ARADP was aimed at assisting remote area populations in Botswana with infrastructure provision, capacity-building, economic promotion, and technical assistance aimed at Remote Area Dwellers (see Chr. Michelsen Institute 1996 and Saugestad 1991 for assessments of the Accelerated Remote Area Development Program). The population and land use survey of the Western Sandveld Region was carried out by two of us, Alec Campbell and Michael Main, in February, 1991. The study area included 34 Tribal Grazing Land Policy ranches and approximately 100 cattle posts. Of thee 134 localities, 105 were actually visited and data were gathered on 92 of them.

This survey was the most recent of five surveys conducted over the Western Sandveld area or portions of it. They were completed in less than one month's field work. Earlier surveys took considerably longer, sometimes lasting over twelve months or more. This survey adds to those previous studies, particularly that which was done by Hitchcock (1978).

The first survey was carried out by Mr. Edirilwe Seretse who, by mid 1931, had compiled a list of places on Ngwato land where San lived for what was known as the Tagart Commission (the Masarwa Commission, looking into the treatment of people in the Ngwato District. Also included in this compilation of data was some information pertaining to their lifestyles (for a summary of the data, see Hitchcock

1978, Volume II, Appendix 18, pp.135–155). A few of these listings refer to places in, or on the edge of, the Western Sandveld. The second survey was conducted by Mr. J. W. Joyce in 1935–6, also on Ngwato land, and it also contained information regarding the San and their lifestyles. Once again, places in or near the Western Sandveld were included.

The third survey was carried out by Robert Hitchcock in 1977–8 and covered the whole of the Western Sandveld, listing population statistics, demographic data and people's attitudes towards developments in the area (see Hitchcock 1978, 1980). The fourth survey was conducted in December, 1987 by officials of the Central District and covered only Block C of the TGLP Ranches (see Tideman 1987). This survey contained population numbers, employment and livestock.

Work was also done in the Western Sandveld by ecologists, range and livestock management personnel, and agronomists, some of them government officials such as those from the Animal Production Research Unit (APRU) in the Ministry of Agriculture. Human geographical research was carried out in the late 1980s on the issue of ecological change in the Western Sandveld by Jeremy Perkins of Sheffield University, now a consultant in Botswana (see Perkins 1991). All of this information, along with data from various ministries (e.g. from what is now the Ministry of Environment, Wildlife, and Tourism and the Ministry of Lands and Housing along with the Remote Area Development Program in the Ministry of Local Government) and from non-government organizations was very useful for purposes of understanding the situations of San and other Remote Area Dwellers and of laborers in cattle post and ranch areas.

## **THE WESTERN SANDVELD SURVEY**

The Terms of Reference for the survey required that information be collected in the Western Sandveld area of the Central District on Remote Area Dwellers (Figure 1 and Figure 2). Information requested included (a) numbers (b) distribution and (c) vital statistics of the population living in this region. We understood this area to be the sandveld area lying between the eastern boundary of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve and the hardveld which extends westward from the villages of Mmashoro, Tlhabala, Mosolotsane and Kodibeleng, and which is bounded on the north by the Makoba Fence and an arbitrary east-west line drawn somewhere south of Lephepe. One of the requirements of The Terms of Reference was to gather information regarding the 'tribal allegiance' of the people residing in this area. For this reason, although all people mentioned in the study are called 'Batswana', they have been described as San, Mongwato, Mokgalagadi, Omuhherero, etc., depending on the group or sub-group to which they said they belong.

One of the problems faced in this study was the clear definition of the term Remote Area Dweller. In fact, the definition of RADs varies from place to place in the country. In this study, a definition of RAD has been used that fits the people in the survey area who are considered to be RADs by its other inhabitants.

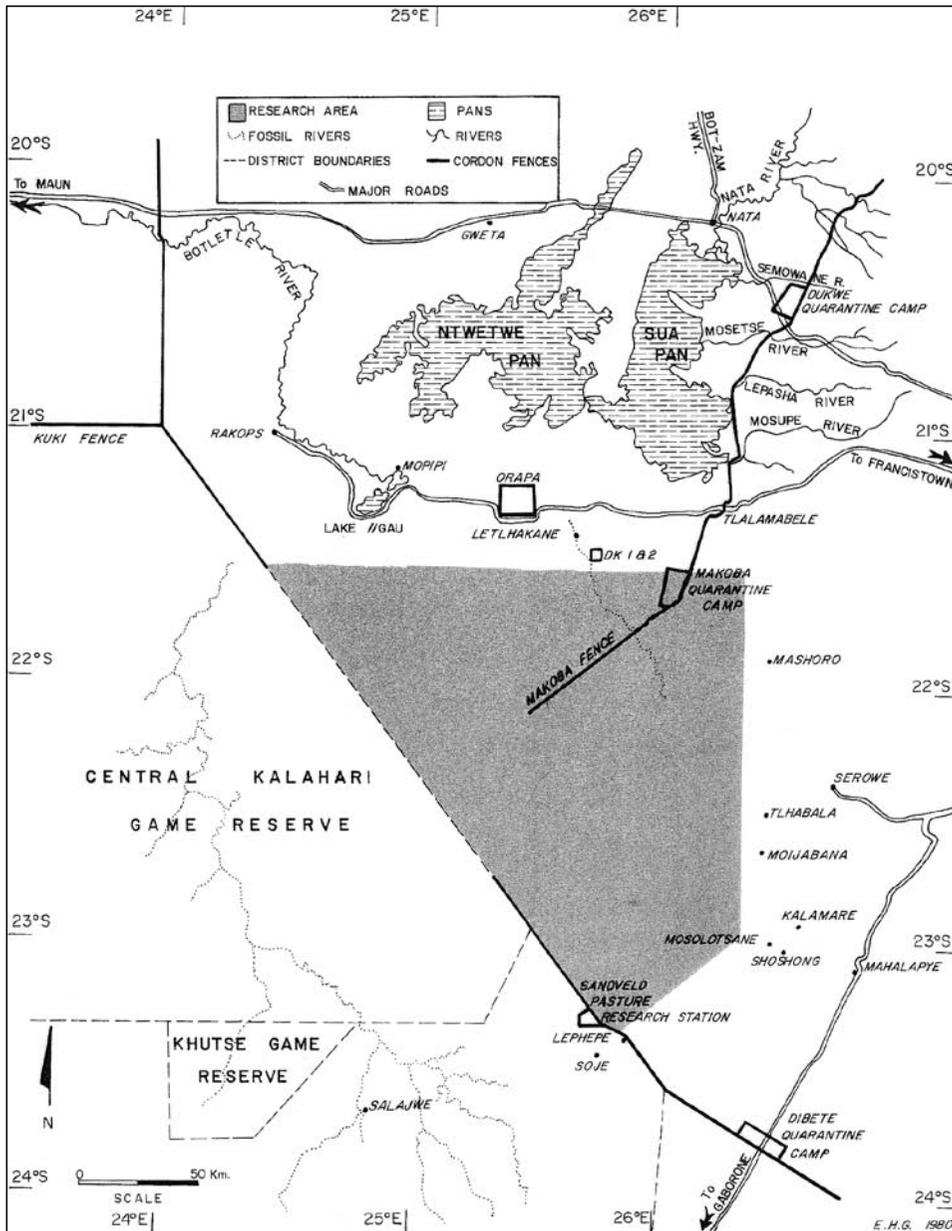
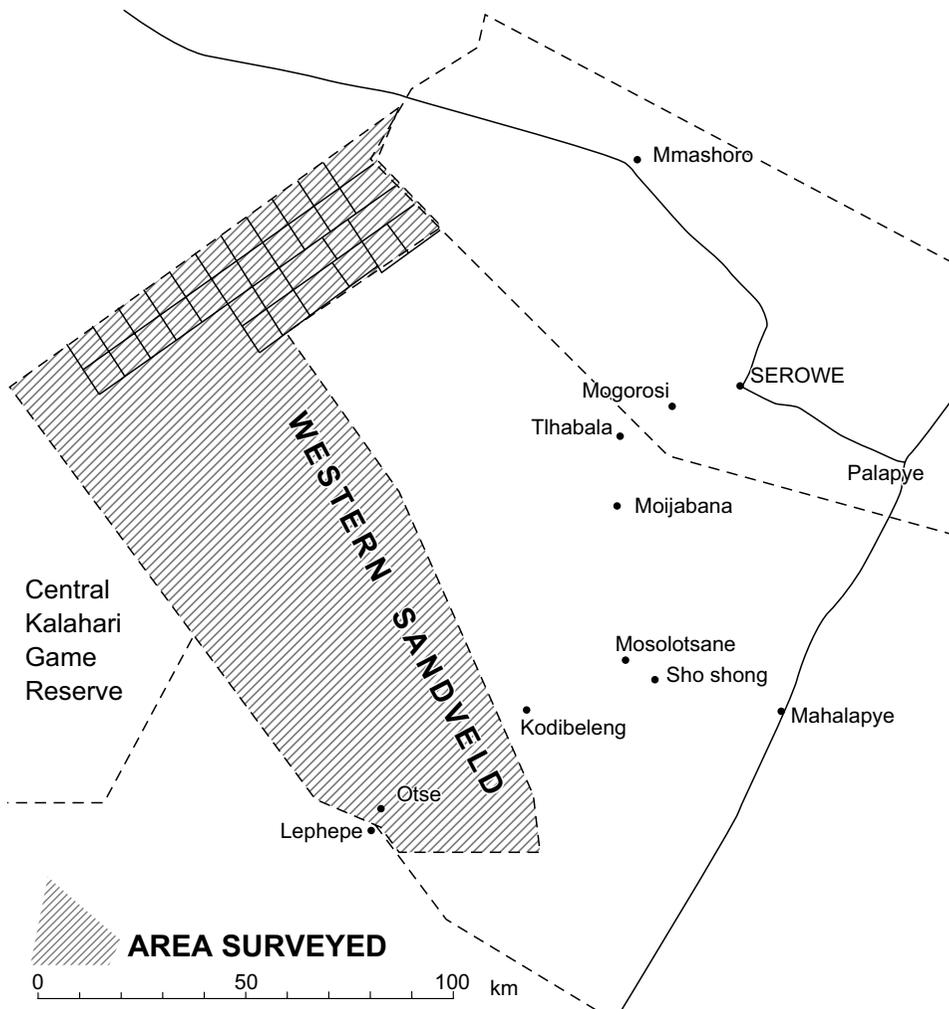


Figure 1 The research area in eastern Kalahari, Botswana



**Figure 2** Western Sandveld in Central District and the area surveyed.

We found some people living at cattle posts and on farms. This was their main, and probably the only physical homes where they reside. However, the people there retain links with relatives in established villages, usually send their children to school, and they believe that if they return permanently to a village, they could re-establish themselves. For these reasons, such people were not been included in the survey; even so, their links are becoming fairly tenuous and, for some, are breaking or have broken. Generally, these cases involve either men from the east who have married into RAD families, or second and third generation settlers whose parents left the home villages before they were born. Many of these latter people, who rarely send their children to school, have been included in the RAD population.

The area to be covered was vast, nearly 10,000 square kilometers. It became

clear from the start that it would be impossible, in the amount of time available, to visit every cattle post and ranch (approximately 100 and 34 respectively) found in the study area. We proposed to both NORAD and the Ministry of Local Government and Lands that we undertake to achieve as large a sample as possible. As a result, we visited two-thirds of the ranches and most of the cattle posts.

Here, it must be noted that there are numerous RADs living to the east of the area surveyed. However, these people are within a reasonable distance of villages such as Mojabana, Tlhabala, Otse, Mosolotsane, Shoshong, Kodibeleng and appear to be more integrated into the village system than those living to their west in the survey area. This does not mean that they can be ignored in proposed Remote Area Development programs.

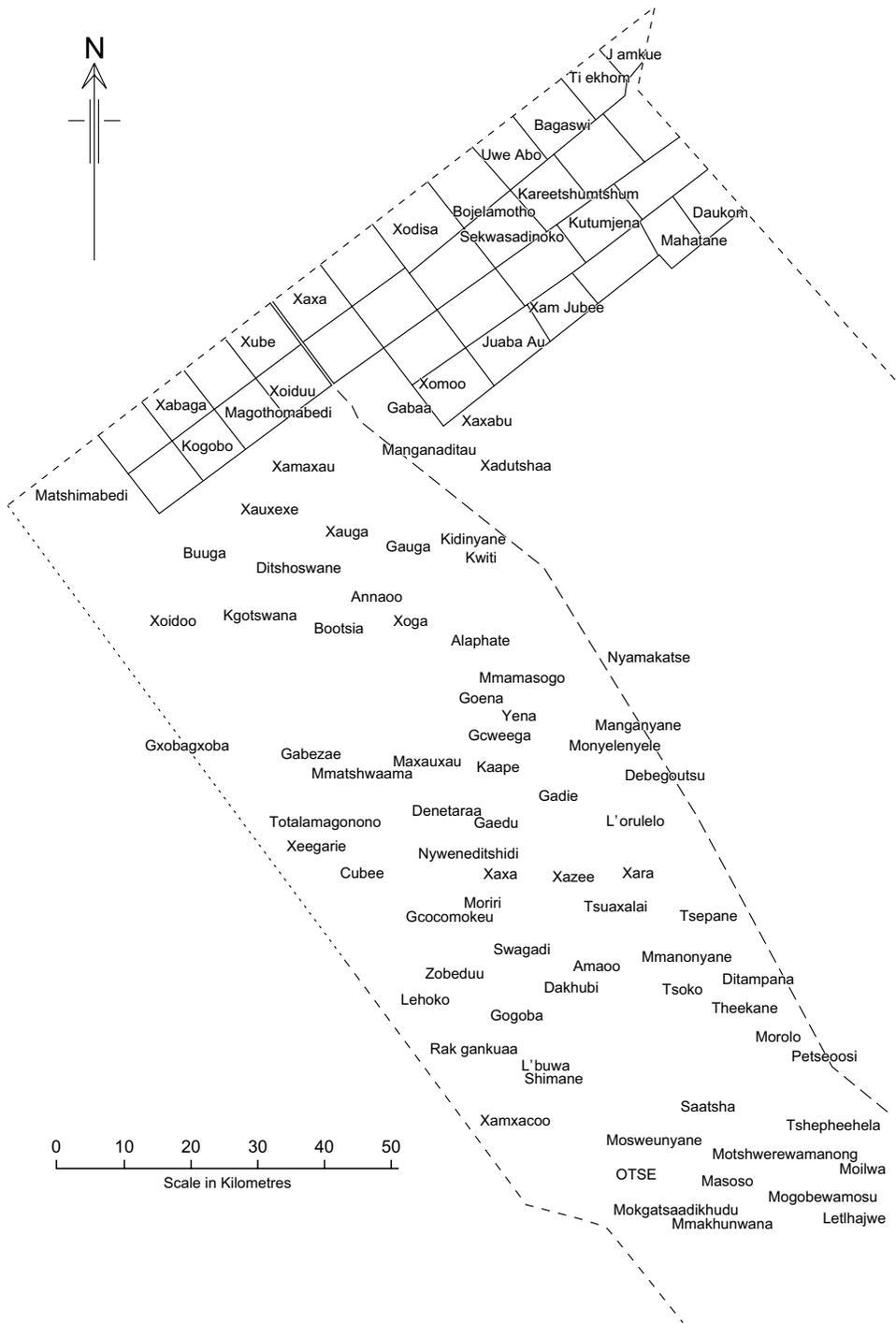
The Terms of Reference also required an overview of current and future land use needs, possible resource capabilities for various practices and ways to secure access to both land and public services. Taking into account the large number of RADs, over 1,800 in the area surveyed (an estimated 4,500+ for the whole Western Sandveld), and that this is a ranching area in which all land, with one small exception, has already been allocated for use, it served no purpose to consider stock raising on any scale as a proposition for RAD development.

We visited approximately 105 ranches and cattle posts and obtained data from 92 of them (Figure 3). At many we found RADs, sometimes in considerable numbers. It soon became apparent that the situation at one farm or cattle post was mirrored at others. Because of time shortage and because the questionnaire could take up to two hours to complete, it was abbreviated and some of the questions omitted. For this reason, the extract sheet was redesigned. Even so, the general picture described includes information on all aspects originally listed.

It must be noted that, for most of the area, future land use will be ranching. There is little, if any, land that can be set aside as communal or as Wildlife Management Area in which community-based natural resource management activities could take place. Practically all land within the survey area has been allocated to cattle-owners who have drilled boreholes. Cattle post owners have been told that they, as well as TGLP Ranch owners, may fence land surrounding their borehole. For this reason, it is difficult, if not impossible, to make precise recommendations for all those who currently live in the area, but are not cattle-owners with rights to the land.

The objectives of the survey were to identify the numbers of Remote Area Dwellers (RADs) by farm and by borehole (cattle post) and to plot these on a map; to determine their group affiliation and place of origin; to make an inventory of their means of subsistence; to examine their current land rights and uses; and to assess their future requirements in terms of available facilities.

The field survey was conducted in two separate periods. The first survey was done between February 5th to 14th and was conducted by Mr. M. Main and Mr. Sefako Morake, who acted as interpreter. Also present, and of considerable assistance, was Mr. Nthobatsang (RADO, Serowe sub-district) and his driver.



**Figure 3** TGLP Ranches and cattleposts in 1991

The first phase covered TGLP Ranches in Sections B and C along the Makoba Fence and some cattle posts to the south and south west. The second phase of the field survey lasted from February 19th to 26th and was undertaken by two teams which included Mr. A Campbell and his interpreter Mr. L. Baleletsi, as well as Mr. Main and an interpreter from Tlhabala, Mr. Gaotsholetswe Oremeng. In all, the survey teams spent 26 days in the field. During the second phase, the two teams worked separate areas, meeting at an appointed place in the evenings. On the 24th of March, 1991 they left the Sandveld and worked in the area to the east and south-east of Otse. Numerous RADs were found here; however, their circumstances are not the same as those living in the cattle posts and ranches to the north. After 12 cattle posts had been visited, estimates for RAD numbers living at other cattle posts in the area were made.

The TGLP Ranch at the junction of the Makoba and Mokoro Fences was the place of commencement of the field work. Shaw's cattle post at Moilwa was the last point of enumeration. Between the two teams, some 2,400 kilometers were covered in the survey area and approximately 105 settlements were visited. Whenever possible, farm and borehole owners were questioned about the distribution and lifestyle of RADs. Generally it is felt that the information given was reasonably accurate.

## **THE WESTERN SANDVELD SURVEY AREA**

As already stated, the survey area was never clearly defined, being described only loosely as "the Western Sandveld" in the Central District, to the west of Serowe. Despite this, however, there seemed to be general agreement that the survey region comprises an area of TGLP Ranches and cattle posts bordered by the Makoba Cordon Fence in the north, the western boundary of the District in the west, and an east-west line drawn through Lephepe in the south. The eastern boundary was taken to be the line of a proposed new trek route. Working from the start within these parameters, we confirmed or modified them in the light of daily experience. For instance, there is a distinct change in vegetation some 25 kilometers west of the village of Mosolotsane (a point which lies very close to the proposed trek route). The vegetation to the west of this point is typical of sandveld while to the east it begins to bear a distinct resemblance to that found on hardveld. The kinds of resources available for grazing by stock differ somewhat between sandveld and hardveld areas, as does the availability of surface water.

The Western Sandveld area consists of sandveld which, in the east and south, changes gradually as the sand cover becomes thinner and harder ground begins to take its place. Generally, the whole area is covered by Northern Kalahari Tree and Bush Savanna, although the composition of vegetation types changes as sands become firmer in the east.

The land is covered by wind-blown sands and appears flat, although there is considerable low relief in the land caused by eroded ridges and sand swells, dunes

and sandy hollows. In the south, around Otse, and spreading eastward towards the Serorome Valley, Kalahari sands are scarred by a shallow fossil drainage system with dark, alkaline soils, often based on shallow calcrete. For much of the area, there is little variation in vegetation patterns, although there are increases in the frequency of certain species as soils become firmer in the east. There are also pockets of thicket in the drainage areas in the south. For the most part, the country is fairly open grassland with mosaics of shrub in lower areas and taller trees on the crests of ridges, swells and dunes.

Most of the common tree species are: *Burkea africana* (Monato), which many had recently died, *Lonchocarpus nelsii* (Mohata), *Terminalia sericia* (Mogonono), also with a number of recently dead trees, *Boscia albitrunca* (Motlopi), *Ochna sp.* (*Monyelenyele*), *Croton sp.* (Moologa), *Combretum zeyheri* (Moduba), and two Acacias, *A. fleckii* (Mohahu), and *A. erioloba* (Mokala). In the east, *Peltophorum africanum* (Mosetlha) and *Combretum apiculatum* (Mohudiri) become more common than in the west. Common shrubs include *Acacia mellifera* (Mongana), *Croton subgratissimus* (Moologa), *Bauhinia petersiana* (Motshanja), *Grewia flava* (Morethwa), *Grewia flavescens* (Mokgomphata), and on harder ground in the south, *G. bicolor* (Mogwana), and *Commiphora sp.* (Seroka).

The Grasslands are generally made up of *Aristida uniplumis* (Tshikitasane), *A. meridionalis* (Seloka), *Eragrostis pallens* and *Cymbopogon excavatus*; while in the south *Aristida uniplumis* and *Eragrostis pallens* tend to dominate. In the drainage areas, *Aristida congesta* is common. Thickets in drainage areas are composed mainly of *Acacia mellifera* and *A. erubescens* (Moloto), interspersed with *Grewia flava* and *G. flavescens*. Around cattleposts and boreholes where grazing has been severe, thick patches of *Tribulus sp.* (Mosetlho), *Hibiscus sp.* (Motswalakgoro) and *Lantana sp.*, etc., have replaced grasses and bush encroachment is spreading. In spite of the environmental changes, there is a considerable variety of wild foods including berries, fruits, tubers, bulbs, cucumbers, beans, leaves, honey, fungi and insects.

Wildlife was noticeably scarce. In a total distance traveled of over 2,500km only a few large mammals were noted and these were seen exclusively in the north and north-west. They were:

- Hartebeest - One group of 10 with young
- Ostrich - Five groups with up to 8 animals
- Eland - Two groups numbering approximately 120 animals traveling together, within ten kilometers of the CKGR
- Giraffe - One group of nine animals, possibly seen twice.

Among other animals observed were: less than 15 duiker, less than 20 steenbok, jackal and tortoise. Very few game birds were seen, these being mainly Korhaan (*Mongwangwa* and *Mokgweba*), Guinea fowl (*Kgaga*), and Sand grouse (*Masoga*).

We were told that *Nato*, the caterpillar that feeds on *Burkea africana*, and which is eaten, sometimes occurs in abundance and termites (*Mothwa*) and flying ants

(*Dikokobele*) are also eaten. Bees also occur, but are said to have decreased considerably in numbers as a result of the drought, and that very little honey is now found.

The Western Sandveld is a traditional ranching area, having supported cattle posts of varying permanence for a considerable time, in some places, for at least 200 years. Apart from Otse, there are no villages and if any services exist, they are primarily in the form of mobile clinics, veterinary services, police, and hawkers who travel through the area in vehicles and sell their goods.

In 1991, there were 34 Tribal Grazing Land Policy Ranches and over 100 cattle posts in the area that was surveyed. In addition, there were well over 50 other cattle posts lying on harder soils, east of the proposed trek route, that were not surveyed. Most cattle posts and many ranches are owned by people whose homes and places of permanent residence are far removed, such as Serowe, Tlhabala, Mosolotsane, Shoshong, Mahalapye, Sefhope, Lobatse, and Ramotswa. Some owners visit their holdings fairly regularly; some send a truck to provide dieseline and pay their employees while visiting the post as rarely as once a year; and others make irregular personal visits, sometimes leaving gaps of as much as six months or more.

Most cattle posts are managed by a foreman who is sometimes a poorer relative of the owner, or he can come from outside the area or, occasionally, be someone born in the area. The labor force consists mainly of people born in the area and whose parents were also born there. In addition to such employees, many cattle posts support others born in the area who may be relatives or friends of those employed.

People from a number of different ethnic groups make up this population, and include San of Tsasi, Kua and Hiotsware origin, Bakgalagadi (mostly Baphaleng and Bakgwatheng), Bapedi, Batalaote and Bangwato with a few individuals from other groups such as Babirwa and Ovaherero. Their history has considerable bearing on their modern lifestyles and, for this reason, is described briefly.

The earliest inhabitants with descendants still living in the area are San (Basarwa) who apparently belong to the Central Bushman language group. Although they speak a variety of dialects, these appear all to be mutually understandable. Traditionally, Tsasi lived in the south around Otse, Hiotsware lived in the east, and Kua in the north and north-west. Today, with the exception of Tsasi, most San no longer know to which group they originally belonged and describe themselves as “people of Moijabana” or “people of Mosolotsane,” depending on the residence of the person for whom their ancestors had been *malata* (‘serfs’ or ‘servants’). Traditionally, they were gatherers of wild food and hunters.

About AD 600, agro-pastoralists spread into the area from the northeast, settling at places like Moijabana, although probably never entering the sandveld except, perhaps, for hunting. Little is known about them and they had vacated the area by 1300. The region was re-occupied by agro-pastoralists in the 17th and 18th centuries. Early arrivals included Bakgwatheng and Baphaleng from the south, Batalaote (an Ikalanga-speaking people from the north-east) and Bapedi from what

is now the northern Transvaal. During the 18th Century, they were followed by Batswana from the south. First arrivals included Bakhurutshe and Bakaa, who were soon followed by Bangwato.

About 1840, the Bangwato moved south to settle in Shoshong, and swiftly gained control of the surrounding area, subjugating lesser peoples. With these subordinate people came a few San who had been used as serfs (*Malata*). Generally, the subordinated people were incorporated into Ngwato wards (*metse*), sometimes as *Batlhanka багаKgosi*, or Chief's servants. The San did not achieve any status and were not recognized as members of any group. Numerous other San lived in the hinterland where they continued their traditional lifestyle, although they maintained ties with the *malata* San. Thus, in this region there were essentially two different populations of San: (1) those living on their own, and (2) those who were serfs.

The serfs' masters had exclusive rights over them and their descendants and, while not being able to sell them, they could use them for any form of service, which included domestic work, hunting and cattle herding. In addition, their masters were responsible for their livelihood; they fed them, looked after their welfare and represented them in relations with other Bangwato. *Malata* were unable to represent themselves in court; they were not considered Bangwato and neither attended the *kgotla* nor were initiated into any regiment. This historical status is extremely important in any modern considerations of their rights to resources.

The Ngwato *Kgosi* (chief) relegated considerable political power for district affairs to heads of wards. Thus, a ward was granted land for living purposes, land for fields, and land for grazing cattle (*dinaga*), all of which was administered by the ward head. In his turn, the ward head allocated use of permanent water sources to family heads and generally was responsible for control of grazing in his *naga* (grazing district). The Western Sandveld was divided into a number of such *dinaga*, and San living there were steadily incorporated into the *malata* of cattle-owners. Thus it is that '*Roan, re Basarwa багаMosolotsane*' simply means that the speakers look upon themselves as the descendants of people who were once the *malata* of the *Kgosana* at Mosolotsane.

Originally, *malata* were not allowed to own property and were required to provide set quantities of wildlife trophies (ostrich feathers, spotted-furs, ivory and meat) to their *Dikgosana* on a regular basis. Although this system of tribute was abolished and *malata* given rights to own property, facets of the traditional system still prevail. They have a strong bearing on the general attitude of the cattle-owners towards people of the original *malata* class.

Initially, agro-pastoralists kept stock on harder soils around modern Moijabana, Shoshong, Mosolotsane, Tlhabala and Mmashoro, and probably moved them into remoter regions during rains, when surface water lay in the pans. At this time, the Western Sandveld was used mainly as a hunting area, and was still occupied by mobile groups of San who had not fallen under the serfdom system.

During the second half of the 19th century, as cattle numbers increased, so people herded them further west when rains fell, only returning them to harder

ground in autumn. When people began to store water by deepening hollows in pans in the sandveld so that they would hold water for longer and to sink shallow wells, they began to acquire rights over water sources. As they spread, so they began to occupy San areas, bringing the San steadily into the Ngwato system. During the 1940s, the first boreholes were drilled in the survey area and the patterns of land use changed. With reasonable year-round water supplies, permanent posts were established and cattle numbers increased. In the later 1950's, a new spate of drilling took place and, almost immediately afterwards, the area was hit by drought. As a result of the drought, many cattle in the Central District died. A relief drilling program was initiated in 1965-66 in the Western Sandveld, resulting in much of the area being put to grazing. Boreholes have continued to be drilled until virtually all available space for grazing has been taken.

In 1976, a zoning exercise took place in the region, the intention being to demarcate areas to be used for commercial or communal grazing, and for some to be kept in reserve. As a result of this, the Sandveld along the Makoba Fence was zoned for TGLP ranches, while much of the area to the south was to be used for commercial ranching. In effect, the commercial area was never gazetted and, apart from TGLP Ranches, the area remains zoned for communal use.

By approximately 1988, the whole of the Western Sandveld had been occupied by cattle-owners and apparently all mobile groups of San had settled, often precariously, on boreholes. The traditional system of hunting and gathering had been displaced by cattle grazing, most large wildlife species had disappeared and the San were reduced to collecting wild food, begging for water and obtaining what little employment was available.

## THE ISSUE OF REMOTE AREA DWELLERS

Who is and who is not a Remote Area Dweller is usually difficult to assess. Definitions given by Childers (1981) and Gulbrandsen, Karlsen, and Lexow (1986) do not, as Childers points out, ever fit in their entirety. The term given to Remote Area Dwellers in government circles in Botswana is *tenyanateng*, sometimes translated as those who are 'deep inside the deep' (Mogwe 1992: 3). San describe other Batswana (people of Botswana) as *batho-ba-bantsho* ('black people') as they see themselves as physically distinct, sometimes referring to themselves as 'Red People.' San are sometimes described by Batswana as 'those who do not rear cattle' (*ba-sa-rua dikgomo*). As will be described below, at least some San do rear cattle, and thus should be described as *ba-rua-dikgomo*.

The RAD population in the Western Sandveld Region is composed of people affiliated to a number of different groups. By far the great majority are San. These are followed probably by Bakgalagadi, although it is doubtful if they number more than about 10 per cent. In addition to these are some Bapedi. Finally, there are numerous single men, emanating from a wide variety of groups, who have married into San, Kgalagadi and Pedi RADs and have, in effect, themselves become RADs

or are on the way there.

As the human population increases at about 3.5 per cent each year, pressure for resource use becomes greater, particularly in rural areas where wild food, firewood and grazing are the basis of daily existence. All land within reach of water points is now being grazed by cattle and nothing really remains for other purposes. Thus, the number of landless people increases and, unless some of these people move towards urban areas, they will become RADs. For this reason, RAD numbers must be expected to rise, not fall.

We commenced with one conception of a RAD, but had to change this as work progressed. After the work we did, we came to some agreement about what we believe a Remote Area Dweller is: A Remote Area Dweller is a person who has no home in a village where there is a recognized *kgotla*, has no claim to land which is recognized by the Ngwato Land Board, and has no claim to the use of water without expectation of conditions being imposed on its use by persons who hold generally-recognized rights to water points.

According to this definition, people who live on a TGLP ranch or cattle post of another and who fulfill the above conditions, irrespective of whether they are employed or not, must be seen to be RADs. The prime reason for believing this is that, should such a person be told to leave his or her present place of residence, he or she has no home to which to return and would, of necessity, have to find a place to live on another farm or cattle post.

Generally, although there are exceptions, these people are San (Basarwa), either Tsasi or Kua-speaking, who have a long history in the area. With few exceptions, San say they were born at or near the place where they were found. The exceptions mostly say that they had been born in Mosolotsane, Moijabana, Tlhabala, Mogorosi, Shoshong, Lephepe or Otse. In fact, it appears that, at the time of their births, their parents may have been living as servants (*malata*) to the Headman (*Kgosana*). Of these villages and later been moved into (or back to) the Western Sandveld. Many other RADs are Bakgalagadi, most of whom do not know whether their parents were Baphaleng, Bakgwatheng, etc. A large proportion of these individuals were also born in the Western Sandveld or had lived in the region for much of their lives. Other people appear to be on the road to becoming RADs. These are:

- a) Single men who, for some reason, have gravitated from a village into the Sandveld, married into San or Kgalagadi communities living there and broken ties with their original homes. As one person put it, "Why should I go back to Sefhope when no one there knows me?" or
- b) People coming originally from villages to work on cattle posts and now having few or no ties with their homes. Often, they are the children of the people, now deceased, who left the village.

At most places where RADs are employed, if they are not single men, then there are other unemployed RADs living with them. In this way, a settlement is

often composed of three to seven people who are employed and have families, and a number of other people, including quite large families, who live with them and are unemployed. Usually, these are relatives, parents, sisters and their husbands, uncles and their children.

In the south, determining exactly who is and who is not a RAD is even more difficult. This has been a traditional grazing area for a very long time, owing to its original abundance of surface water. During the 18th Century, it was centered on Boatlame and Lephepe. During the *Difaqane* ('time of troubles') in the early 1800s most cattle appear to have been removed. By about 1840, cattle numbers were again increasing, and were centered on Shoshong. This area was where Ngwato royalty kept much of their stock tended by Bakgalagadi and San.

Over time, many Bakgalagadi have been integrated into village life at Kodibeleng, Shoshong, Otse, Kalamare and Mosolotsane; however, the great majority of San remained on cattleposts as *malata*, serfs of rich patrons. After generations of sedentary life, they are firmly established in the area with permanent homesteads at which many of them were born and have died. "I can point to more than one hundred graves of my people right here; this is my land."

In the past, these RADs herded their patron's cattle and in return there was a clear understanding that the RADs could have fields and plough with them with the patron's oxen. How far back the history of agricultural fields goes is uncertain, but certainly, it reaches to before the 1931 survey of Mr. E. Seretse. It appears to have withered during the 1960s drought and nearly perished when the value of cattle rose in the 1970's. At that time, *malata* were forbidden to plough with their patron's stock.

Today, a few RADs have cattle and donkeys, and some lands are still ploughed; but RADs say ploughing has drastically decreased, although they would still like to plough. Some families have members living away in larger centers earning cash wages, rather than relying on ploughing.

## REMOTE AREA SETTLEMENTS IN THE WESTERN SANDVELD

Settlements vary in size and layout, but not in permanence. The smallest settlements are those where single men are employed at a cattle post. The largest settlements are situated on cattle posts where men with families are employed and have been joined by relatives or friends who squat on the water point. Small settlements may contain as few as five people whereas large ones can have as many as seventy inhabitants. Larger settlements are usually broken up into a number of family groups scattered around boreholes at distances of up to two kilometers.

While the owner of a cattle post is usually an absentee landlord, he keeps a residence close to the borehole and around this place live most non-RADs who are employed. There were no fields or gardens at any of the farms or cattle posts visited. We saw lands only in the area to the east of Otse, and most of these had not been ploughed for a considerable time. Here also we noted small pens for goats.

Generally, homes had an air of semi-permanence, particularly in the south where people say they had been born in the very village in which they are today living. In one or two cases, they were able to point to fences which had been built around their villages. Comparing these settlements with those of RADs living south and west of Lake Ngami, we felt that they have a more established appearance than those of Ngamiland and that the system here has much deeper roots.

As noted above, most RADs are of San origin. We could see no apparent difference between the lifestyle of San and other RADs. In addition, all San speak dialects which, while varied in vocabulary to a small extent, are mutually understandable. We did question people on their desire or otherwise to live with others who speak a different dialect or belong to a different group. The San from the south say they have no wish to live with San from the north; “those people can change themselves into lions!” Bakgalagadi say they have no wish to be put in settlements with San. We did not ask Bapedi how they feel on this matter but suspect they would be prepared to live with Bakgalagadi, but not with San.

It is difficult to distinguish clearly whether there is an east-west line dividing the San. It is likely that the division is very obscure in the central area. What is clear is that Tsasi living in the south have no wish to live with Kua-speaking San in the north.

Population statistics were recorded for 92 ranches and cattle posts, although a few further cattle posts were visited where no RADs were found. At these settlements, 1,862 RADs and 242 non-RADs were counted. This gives an average non-RAD population of less than three and a RAD population of about 20 per settlement.

If one compares the numbers of people at boreholes over time, from the 1970s through the early 1990s, one can see that there is significant variation (see Table 2). This variation depends on a number of factors, including the quality and quantity of water available at the water point, the state of the equipment, the numbers and types of animals being kept at the place, the types of cattle post or ranch workers who are there, and the operating rules of the cattle owner or water right holder. It also may depend on the types and quantities of grazing, veld products, and wildlife in the area.

**Table 2** Population changes at nine Western Sandveld boreholes

Place	1975	1978	1987	1991
Annao	6	39	—	7
Gaugo	3	31	—	—
Kareetshumtshum	72	57	146	78
Bae	60	187	—	—
Debegoutsu	25	25	—	13
Tsepane	20	26	—	72
Denetaraa	5	18	—	27
Nyamakatse	9	25	—	22
UweAbo	18	38	11	29

We do not believe we missed any mobile hunter-gatherers in the area as they apparently no longer exist. Due to time constraints, we did miss at least 10 cattle posts and 12 TGLP ranches. Obviously, with the closing of some boreholes and the opening of 45 new ones, RADs have spread out since 1978. In addition, some 1,080 mobile hunter-gatherers, estimated by Hitchcock to be in the area in 1978, have somehow been absorbed by existing or new cattle posts and farms. Some of these lived in the area to the north of the Makoba Cordon Fence, and some were probably temporary visitors from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve. They have been excluded from the calculations since many must have been included in the survey count. A total RAD population was estimated for the Sandveld area south of the Makoba Fence. It totaled 4,554 Remote Area Dwellers.

The number of people who have been to, or are actually attending school, is almost negligible. Generally, those who have some education or have children at school are non-RADs. Among RAD populations, only in the south did we find any children attending school and the majority of these are at Kgomodiatshaba School in Kgatleng where there is a hostel. Attitudes towards education vary from place to place, possibly on account of ignorance. In some areas, people express a distrust of education and say they do not want their children to go to school. In other areas, people express a real interest in education, saying that the main reasons for not sending children to school are lack of money for fees and uniforms, no accommodation at schools, and transportation difficulties between home and school. Many people express surprise when told that education is free.

A large proportion of RADs clearly recognize that education is vital as a factor for improving their existing subsistence. For them the problem lies in *how* to obtain education for their children. At one cattle post, a small creche (a pre-school or care facility for young children) was being run by the foreman's wife, who was paid a salary by the owner to look after and teach the children who attend. These children come both from the cattle post itself and from nearby settlements. The creche is well-known in the area.

Nobody was found with a secondary education. Most children leave primary school before attaining Standard 5 and many never go beyond the first two years. It was not uncommon for those children who did attend school to drop out, either because they felt that they were not well treated or because of demands for their labor at home. A small number of women have attended Non-Formal Education classes in Mahalapye and one of these runs a *semauso* (small store) for the cattle post owner.

One man has training in tanning obtained in Kanye, and in brick-making, obtained in Mochudi. He says he had been promised FAP assistance, but this never materialized and he eventually had been forced to return to the cattle post where he now works as a herder at P20.00 a month.

Only three children were reported by Hitchcock as attending school from the whole area surveyed by the two of us (Campbell and Main). In 1991, from the northern part of the survey area, 51 children were attending school, of which 17

come from Kareetshumtshum. Generally, children attending school appeared to come from non-RAD families. In the southeast, 23 people either have been to or were attending school.

Children in Kareetshumtshum attended school mainly in Serowe, although three were going to school in Mmaletswai. Children from other northern settlements go to various schools including Serowe, Mojabana, Mosolotsane, Shoshong and Palapye. Most southern children attend school at Kgomodiatshaba in the Kgatleng, while a very few go to Lephepe and Mahalapye. The communal service center at Mmaletswai contains a school, health post, and other district council facilities. The Remote Area Development Officer from Serowe visits Mmaletswai on occasion, and the Remote Area Development Program and the Central District Council provide supplies for the school and health post.

We were impressed by the different attitudes expressed by some women as opposed to those of almost all men. Women, particularly young women, are outspoken about difficulties that RADs experience, while men tend to be more resigned to their lot in life. Women are basically the only people who have attempted to acquire a little non-formal education. We concluded that, in general, women appeared to be more progressive and more susceptible to new ideas than men, or so it seemed.

One of the areas where women seem to do more work than men is on the lands. In Botswana, 'lands' means agricultural fields or gardens. In the north and central areas we saw no proper fields and only a few small gardens in which people grow maize, sorghum and melons. Only one garden seen can really be described as productive. In the south, particularly at Letlhajwa and Moilwa, we saw remains of numerous lands, some more than two hectare in extent. We were told that some of these are still under cultivation. One or two people have proper ploughs.

Before the 1960s drought, these lands were ploughed by RADs using the cattle post owner's oxen and plough. However, when the value of cattle rose dramatically in the '70's, this practice was stopped. All people living in this area say they have fields, even if not allocated by the Land Board, and that they want to keep and develop them. The problems lie in lack of money to fence and buy seed, and lack of drought power. They say they have asked for help on several occasions from Agricultural Extension Officers in Mahalapye, but have been told they live in an area too remote for assistance. One field at Yena still exists, but appears to belong to the owner.

Nowhere did we learn that Agricultural Extension Officers visited the area. This may be because the area has been zoned for cattle raising. Without any explanation of what it means, RADs find it difficult to understand what zoning implies. Consequently, they also find it difficult to comprehend why services are offered elsewhere and not to them.

A general comment for the whole survey area is that it is difficult to establish any form of field because fencing is an absolute necessity and something they cannot afford. At only a few settlements were we told that owners have refused to

allow planting of crops. These aside, there is little doubt that some crops can be grown in some years and that, for the most part, given the right resources which they currently claim they lack (seeds, tools and fencing), RADs are keen to try and grow them.

In Botswana 'stock' means cattle, donkey, horses, goats, dogs and chickens owned outright by RADs. No sheep were seen anywhere in the area. Basically, the only RADs who own cattle live in the south. In the north and central areas, a number of RADs own one or two head of cattle which they have acquired through work. Table 3 presents data on population, employment, and livestock ownership among a sample of cattle posts in the Western Sandveld region from 1977-78, 1987, and 1991. In some instances, the employees had not been paid a cash wage for which they were contracted, for more than a year and had been given a beast by their

**Table 3** Comparison of population, employment, and livestock ownership data for Western Sandveld Remote Area Dweller/non Remote Area Dweller cattle post residents 1978, 1987 and 1991

FARM	POPULATION			EMPLOYED		CATTLE		DONKEYS		GOATS	
	1978	1987	1991	1987	1991	1987	1991	1991	1987	1987	1991
Farm No. 12		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Daukom	90	8	19	5	4	0	0	2	4	0	0
Gabeetshaa		0	?	0	?	0	?	0	?	0	?
Gamjena		10	?	2	?	0	?	3	?	9	?
Jamkue		21	10	3	5	0	?	4	?	0	?
Jueba Au		13	?	4	6	0	?	5	?	0	?
Kareetshumtshum	57	146	78	13	19	62	8	50	9	153	40
Katamjena		27	21	4	3	0	8	30	1	15	22
Madinoga		12	?	2	?	4	?	0	?	0	?
Mahatane	93	35	?	9	5	0	?	11	?	6	?
Maelesele	-	30	?	5	?	0	?	9	?	0	?
Sekgwasanoko		30	?	4	8	1	?	5	?	8	?
Selagagom		27	?	4	?	0	?	5	?	45	?
Tiekhom	21	16	?	8	2	0	?	2	?	5	?
Tsholetsekhiba		21	?	4	?	5	?	4	?	1	?
Uwe Abo	38	11	29	3	10	5	0	0	9	6	5
Xamjube		15	?	4	5	4	?	9	?	25	?
Xhomoo		31	?	7	?	4	?	7	?	20	?
Xodisa		36	40	9	8	0	0	6	1	25	0
Xoxhao		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	?	489	?	90	?	85	?	152	?	268	?

Notes: Most of the boreholes on these ranches had not been drilled in 1978. A detailed survey was conducted by DOL, RADO and Land Board Member, Central District in December, 1987. Because recent figures exist, not much time was spent surveying the ranches in 1991, and on most of the ranches only numbers of employed persons were collected.

employer in lieu of wages. Several of these people are uncertain what to do with this animal.

A fair number of people say they were contracted to work for cattle and not for cash. Usually, this involves payment of one beast a year, although in some cases they receive two animals a year, one of which is described as 'rations'. Most people working for cattle are not RADs and choose this form of payment as a means of acquiring 'cattle capital'. In one instance where 19 men are employed at one ranch, they all say that they are working for cattle. They say they are owned by the rancher and that this is their traditional form of payment.

At most settlements, one or more RADs own donkeys. In a few instances, they also own horses. Both animals appear to be used mainly for transportation and not for hunting and are undoubtedly considered a form of wealth. In the south, donkeys are used for ploughing. We were doubtful about the number of goats to which people admitted ownership. Whenever goats were still in a pen, they invariably numbered more than their owner had claimed. Compared with Ngamiland where dogs are almost certainly used for small scale hunting, here there are fewer dogs, probably because there is little left to hunt.

Chickens are not considered important. Most chickens seen belong to non-RADs. A number of women indicated they would like to keep chickens and one woman is in possession of *mafisa* chickens. In the south where RADs own larger number of cattle, donkeys and goats, we were told that borehole owners charge watering fees, a beast a year, about which RADs bitterly complain. Nowhere in the study area did we encounter any individual keeping cattle under the *mafisa* system, the Tswana system of long-term loan of livestock in exchange for managing them.

In 1977 Kareetshumtshum had 12 cows, 13 donkeys, 42 goats, 12 dogs and 3 chickens. Today it has 8 cows, 9 donkeys, 40 goats, 17 dogs and 25 chickens. Daukom and Uwe Abo have both lost 10 head of cattle since 1977, but otherwise retain small numbers of dogs and small stock. Manganyane remains as it was in 1977, while Mmanonyane has lost all but one cow.

An important source of income in the rural areas is the production of beer, usually done by women, but sometimes by men. We believe there is a fairly low level of beer production. People say there is no sorghum in the area and they cannot afford sugar. Certainly, beer is brewed and the few who sell it, at "a shilling a cup", say they don't make any money out of it. Probably, beer drinks are more of a social event than a means of raising cash. Only in the south, where *Grewia bicolor* grows, did anybody say that they make *kgadi* and sell it.

Grass suitable for thatching grows throughout the area. Many women indicated they cut grass but say they do it only when commissioned. They all say they would like to cut grass for sale but that there is no way of transporting it to a market. Crafts are sometimes seen as an important source of cash or as items for barter.

Many men say they are able to make mats and whips, tan skins, prepare reims (reins), carve stools and make *kgotla* chairs. A few women and one man say they can make baskets. Most of the handicrafts seen are not suitable for sale to tourists,

but are very suitable for local use. The only quality saleable items seen were baskets. A few women embroider using plastic threads from Drought Relief food bags. Men complain that skins to make mats are extremely difficult to obtain and that they can only make reims when skins and fat are provided.

Gathering of wild plant foods is practiced by every community, particularly by those living in the west of the area. Wild food is important to every one of these communities; however, availability is very variable, especially in the east. Many comment that cattle are depleting wild food in two ways; firstly by consuming some species; secondly by eating the above-ground evidence of roots and tubers. In addition to this, sheer numbers of people have, in some places, reduced quantities of food available. They believe that the quantity of wild food still available, even in reasonable rainy years, is now insufficient to provide for them and that without drought relief they would starve. It was difficult to assess the amount of wild food actually gathered. Certainly, we saw it at many settlements, either collected, being cooked or being eaten. We estimate that at least 20 per cent of food eaten comes from the bush, even when Drought Relief food is being distributed. When it is not available reliance on wild food rises to a level of at least 80 per cent.

There is no legal hunting in the area, nobody receives free hunting licenses nor are they able to buy licenses. A few people admit to illegal hunting, pointing out that meat obtained in this way is often the only protein available. There is no doubt that men cross the border into the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, where they have relatives, to hunt. Three people were seen with bows and arrows and one other person had a spear. Many people say they have lost the traditional hunting skills and that, if they could hunt now, it would be with dogs and spears. In fact, in the area and particularly in the south, there is practically nothing left to hunt.

### **CATTLE POST WORK**

It is not always easy to define whether a person is employed or not. We attempted to come up with a breakdown of jobs:

- a) Some people are hired for a specific job such as foreman, pumper, herder, etc. and receive a specified cash wage (plus rations, not always specified, and the right to take some milk).
- b) Another form of payment is in cattle. A person contracts to work for a specified time, usually a year, on the understanding that payment for this work will be one beast.
- c) Other people, who have usually lived on the cattle post or with the owner's cattle for a considerable period, receive nothing for any duties performed other than the right to take milk, live on the borehole, and receive occasional handouts.
- d) A number of San complain that their employers assume the right to the free services, on an occasional basis, of other members of their employees'

families.

- e) A few people are employed on piece-work, generally cutting posts for a stipulated sum.
- f) Finally, where people live on a cattle post and are not actually employed, owners often expect them to work for nothing at moments when a larger than normal labor force is required.

Of the 601 people employed at 92 boreholes, about 460 are RADs and 141 are non-RADs. This suggests that, for the Sandveld area south of the Makoba Cordon Fence, about 1,200 people are employed of which about 900 are RADs.

Both in 1977 and today, people still report instances of payment by one or two cattle a year, and there are still cases where people work only for milk. Wages have risen considerably since 1977, but are still very low when compared with those received in larger villages and in urban areas. In 1977, San earned on average, between P2 and P5 per month with the addition of food and milk, when available (Hitchcock 1978). Today, they average about P25 per month with milk and food although some receive as little as P10 per month, while a very few earn up to P60 per month.

In 1977, non-San earned on average between P10 and P15 per month with food and milk, with a maximum of P35 in one case only. Today, they average between P40 and P60 per month, while a very few earn over P200 a month. The 1987 Western Sandveld Survey indicated a substantial rise in wages, although in national terms, they remain incredibly low. Between 1987 and 1991 there appears to have been little change. In cases when more than one owner uses a borehole (and in some instances there are up to 17 separate users), each retains a separate labor force. Generally speaking, the workers do not help each other.

Many owners and their agents are extremely irregular in visits to cattle posts. Payments are often delayed; gaps of 3–4 months are common, up to 8 months not uncommon and delayed payments of as much as a year or more were recorded. In one instance, an individual reported he had not been paid for four years. Even when owners visit cattle posts, they do not always pay their staff. As one person put it, “One of the reasons they withhold our wages is to keep us working for them. They know that if we leave we are going to lose all the unpaid wages and that is why we have to stay. If we complain over our pay, we get fired — so there is nothing we can do!”

Difficulties with regard to payment of wages are sometimes compounded when recipients are unable to count. We found that most RADs are unable to count above ten, and that money is counted normally by color of notes or the picture on it. Thus, a man said “I am paid five pounds (P10) and an ostrich (P20).” One said that he likes to receive his pay in the same combination of notes every month so that he knows what he is getting (“One red and one green note”).

Giving of rations as part of the payment package is not regulated in any way and is subject to the same vagaries as payment of wages. Although in some cases the monthly delivery of rations (and wages) is extremely regular and reliable, these

instances are most certainly the exception. Normally, months go by before food is delivered. Some employers deliver rations only once a year.

The level of rations appears to vary considerably; some employers give of their staff a 12.5kg bag of mealie meal, some sugar, tea and tobacco, and allow them to eat any animals which die. Others give the same amount of food to be shared between all their employees. Some employers kill one animal a year for their staff, sometimes in addition to fairly regular rations. Others offer no rations at all, although they may kill a beast. As a San RAD noted,

Cattle owners often prefer to employ us San to Black people. They know we do not kick up a fuss if we are poorly treated whereas Blacks do. Also, we have no homes to go away to, nor fields to plough when it rains. We are prepared to work for less money than Black people.

Although a considerable number of people have spent many years working for the same employer, many have only worked for a short time with their current employer. There is a surprising level of mobility among workers. Even though people are mobile, most report that they were born within about 50 kilometers of the place where they now work. Frequently, people say they had only started work during the last few months and are uncertain how much they will be paid, even though a sum may have been agreed. As one individual put it, "Although we may agree on the amount of our pay when we start work, we are never actually certain how much we will receive until we see the money."

If people are dissatisfied, it appears they wait until they are eventually paid, and then leave immediately to look for another job. In one case, already mentioned, a man waited for four years to receive his pay. Finally he was given a cow instead of the money he had been promised, and left immediately to work for another cattle-owner on the same borehole.

Other sources of income in the Western Sandveld include government programs. During the drought, for example, people were employed on bush clearing for roads. This occurred only in the TGLP Ranches and east of Otse. Where it happened, it was popular, with almost all people able to work, men, women and older children participating. It appears that if such employment could be offered on a regular basis, it would be well supported.

In a number of areas in Botswana, San and other Remote Area Dwellers depend heavily on food supplied by the government. In some cases, the food is provided for purposes of drought relief. In other cases, RADS who are considered 'destitutes,' those living below the poverty datum line, receive food. In some cases, elderly people receive pensions which they often use to buy food, some of which they share with relatives and friends.

We found it difficult to understand the system used for issuing rations. People reported that during 1990 relief food was distributed until June. At some settlements everyone received rations, children and adults, whether employed or not. At others,

only women and children received food. In one case, only men received food, and in another all adults but no children were fed.

When food distributions recommenced in December, some people who had never received rations before began to be fed, while others who had received food in June were excluded. At many settlements rations began to be issued to everyone irrespective of employment. In addition to issues to RADs, we found RAD food bags in the homes of people who obviously own considerable numbers of cattle and have no RADs working for them. During December to February, 1991, issues were extremely irregular, many people saying they had received only one issue during the three month period. Many RADs say that, despite the inefficiency of distribution, food relief is vital and how they cannot manage without it.

Milk is of exceptional importance to all residents of cattleposts. This is recognized by cattle-owners who generally allow employees and families to use it. In only a few instances did we learn that people are refused milk. It is the basic food at some times during the year, either fresh or as *madila* (soured milk).

One of the problems people faced in the Western Sandveld and other remote areas of Botswana related to their ability to get registered with the government, a system known as Omang, and to have the opportunity to vote. A few RADs did not know anything about National Registration. Most people know they have to register and about 20 per cent have completed application forms. Registration apparently took place more than a year ago; however, only one person admitted to having received an Omang card.

In the north, few people appear to be registered as voters, although many people in the south hold voters cards. Only a very small proportion of the people interviewed know their Member of Parliament by name and only in the south did any of them know the name of their District Councilor. Very few individuals say they had voted at the last election. One man reported; "I vote for Seretse Khama." (Seretse Khama, the first President of Botswana, had died in 1980). Nobody was able to say that the Member of Parliament had ever visited the area and only a few had seen their Councilor (who has a cattle post in the area).

It became apparent that RADs from this area never attend *kgotla* meetings held in villages. Some say they have never been to the *kgotla* at all. The general level of knowledge about local current affairs is exceptionally low. For instance, many are unaware that boreholes are likely to be fenced, although they are aware that they may have to move.

The only regular service offered comes from the Veterinary Department which makes visits to all farms and cattle posts. Other sporadic visitors include the Police and the Department of Wildlife. The Community Development Officer, Remote Area Development Officer and Mobile Clinic, except during annual vaccination, are unknown in most areas. None of the government official appears to have attempted to encourage children to go to school.

Only one cattle post reports regular visits from a number of services, including the Community Development Officer, Police, Department of Wildlife, Mobile

Clinic, etc. It transpires that this cattle post is owned by a senior representative of local government. As one cattle post worker put it, "The Vets come here a lot; they (Government) look after cattle better than they look after people."

One of the difficulties facing RADs is that they have lower access to stores and places to purchase goods or obtain services. Except at Otse, there are no retail stores anywhere in the area and most RADs have only limited ways to purchase consumer items such as tea, sugar, meal, clothes and tobacco. If they live close to the Makoba Cordon Fence, they walk or ride to the store to its north. Elsewhere, the stores are too far distant for them to walk.

In some instances, cattle-owners take their staff on occasional visits to stores at Mosolotsane, Shoshong and Mahalapye, for example. The general rule, however, is for employees to purchase from their employers when they visit the settlement, or from *dimauso* owned by their employers. Complaints about prices, particularly in regard to goods sold by hawkers, are common. Generally, prices are high and RADs are forced to pay them if they want the commodities. It is ironic that the poorest people in Botswana often have to pay the highest prices for goods.

Another problem with living in remote areas was the lack of information and communication systems. Working radios were seen in some 60–70 per cent of settlements visited. Many are owned by non-RADs but some belong to RADs. We were not certain to what extent programs are actually understood by RADs, but we do know that many people listen to the radio and appreciate the programming available.

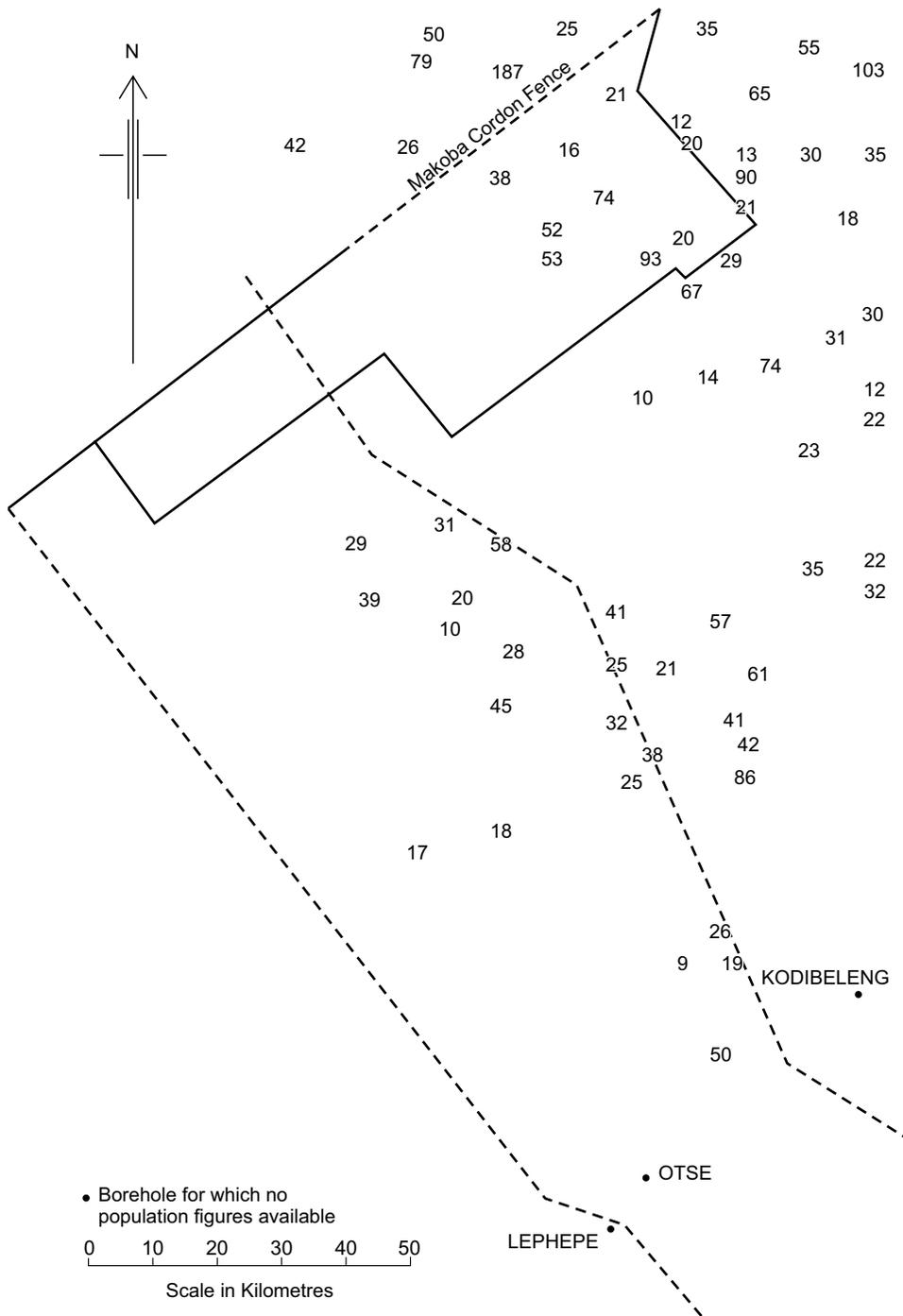
All RADs have some knowledge of Setswana, with about 90 per cent speaking reasonably well and 80 per cent being completely fluent. Only rarely was anyone encountered who either could not speak Setswana or spoke it so badly as not to be easily understood. Many RADs speak Setswana without an accent.

There is considerable movement throughout the area and into the Central Kalahari Game Reserve. Communities are not isolated and insular; there is marked traffic between them. Frequently an individual seen at one farm yesterday is seen at another today. With so much movement, we feel RADs should have a better knowledge of current affairs and we find it difficult to understand why there is such a low level of general knowledge. We conclude that it may be simply because the RAD population does not see itself as part of the greater community and therefore has little interest in it.

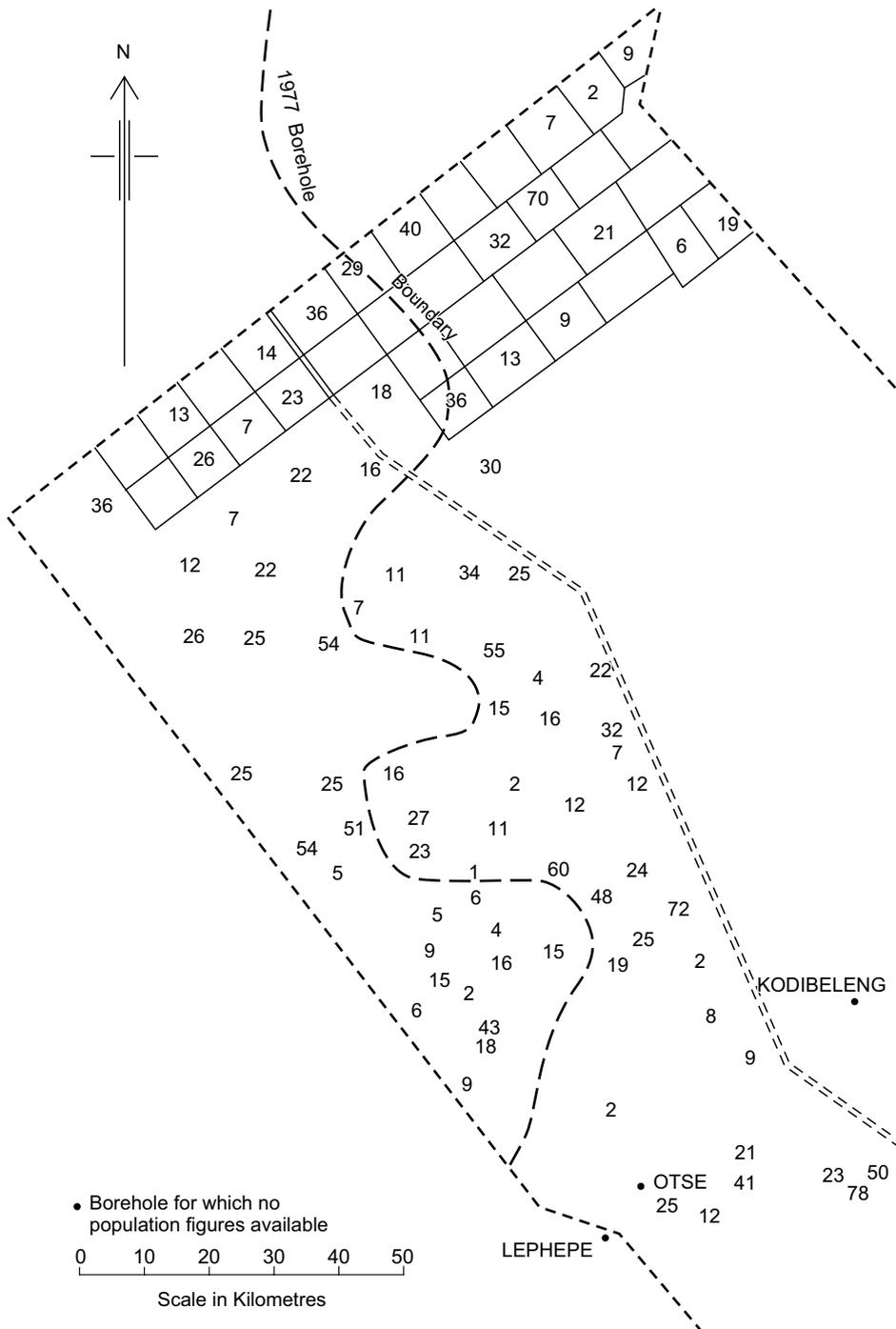
## **CHANGES BETWEEN 1978 AND 1991 IN THE WESTERN SANDVELD**

During the 12 year period from 1978 to 1991, a number of few changes have occurred in the Western Sandveld (Figure 4 and Figure 5). The following is merely an outline of some changes which have an important bearing on developments in the area.

- a. The sedentary population has increased to include about 4,500 RADs



**Figure 4** 1976-77 Population distribution



**Figure 5** 1991 RAD Population distribution

- living in the Western Sandveld, south of the Makoba Cordon Fence and excluding Block A TGLP Ranches and Mmaletswai.
- b. About 45 new boreholes had been drilled in the western areas of the Sandveld. Even today, new holes were being drilled, as well. At the same time, a number of boreholes from pre-1978 have ceased to function, although this probably does not exceed 10.
  - c. Generally, cattle posts have spread to the western District Boundary and there is little area left today which is not grazed at some time of the year. What this means is that there are few, if any, areas where people can take their animals if, for example, they have a bush fire destroy the grazing on their cattle post or ranch.
  - d. Large mammals, wildebeest, hartebeest, gemsbok, kudu, giraffe and springbok have been virtually eliminated from the area and smaller mammals are substantially reduced in number.
  - e. The volume of wild food has been reduced, either through species disappearing in some places, or being depleted in others.
  - f. To some extent, the lifestyle of the mobile section of the population has become more sedentary. In 1978, Hitchcock estimated there were 1,080 mobile hunter-gatherers. It is doubtful that any such people existed in 1991.
  - g. Part-time gatherers still exist, but they are settled and live on cattle posts and probably move only for shorter periods of time to look for plant foods. They no longer hunt in the area, although some cross into the Central Kalahari Game Reserve to hunt, or they did in 1991.
  - h. The mobile hunter gatherer population is no more, and, to some extent, has been absorbed by the cattle post population. In effect, this means that the cattle post population has increased very considerably. Even so, few of these people are actually employed for cash wages and most spend time collecting plants to supplement whatever Government food and milk they receive.
  - i. The number of people with some level of primary education has risen from three in 1978 to 74 in 1991.
  - j. Wage rates have also increased, although they remain far below the breadline. San now average about P25 a month, instead of P4 in 1978, while non-San receive about P50 a month, instead of P12 in 1978.
  - k. There are few people left who do not understand Setswana, while most people speak the language with some fluency. A few people speak English.
  - l. RADs appear to own somewhat less stock today than they owned in 1978. It may be that RAD stockowners have tended to move towards Mmaletswai.
  - m. Opportunities for laboring outside the area have changed. People no longer take up contracts on foreign mines. Thus, in the north of the Sandveld, no real alternatives exist, while in the southeast more people work as laborers,

mostly in construction, in Gaborone, Mahalapye, Palapye, or Jwaneng.

- n. All RADs today recognize the possibility that they will be forced to move in the not-too-distant future. In 1978, this was recognized only by a few people; today it looms as a major threat to their existence.

## WHAT DO RADs HAVE?

At first glance, RADs appear to have nothing; but this is by no means true. Generally speaking, most RADs have a permanent or semi-permanent home in the area where they were born. They are surrounded by their relatives and friends who live in the neighborhood. Each family is part of a wider network of families which spreads away from it for a considerable distance.

This network of relatives and friends provides an important support system, particularly in difficult times. It means that if people lose their jobs, or are told to move, they have somewhere to go and know they will receive help with food and shelter until they have re-established themselves.

RADs are very conversant with the area's resources, its wild plant foods, beehives, smaller animals and so on. This may be the result of several generations existing in this region or due to a long association with the area. Consequently, they do not starve when other foods are not as readily available.

Many of the RADs are employed, even if at a very low wage. This gives them small amounts of money, some milk, and a secure place to live. It also provides a base for relatives to stay and so builds up reciprocal obligations.

Perhaps the one thing RADs really lack is the inalienable right to live in a place and use its facilities without obligation. In effect, RADs have no real land-use rights and can be told to move by anyone who has been awarded such rights by the Land Board. RADs have little apparent access to officialdom. They do not attend *kgotla* meetings and have no voice in community decisions. They are unable to articulate their problems and wishes, particularly in respect to land rights. If they are unfairly imposed upon by their employers or others, they have no means of redress.

They have a minimum of possessions. For instance, few own donkeys and goats, let alone horses or cattle, nor do they have the means to obtain these in any quantity. If they manage to accumulate any stock, many animals die in the recurrent droughts, or the borehole owner demands higher watering fees than they can afford to pay.

Because they have no subsistence base, they have few choices. A number of comments were made along these lines:

"If we complain over our pay, we get fired; so, there is nothing we can do."

"I work here because there is nowhere I can get a job anywhere else."

"The employer can always find an excuse for not paying us. No matter how hard you work, you can't satisfy him."

Given these circumstances, RADs lack self-confidence, pride and self-respect. In short, they lack any form of independence and this tends to color all their thinking and to shape their way of life.

### **WHAT DO RADs WANT?**

What RADs really want is not easy to define. They make statements about their wishes, and many of these were recorded. Problems lie in the way history has conditioned their thinking and outlook on life. For more than a hundred years, they have belonged to a servant class at the bottom of the social hierarchy and, so far as their relations with non-RADs are concerned, have had their thinking done for them. Consequently, while they know what they dislike about their lives, they expect authorities to tell them how they can improve themselves. This does not mean they want to do what authority decides for them, rather they are conditioned to doing whatever they are told.

For RADs, the picture of people who are well-to-do reflects cattle-owners who probably have lands at home. They see this as the way to succeed and really do not understand that there may be other options. Recent surveys have apparently tended to put this option to RADs in a way which makes them believe this is what is likely to happen to them. For instance, one group knows a proposed location, Seloosi, where it has been suggested they might move; and another, in the south, say if they have to move, they want to go to Magakabe.

Most people say they want a borehole and land around it which would be their own. They also want to be helped with stock and Government services. Apart from these, standard requests are for ploughs, wire (to fence agricultural plots), seeds, donkeys and implements. They also recognize lack of Government services which are afforded further to the east, and a common request is for schools and clinics. They also want greater security of land and resource tenure. The Western Sandveld population survives because it is an integrated system with its members interlocked in a network of extended economic and social relationships of varying types. They could do better, they say, if they had a greater degree of livelihood security.

When asked how they would live if in possession of all these things and had, say, three cows, one man said he would sell a cow to obtain money for food. In the second year, he supposed he would have to return to work at a minimal wage for his old employer. In other words, many RADs do not understand the complications involved in a combination of property ownership and the need to make a living. Their existence is precarious because of many factors including population growth, diminution of wild foods, increasingly commercialized ranching, potential losses of employment opportunities, loss of a major protein source with the end of hunting, lack of services that can help them become more self-sufficient, and, for some, threatened expulsion from their homes, with nowhere to go except to other boreholes, where they risk the possibility of being removed again.

After discussions like this, they agree that a prerequisite to any form of life

away from others is to have cash in hand so that they will not be forced to sell whatever they are given in the first instance. They also recognize that not all years are good years and that several seasons can go by when they reap little or nothing.

Many RADs express the wish for a greater measure of independence: they do not want to be obligated to work for others, to beg for water and be beholden to people who are better off than themselves. There is a tremendous need for consultation, recognition of traditional lifestyles and land use systems, freedom of choice (like other Batswana enjoy), compensation for losses, and the need to understand better citizen rights in terms of the Botswana Constitution and the law.

A major issue that has faced San and other rural peoples in Botswana has been relocation. San, Bakgalagadi, and others have had to move out of national parks and game reserves, including, most recently, the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (see Ikeya, this volume). They have also been required to move out of areas that were designated as state land, as occurred, for example, in the Northern State Lands in Botswana in the 1950s. In some cases, they have been relocated into RAD settlements, leaving their ancestral areas for central locations where the government of Botswana provides water and other services. The process of relocation has served to disrupt socioeconomic systems, and exacerbated the degree to which San and other RADs must depend on the state and other institutions for their subsistence. Feeding programs, while they may avert hunger, are, according to some people, demoralizing in the long term.

As part of the ARADP survey of the Western Sandveld, we were asked to ascertain the general feelings about moving to a proposed Community Service Center in the extreme north-west of the study area. The general reaction was either completely negative or conditionally positive. Perhaps the people's own responses best spell out their feelings:

“We would go because we would be asked to go.”

“Yes, if told by the Government to go, I would go. I don't know if I would go otherwise.”

“We would go, but we would have to get permission from our Headman.”

“We were born here. All the boreholes around here have been drilled on our motherland.”

“What we really want is a village of our own.”

“We won't move to a Community Service Center unless it is put here, where we are. This is our home.”

“If Government could find land where we would be free, yes, we would go (to a Community Service Center).”

“We have been displaced from our land by the cattle owners, and now they want us to move out. If Government wants us to move over that line (the CKGR boundary) we will, but no further. If we are moved, we want a borehole, school, clinic, fields, tools, donkeys, ploughs, seeds, cattle and goats.”

“This is our home. This is where we come from.”

“We don’t want to move, but if we have to move, then we will go to Magakabe.” (They said they were not prepared to go anywhere else.)

“We have been told that Seloose has been reserved for us and that is where we must go. I suppose we will go there, but this is our home and we would prefer to stay here.”

“I can point to more than one hundred graves of my people right here; this is my land.”

“I was born here and I will die here. I will not move.”

It is clear that many people saw the land on which there are now cattle posts and ranches as originally their land. A number of them said that they were the first people to reside in the area. Others said that they came in before the cattle post owners did, and that they should not be required to leave the areas where they had long-standing customary land rights. There was great concern about the expansion of ranches and of fencing in the area, as they saw these trends as indications that they would be asked to leave.

### **DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS IN THE WESTERN SANDVELD**

In 1978, Hitchcock prepared a series of recommendations for development of the Western Sandveld. They were based on Botswana’s guiding principles of democracy, development, self-reliance and unity, and included the Nation’s stipulated planning objectives; rapid economic growth, social justice, economic independence and sustained development. Hitchcock (1978) made some 34 recommendations which sought to develop the area in such a way that all its inhabitants received economic opportunities, however small, and that social justice prevailed.

A few of these recommendations have been followed, but it has proved difficult to learn if others were going to be implemented. The *Central District Development Plan 4.3* says “Development of RADs requires concerted efforts and harmony with other programs rather than to have it isolated in a manner it has hitherto appeared.” What is actually happening does not appear to follow this ideal.

In effect, land allocation and drilling of boreholes has continued unabated since 1978, irrespective of, and apparently without consultation with, people living on it. Without massive expropriations, it appears today that any carefully reasoned developments, fair to all citizens, are impossible to implement as the land for these has been ceded to cattle-owners. Since the area is primarily sandveld with a mean annual rainfall of 350mm, it is suitable really only for ranching. Growing crops on a sustained basis is going to be very difficult.

The nearest major facilities are more than 100 kilometers distant making provision of services potentially very expensive. Currently, rights to drill boreholes on an eight-kilometer grid have been allocated to cover almost the entire area, and it is being used extensively for stock raising. With the exception of a small area in the northwest, virtually no vacant land remains. Wildlife in any viable numbers no longer exists, and the level of other wild foods is being steadily lowered both

through overuse by humans and through cattle grazing. There is a very large number of poor people living in the area, possibly in excess of 4,000. The majority of these people were born in the area and have no homes elsewhere.

Because of the nature of settlement distribution on boreholes, which is more-or-less governed by the 8 kilometer rule, settlements tend to be small and distances between them large. There are no villages in the area, no services such as schools and clinics, and no retail stores. In particular, there are no *dikgotla* and no place for people to come together to discuss mutual problems and aspirations. While settlements may be small in general terms, some of them number from 50 to 100 inhabitants which, for a cattle post or ranch, is large and likely to pose real problems if land is fenced.

Remote Area Development staff appear sparse on the ground and ill-equipped to deal with the vast number of RADs in their Districts. Lack of female RAD Officers tends to exacerbate the problem. There are few job opportunities, with herding virtually the only occupation. Even during droughts, it is extremely difficult for Local Government to introduce meaningful Council work projects.

Perhaps the greatest problem lies in the attitudes of all those involved in the so-called "RAD problem".

- a) RADs tend to act defeated. As mentioned above, they tend to do what is expected of them which is to behave like servants.
- b) Cattle-owners treat RADs as servants. Even if RADs provide entire day-to-day management of cattle posts, owners still impose upon them through low wages and poor conditions of service.
- c) There is an unfortunate tendency for officialdom to see RADs as a hindrance to organized development in rural areas. For instance, land occupied by RADs has been allocated for ranching without regard for RAD needs.

It is clear from the data collected in the Western Sandveld Accelerated Remote Area Development Program survey that significant changes have occurred over time in the livelihoods and the well-being of people living in cattle post and ranch areas. For some people in the area, notably the cattle owners, incomes have increased. This is also true for some cattle post and ranch workers, as can be seen in Table 4. What must be taken into account, however, is the fact that in a number of cases, there are fewer people working on the cattle posts and ranches than was the case in the past. Part of the reason for this situation is that people who own cattle posts and who have leases over ranches have cut back on the number of workers in order to reduce costs. In addition, there have been efforts on the part of some cattle owners to professionalize their work force, hiring people with extensive experience or who have certificates from the Botswana College of Agriculture (BAC). Some RADs contend that the expansion in fences has led to a replacement of workers because, they say, cattle no longer go as far as they used to for grazing or surface water when

**Table 4** Livestock-related employment data for a sample of cattle posts in the Western Central District Region of Botswana

Date of Research	Number of Jobs per Location	Salary Levels (Range and Average)	Reference and Date
1975	7	P5 –P18, P10	Ebert et al (1976)
1977	7	P2 –P30, P12	Hitchcock (1977)
1978	5	P2 –P35, P9.39	Hitchcock (1978: 314)
1987	6	P10–P40, P21	Tideman (1987)
1990	4	P10–P60, P32	Interview Data (Hitchcock)
1991	5	P40–P60	Campbell and Main (1991a: 45)

it is available, and they have less of a tendency to get lost.

Whereas there were people herding cattle in the Western Sandveld in 1978 for no pay or rations whatsoever, this did not appear to be the case in 1991. People were still having to wait for their pay or rations, sometimes for up to two-three months. There was a growing gap between the haves and the have-nots in the Western Sandveld. Those people who were told to leave cattle posts and ranches were crowding together in places such as Mmaletswai or on the peripheries of villages on the edge of the Western Sandveld. In some cases, people who had been involuntarily relocated were moving from place to place, depending on other people for support and hoping that the water point owner would not seek to remove them. There were significant differences in pay rates for San and non-San, with the non-San being paid two to three times on average what San were receiving. It was also found that non-San cattle workers tended to be paid more frequently and they received higher benefits such as time off in case a member of the worker's family died.

Remote Area Dwellers all faced the prospect of difficulties if there were problems in the livestock industry, such as the outbreak of a cattle disease such as Foot-and-Mouth Disease or Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP). The outbreak of FMD in 1977 in the Botletle Region of Central District saw a reduction in the numbers of people working on cattle posts. In North West District, as a result of the outbreak of CBPP in 1995, hundreds of cattle post workers lost their jobs and sources of subsistence when all of the livestock in the district, some 320,000 head, were destroyed by the government (Hitchcock 2002). In the Western Sandveld in the past several years, San cattle post workers were losing jobs to immigrants, notably to Zimbabweans.

## CONCLUSIONS

While there is a tendency among some observers in Botswana to see Remote Area Dwellers as consisting primarily of San, the work that has been carried out in

the Western Sandveld region reveals that there are significant numbers of non-San Remote Area Dwellers. The concept 'Remote Area Dweller' is seen not so much as an ethnic label as one designating where people live and the kinds of lifestyles they lead.

A crucial characteristic of many RADs in Botswana is landlessness. Land Boards would not allocate arable, water, or grazing rights to cattle post workers, and cattle post owners and ranch lessees had the right to tell anyone on their land to leave if they so chose. It is interesting to note that the residents of RAD settlements in Botswana do not have that same right to tell others to leave, as the government maintains that people have the right to 'live anywhere they choose' so they can go to settlements and stay there. Thus, the picture of land and laborer rights in rural Botswana is much more complex and more inequitable than is indicated in government legislation and policy papers such as the Tribal Grazing Land Policy White Paper (Republic of Botswana 1975) and the National Policy on Agricultural Development (Republic of Botswana 1991). In some ways, there are similarities to the situations on freehold farms in Botswana, such as the Ghanzi Farms in western Botswana.

It is useful to compare the situations of Western Sandveld cattle post workers with those of laborers on cattle stations in the Australian cattle industry (Stevens 1974; McGrath 1987; May 1994; Young 1995: 77–78, 140–152). In both Botswana and Australia, aboriginal people play important roles in caring for livestock in remote areas. In both cases, the alienation of land to outsiders for pastoral production purposes initially caused conflicts. San and Aboriginals both experienced costs and benefits from the livestock industry. The cattle post workers of Botswana and the cattle station laborers of Australia both take pride in their work, and they were concerned about the well-being of the livestock industry. In both regions, aboriginal people were often excellent stock workers. A major difference between the situations in the Western Sandveld region of Central District, Botswana and the outback of Australia was the fact that in Australia, Aboriginal ownership of cattle stations is on the rise.

Unlike areas around the Okavango Delta and the Makgadikgadi Pans, the Western Sandveld does not have much to recommend it to tourists, and as a result, tourism-related income is hard to come by for local people. Markets for crafts are minimal, and as a result craft-related income is low. This contrasts with the situation in North West District and Ghanzi District, where craft-related income for remote area communities is relatively significant, depending on proximity to markets (e.g. Maun, Tsodilo, Gomare, Ghanzi) and the presence of craft purchasing operators such as those from the Kuru Family of Organizations.

Special Game Licenses are no longer available in Central District (or anywhere else in Botswana, for that matter), and as a result, people have to get citizen hunting licenses if they are to hunt legally. This is not something that is easy to do for most people, as they have to travel to Serowe or Gaborone in order to obtain a license. Besides, the numbers of wild animals available for hunting is extremely low.

Fences, both cordon fences and perimeter fences around ranches, have contributed, arguably, to declines in wildlife numbers.

A significant concern of local people in the Western Sandveld relates to the availability of wild plants that are used for food, medicines, building materials, and other purposes. Some people in the area argue that as the numbers and densities of livestock have increased, the availability of wild plant resources have declined. Cattle compete for some of the same resources as people do, they note, and as a result of the presence of small stock and large livestock on the range, it is harder to find certain kinds of plant resources. As Perkins, Stuart-Hill, and Kgabung (2002) have argued, cattle-keeping has impacts on wildlife, vegetation, and veld products. This is particularly true close to boreholes in the so-called 'sacrifice zone' (0–400 meters), which generally is heavily trampled, and the bush-encroached zone (200–2,000 meters), the area where shrubs have replaced grasses and where competition for wild plant species is intense. People in the Western Sandveld have noted that some of the major species on which they depended in the past, such as *morama* (*Tylosema esculenta*) is harder to find now than was the case in the past.

People no longer are as dependent on melons (e.g. *Citrullus lanatus*) as they used to be, in part because of the greater availability of water from boreholes and wells, but also because livestock and wild animals compete with people for these resources. The use of fire as a management tool has also changed; whereas people regularly burned the veld at certain times of the year or under specific climatic conditions, the timing and frequency of burning patterns have changed, in part as a response to government recommendations but also because of the presence of more people on the landscape. There have been some large, uncontrolled fires in the Western Sandveld over the past two decades which have had serious impacts on the range, impacts, which, according to local people, would have been mitigated had they been able to use the small-scale burning strategies that they had learned when they were young.

Whereas human dependence on ground water, livestock, and livestock products tended to expand with the introduction of new water points and livestock in the Western Sandveld, it is apparent that this dependency has decreased in recent years as the numbers of workers and residents on cattle posts and ranches has declined and as cattle owners have become increasingly strict about the use of the animals and other resources on their properties. There is no doubt whatsoever that the degree of dependence on foraging resources has varied over time, but the extent to which groups depend on foraged foods for their primary subsistence and income has declined. Most people in cattle post and ranch areas in places like the Western Sandveld have a mixed economy, depending on a number of different kinds of activities for food (foraging, borrowing from relatives or friends, depending on government livelihood supports such as destitute payments, receiving rations from cattle owners, and purchasing goods).

Local people in the Western Sandveld have told researchers, development workers, and government officials for years that they want to be able to receive

development assistance that is aimed at enhancing their livelihoods in sustainable ways over the long term. They see the value of some of the livestock projects that have been initiated because they realize that livestock represents an important part of the Botswana economy in general and an extremely important part of the economy of the Western Sandveld region in particular. The people of the Western Sandveld were appreciative of the assistance provided to Botswana by international institutions like the World Bank and the European Union. At the same time, they would like to see similar kinds of development efforts funded by international donors to bring about an end or at least a significant alleviation of poverty. They also realize the significance of a Botswana government commitment to poverty alleviation, and they recommend intensified efforts to address poverty and vulnerability in Botswana.

The RADs would like to see more assistance provided to cattle post and ranch workers in addition to cattle owners. They would like a minimum wage in the agricultural sector which is enforced carefully by government. They would also like to see Land Boards and ministries seek to ensure the land and water rights of people living in commercial ranching areas, granting them formal arable, grazing, and water rights. Without these kinds of development initiatives, people in the Western Sandveld and other commercial ranching areas in Botswana say, they will have to continue to be dependent on other people — and the government of Botswana and international organizations — for their livelihoods.

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that in the past decade in Botswana and other parts of southern Africa, there has been a call by San and others for more community-based management and ownership of land and resources. It is difficult, if not impossible, for a San to obtain freehold rights over land in Botswana, and there are few, if any, cases where San have gotten a water right. Privatization of land and water generally has worked to the detriment of San in Botswana.

As this study has shown, those members of society who are the poorest of the poor and who depend relatively heavily on access to common property and natural resources have found themselves in situations where they are marginalized and squeezed into smaller and smaller areas where their resource rights are restricted. The efforts to promote community-based natural resource management have not had much impact among San and other people in commercial ranching areas. None of the San in the Western Sandveld has been able to benefit directly or indirectly from the decade and a half long effort to promote community-based resource management and development in Botswana from 1990 to the present. As Taylor (2006: 4) has noted, ‘Processes of land capture by a privileged minority are often driven by state-led ‘reforms,’ those governing agricultural development in Botswana being a prime example.’ It is ironic that Botswana, with the highest ratio of livestock to people of any country in Africa, with extensive experience in livestock and community development, and with some of the most forward-looking and innovative legislation on community-based natural resource management in the world, has been unable to come up with an integrated livestock development and range conservation program

that can benefit the poorer sectors of the country's population living with livestock on the land.

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