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Interaction of the San, NGOs, Companies, and the State

Kazunobu Ikeya
National Museum of Ethnology

ABSTRACT

San and Kgalagadi living in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR) of Botswana have been influenced strongly over many years by indigenous political movements and government resettlement policies. This paper reviews past and present interactions of the San, NGOs, mining companies, and the state, and examines the connections among indigenous rights, rights of citizens and human rights. Results of studies of the CKGR and neighboring areas, such as Molapo, Metsamaneng, Mothomelo, and New Xade, in Botswana can improve the general understanding of their mutual relations. San and Kgalagadi living outside the CKGR now receive medical services and pensions under a development and welfare system of a democratic government. However, people living inside the CKGR receive only school services. Differences in perceptions of the rights of indigenous people, citizens and human rights were explored during long-term fieldwork in the study area.

INTRODUCTION: THE REALITY AND IMAGE OF THE SAN IN CKGR ISSUES

Recent years have been marked by debates between the Government of Botswana and NGOs or local people regarding use of the natural resources of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR) (Hitchcock, Vinding and Andersen 2000; Saugestad 2001; Hitchcock 2002; Ditshwanelo 2002; Hitchcock *et al.* 2011).

Much discussion has centered on the propriety of policies, such that some NGOs criticized the national relocation policy either before or after the court case that lasted from July, 2004 to December, 2006. However, the arguments have not necessarily clarified the diverse responses of the San and the Kgalagadi to the resettlement plan.

Differences in the perceptions of the rights of indigenous people, citizens, and humans have not been explored in much detail. Although the living conditions and concerns of the residents have not been clarified, claimants emphasize that the San

in the CKGR have been demanding land from the government and have some problems of daily life.

The author has pointed out that the San have become divided into two groups: one moved off the reserve whereas the other decided to stay in it, based on the 1997 Relocation Plan in the CKGR (Ikeya 2001). This paper reviews past and present interactions of the San, NGOs, a mining company, and the Botswana State, with specific examination of the connections among indigenous rights, rights of citizens, and human rights. It also clarifies the diverse adaptation strategies taken by the San and the Kgalagadi in the CKGR, influenced by the relocation plan and the 2006 court case. This is addressed paying special consideration to the interrelation between the San and Kgalagadi, and the different actions taken by them.

From 1987 until 2008, the author conducted an anthropological field survey in six settlements (Metsamaneng, Gope, Gukanba, Molapo, Mothomelo, and Kikao) in the CKGR of Central Botswana and three new settlements (New Xade, Xere, Kaudwane) outside the CKGR (Figure 1). Both survey areas consist mainly of two ethnic groups, the hunter-gatherer San and agro-pastoralist Kgalagadi. Both have resided for some time in central Botswana and have a socioeconomic relationship involving either livestock raising or agriculture (Ikeya 1999). For

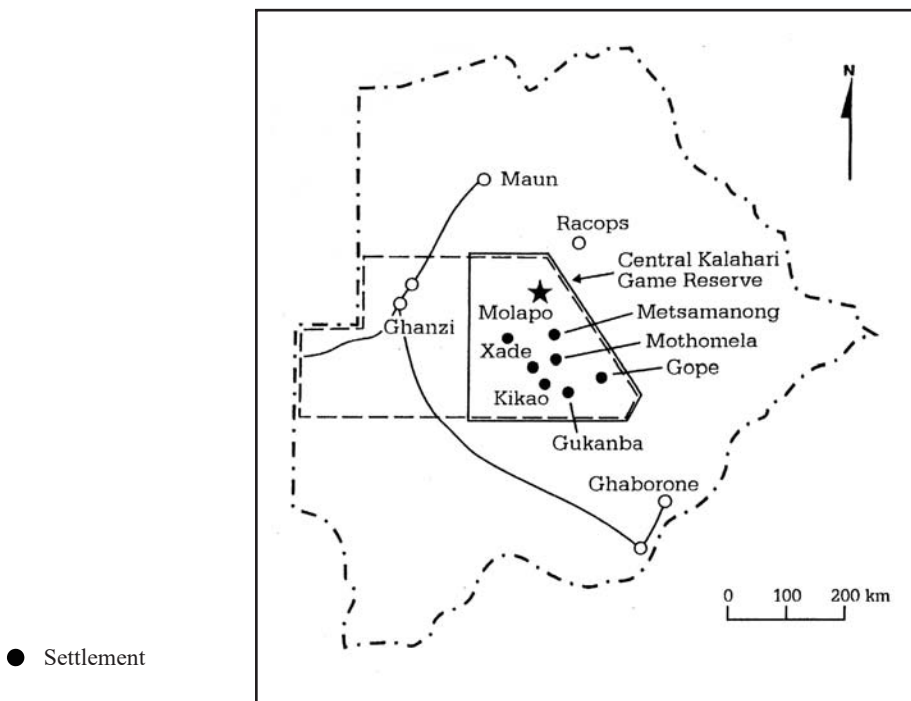


Figure 1 Study area before 1997

instance, the San breed goats under a system in which Kgalagadi own and receive the kids in return for their labor during a certain year. That relationship ends should the goats die during a drought. Alternatively, in a rainy year with a good watermelon harvest in Kgalagadi fields, the San move near Kgalagadi fields to beg, whereas San aid in constructing field enclosures, as compensation (Ikeya 2008).

INTERACTIONS OF THE SAN, NGOS, COMPANIES, AND THE STATE (1980–2012)

Three periods are convenient for classifying the different interactions among the people, the state, NGOs, and diamond companies. These are Period I (1980s–1996) San, State and a diamond company, and Period II (1997–2006) San, State and NGO, and Period III (2007–2012) San, State, and a diamond company.

1) Period I (1980s–1996): San, State and diamond company

In the 1970s the future of the San in Botswana society became a newspaper and magazine topic as part of the debate related to the national development of Botswana. This led to the establishment in 1974 of the Bushman Development Office (BDO), in the Ministry of Local Government and Lands. Later, the BDO was renamed, first as the Extra-Rural Development Office (ERDO), and then as the Remote Area Dwellers Office (RADO) (Hitchcock 2002).

After 1979, the Government of Botswana's development plan for remote areas was extended to the CKGR. Xade, the center of this area, was the focus of development in the reserve (Ikeya 1996). A primary school, clinic and general store were built near the well in Xade. The population of Xade increased rapidly to around 600 by 1982 (Tanaka 1987).

During the 1980s, the De Beers diamond company signed an agreement with the Government of Botswana for exploration rights in the eastern CKGR. This led to the construction of wells by De Beers at Mothomela and Gope and establishment of survey camps at Baape and Gope. Following the well construction, Kgalagadi and various San groups, such as //Gana, /Gui, Tsira, and Hai/no, began to settle near Mothomela and Gope. The well at Mothomela came under government administration in the late-1980s, while exploratory surveys were still being conducted at Gope. De Beers built a road network in the reserve, replacing the old, winding and sandy road thought to have been built in the 1950s by Silberbauer. The Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP), which made use of the roads for surveys and management of wild animals, as well as to conduct poaching patrols in the reserve, became responsible for their maintenance. With the construction, in 1982, of schools and clinics in Xade, others chose to settle. The population of these settlements increased and, to supplement their income, their inhabitants began working on road construction and handicraft production (Ikeya 1996).

In 1979–80 there were living in the CKGR 296/Gui (26.3%), 405 //Gana (36%), 284 Kgalagadi (25.2%), and 139 “Others” (12.4%) (Hitchcock 2002: 805). However, in 1995 there were four San groups comprised of 396 /Gui (27%), 311//Gana (21%), 197 Tsira (13%), and 95 Hai/nu (6%), together with 495 Kgalagadi (33%). Table 1 shows the ethnic composition of each settlement in the CKGR in 1979–80.

Table 1 Population and Social group composition in CKGR (1995)

No.	Settlement name	Population (n)					
		Total	/Gui	//Gana	Tsira	Hai/nu	Kagalagadi
1	Xade	574	275	153	0	0	146
2	Molapo	200	0	55	0	0	145
3	Mothomelo	350	120	100	45	25	60
4	Metsamaneng	170	0	0	0	70	100
5	Kikao	30	1	1	0	0	28
6	Gukanba	20	0	2	2	0	16
7	Gope	150	0	0	150	0	0
Total		1494 (100%)	396 (27%)	311 (21%)	197 (13%)	95 (6%)	495 (33%)

Source: Ikeya's field study

2) Period II (1997–2006): San, State and NGO

Of the approximately 1,700 inhabitants of the seven settlements in the CKGR, 1,130 moved off the reserve and 575 stayed in the reserve in 1997 (Ikeya 2001). The decision to move or stay is attributed to differences in values; those who moved placed a higher value on monetary benefits, whereas those who stayed placed a higher value on ties to the land. The new settlements to which the inhabitants of the reserve moved were sub-divided into individual household plots, which restricted free movement within the settlement (Ikeya 2001). Some new settlers exchanged their plots, although others moved from the settlement and into the bush. Many new settlers used their government compensation money to buy horses and shoes for them. Cows were also introduced to the new settlements, adding cattle-raising as a new occupation for the former reserve inhabitants. Some settlers who could not adapt to life in the new settlement returned to the reserve.

A negotiating team was formed to represent the “First People of the Kalahari” to oppose the government resettlement plan (Ikeya 2001). This group has held meetings with San in various parts of Botswana. It was also given the opportunity to meet with the Vice-President and several ministers and permanent secretaries of Botswana. The Kalahari Desert creation myth has been cited in support of the group’s claims to land rights (Sapignoli 2012). However, those who returned to their settlements in the reserve, showed little interest in the activities organized by the “First People of the Kalahari.” Residents of the reserve became divided into those who support the movement to regain land rights and those with no interest

in the issue.

Consequently, the San consist of two groups: one that moved off the reserve to obtain the economic benefits of being integrated into Botswanan society and another that chose to stay and use the natural resources of the reserve. The diversity of responses can be explained by social factors such as kinship and language groups in the CKGR. Several clues are useful in understanding the complex interactions among the San groups, individuals, NGOs, and the Government.

The relocation policy promulgated in January 2002 was aimed at removing residents from the reserve more forcefully than during the 1997 relocation policy (Figure 2).

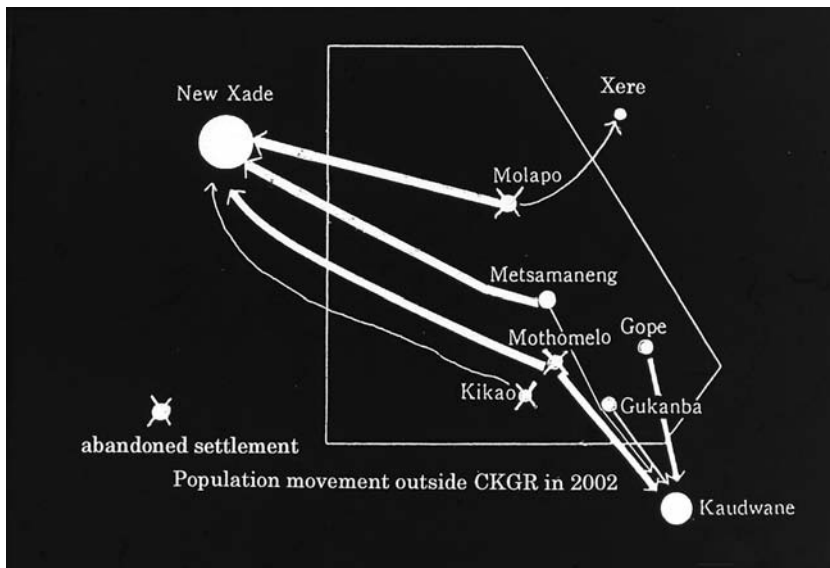


Figure 2 Population movement inside CKGR in 2002 before the court case

The intention of the government to promote relocation was conveyed to those who lived in the reserve in late-January, 2002. The policy was enforced early the next month. First, the government terminated all services to reserve residents, including those for water, medical care, and rations. The government removed water tanks from each settlement, and the engines for wells in Mothomelo. As a result, government assistance for water supply in the reserve was terminated completely¹⁾, so CKGR residents were forced to seek either surface water during the rainy season or wild watermelons, which contain water (Ikeya 2000).

As is well known, in December 2006 the Negotiating Team of the “First People of the Kalahari” won the court case for residential and land use in the CKGR. But, how have local people adapted to the new environment?

The return to the settlement via movement to Molapo and Metsamaneng, in the CKGR, from New Xade started in August, 2002. A Kgalagadi vehicle owner was the center of the return movement for which a vehicle was indispensable, as detailed below. A San or Mokgalagadi who wishes to move sometimes pays the fare, unless he/she is a relative of the driver. The vehicle was used to carry people and their belongings, and sometimes containers of water.

3) Period III (2007–2012): San, State, diamond company

Since the 1980s, the San and Kgalagadi living outside the CKGR have received medical services, school services, monthly food supplies, water supply, and pensions under a development and welfare system run by the democratic government. However, it is commonly said that people living inside the CKGR receive no government services other than schooling. Children are picked up in the settlements and taken by vehicle to the schools in the settlements outside of the reserve.

The author found four types of adaptation among the local peoples after the court case was won (Ikeya 2008), those of people living in the CKGR before the court case, those of people who returned to the CKGR after the court case, those

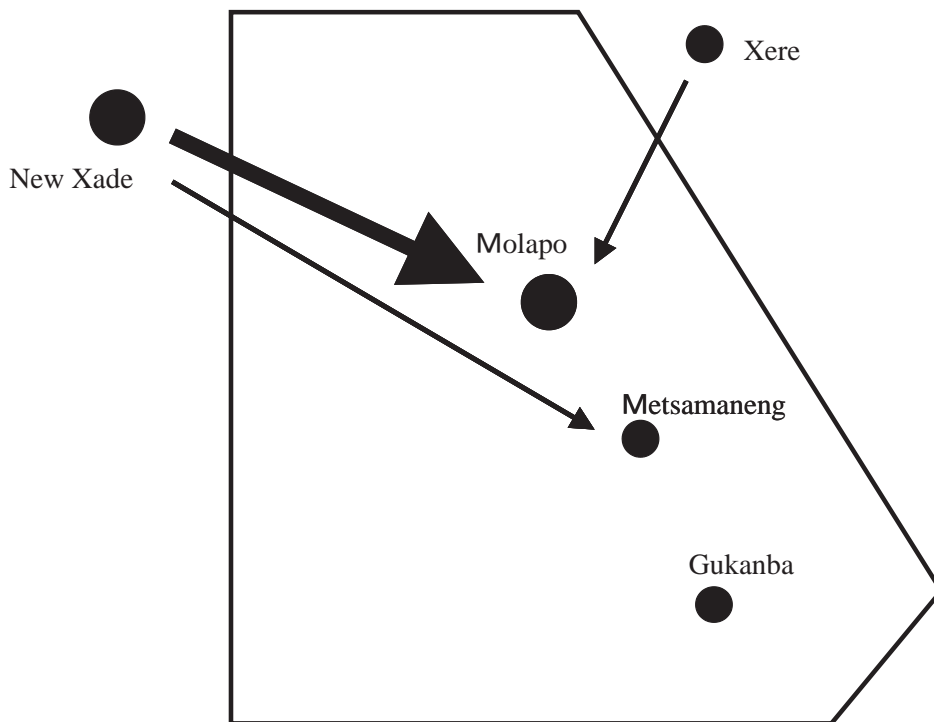


Figure 3 Population movement to CKGR in 2007 after the court case

of people who returned temporarily to the CKGR, and those of people who remained permanently outside the CKGR (Figure 3). The author found people who had moved from New Xade or Xere to the Molapo settlement, and from New Xade to Metsamaneng, but people living in Metsamaneng also left. Either they used their own second-hand vehicles to re-migrate or asked a Kgalagadi vehicle owner for transport, as described in the Period II discussion above. A similar new settlement pattern to pre-migration areas formed in once-abandoned Molapo.

In January, 2011 the people won a second CKGR court case related to the borehole at Mothomelo (Sapignoli 2012). The residents have the right to use water in the borehole. Subsequently, the new negotiation team inside the CKGR tried to speak with Gem Diamond Company, which has managed the Gope diamond area since 2007. One solar battery-powered borehole in Mothomelo was repaired and maintained in September, 2011 by local workers, with funds from the Gem Diamond Company. Some people returned from New Xade and Kaudwane to Mothomelo. At present, San residents of Gope, in the CKGR, use water from a well that was newly drilled by the diamond company.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THOSE MOVING AND THOSE REMAINING (JANUARY-APRIL, 2002)

1) Relocation period, destination and means

The San and Kgalagadi of the CKGR were forced to move as a result of government policy-based decisions on relocation of people from the game reserve. Some people moved voluntarily. There were two major relocations: May-June, 1997 and January-February, 2002. About 500 people in total lived in six settlements of the CKGR early in January, 2002, before the policy was enacted. However, three settlements, Molapo, Kikao and Mothomelo, were abandoned altogether with the displacement of residents (Figure 2).

Movement of CKGR residents was carried out intensively from the beginning of February to March, 2002. The displacement started on February 4 in Metsamaneng and on February 6 in Mothomelo, but it was not completed until March 6. In Gope, the displacement occurred during February 10 – 25, 2002. The displacement of all families was completed in Molapo in about four weeks, from February 4 to March 1, 2002.

Many residents of Molapo moved to New Xade²⁾, but some families moved to Xere, newly built near Rakops. Residents of Mothomelo and Kikao moved mainly to New Xade and Kaudwane, whereas those from Gope moved to Kaudwane.

Several heavy-duty trucks government-owned were used to assist in the displacement. Wood for house frames, complete sets of household goods, and livestock such as goats, horses, donkeys, and chickens, were loaded onto the trucks. Dogs were left behind in the abandoned settlements. In some cases, domestic livestock were left behind by accident.

The residents of the three settlements moved to new settlements, but 73

people remained and lived in the CKGR. They included 20 in Metsamaneng (11 San, and 9 Kgalagadi), 35 in Gope (all San), and 18 in Gukanba (all Kgalagadi).

The author concluded that the decision about whether to move depended not on differences between the San and Kgalagadi ethnic groups, but on the strength of the social bonds within a settlement. Molapo was abandoned because the unity of the whole settlement was so weak that its residents decided to emigrate because some people had already moved in 2001 to New Xade. In contrast, in Metsamaneng and Gukanba, because the Kgalagadi elder who was the leader of the settlement was opposed to displacement, his relatives and friends also resisted it.

2) Life of people who resisted the policy and stayed

The three settlements remaining in the reserve had diverse social composition. Metsamaneng consisted of two different ethnic groups, Kgalagadi and San. In Gope, several San families decided to act together. Gukanba consisted of only Kgalagadi. Among these, as of March, 2002 Metsamaneng had an overall population of about 50 persons. A few couples were left as family units; in many cases, the wife moved out of the reserve and the husband stayed in the settlement. Moreover, Mr. M and his relatives remained in Kgalagadi; San who have had long-term relations with them stay. M's son owned a vehicle that could be used to transport water.

Small settlements adjacent to a depression called a "pan" were dispersed in three locations. The places of residence of San and Kgalagadi were clearly separated in 2001. However, San resided next to Kgalagadi as of March, 2002. People stored water in a drum, for use in the dry season after collecting it from a pan following rain.

Composite occupations differed between the San and Kgalagadi. San hunt with bows and arrows, traps, and dogs, whereas Kgalagadi do agriculture and hunt on horseback. The San used the field crops freely, while supplementing their labor by tanning the hides of small animals and guarding Kgalagadi fields.

Whereas government support was suspended completely in this settlement in February, 2002, as mentioned above, people supplied their own water and food by combining various occupations.

3) Socioeconomic changes in the new settlement

The social and economic changes in the new settlement have already induced changes in group composition through the introduction of new land divisions, introduction of cattle breeding as a new occupation, and so forth. As mentioned above, Molapo residents moved to New Xade and Xere in February 2002.

New Xade is a settlement built in 1997, and where approximately 1,700 persons already resided (Ikeya 2001: 188). A new sub-division was given to each Molapo family, and they lived together in almost the same district. Moreover, compensation was given according to their assets, such as the houses and livestock

enclosures. The amount constitutes a major difference; from 10,000 Pula (US\$2,000) to a San to 210,000 Pula (US\$42,000) to a certain Kgalagadi. Some people used all their compensation money for drinking, while another purchased a used vehicle (28,000–45,000 Pula) (US\$ 5,600–9,000), and another bought a horse (2,600 Pula) (US\$520).

Among the Molapo people, nine Kgalagadi purchased vehicles with their government compensation, but no San did. Of those nine, four later returned to Molapo settlement with the vehicles, as described below. (Note that Subjects 5 and 6 are a mother and her child, respectively; also, Subjects 1 and 2, and Subjects 7 and 8 have sibling relationships, respectively. A relative's youth was employed as the driver, except for Subject 2.)

On the other hand, 10 Molapo families chose to move to Xere, in Central District. Because they wished to live in the familiar settlement near Rakops where they had relatives, the government permitted them to move. A water tank was placed there and a water-supply wagon came once every couple of weeks. Further, the government supplies rations, and food such as their staple ground maize. Later, the population of the settlement increased and a new social relationship was built, because people from the same settlement and who worked at a nearby cattle-breeding farm moved to Tsere.

THOSE WHO RETURNED TO THE CKGR WITH GOATS, AND THOSE WHO DID NOT (AUGUST-OCTOBER, 2002)

However, life was not comfortable for people who moved to the new settlements from the CKGR. New Xade is only 18 years old, but, for various reasons, has experienced a surprisingly high goat mortality rate. Cattle breeding is the center of residents' economic life, but many goats have died for reasons unknown to them. For native Molapo Kgalagadi, the death of goats has become one motivation for returning to the CKGR, contrary to the government's relocation policy.

The movement to Molapo and Metsamaneng (return to the settlement) in the CKGR from New Xade started in August, 2002 (Figure 3). In chronological order, the families of the brothers KO and SE and their mother, KA, moved around August 25; the family of parent KA and child SH on around August 30; NE moved using a vehicle owned by SH on around September 1; Mr. and Mrs. TA on around September 7; Mr. and Mrs. KA by a vehicle owned by TA in November. Young families took their children out of the elementary school of New Xade. On that occasion, their return to the CKGR was resisted at the "wild-animals office", which controls entrance to the CKGR. However, they were allowed to return to the settlement where they previously resided because they claimed it was the place where they had lived in the past.

A vehicle-owning Kgalagadi is the center of the return movement, because a vehicle is indispensable for returning to the CKGR. A relocating San sometimes

pays cash (1,000 Pula, about US\$100 in 2015) as a fare, provided he is not a relative. Goats are also conveyed to the settlement using a vehicle. One Kgalagadi transferred 30 goats by vehicle in two trips, leaving half the herd in New Xade.

On the other hand, in Metsamaneng, where some residents remain; in many cases men remain in the settlement, as mentioned above. Therefore, Kgalagadi and San women returned to the settlement. Some received compensation from the government on that occasion; otherwise, they did not move because of rejecting the migration for New Xade. Moreover, some Kgalagadi lived in the new settlement, commissioning a San to breed goats in Metsamaneng.

About 40 people, 20 Kgalagadi and 20 San, resided in Molapo as of November, 2002. New Molapo consists of three settlements. There are two goat enclosures. There are no horses or donkeys, which are in New Xade.

Each Molapo resident has built a new cabin near where he lived before. All huts are dome-shaped. Water that collects in a depression near the settlement during the rainy season is available; when the water supply runs short, residents usually go by vehicle to Tsere, on the way to Rakops, to fetch water.

Thus, present CKGR residents comprise those who have lived through the relocation policy and those who once moved to the new settlement, but have returned. Today, those who resist the relocation policy are ignored completely by the Government of Botswana. However, it should be noted that a new relationship has been produced, such as that of commissioning goat breeding between a new settlement outside CKGR and a settlement in CKGR.

SURVIVAL LIFE AND SOCIAL NETWORK AMONG THE LOCAL PEOPLE INSIDE CKGR

Will the people who return to the Central Kalahari be able to sustain themselves socially and economically in the absence of services, including the provision of water (Hitchcock *et al.* 2011: 80)? How can people survive inside the CKGR? Generally, a Botswana's remote area dweller's citizenship entails a free food supply, school services, medical services, and pensions. In the new settlement, monthly food supply distributed by the government is a stipulated 12.5 kg maize meal, 5 kg sugar, tea leaves, soup, and 81 Pula in cash per family per month. School services include transportation several times a year from the hostel at New Xade to each home village in the CKGR. Medical services are provided free-of-charge at clinics. A monthly pension of 200 Pula is paid to the elderly. However, people living inside the CKGR receive only school services. How do they obtain food and water inside the CKGR?

The moral economy based on goodness, fairness and justice is generally stable only in small communities. The concept will be useful to clarify the adaptation of local peoples in the CKGR under the influence of State policy.

(Case 1) Mr. G, a San living in the CKGR, owned 5 cattle given by the government as compensation for resettlement at New Xade. However, he sold a

bull for 3000 Pula in New Xade and exchanged one horse for 600 Pula cash. G's wife receives maize meal and cash (81 Pula), plus other items every month at Kaudwane. This food is taken to his settlement and shared among relatives there.

(Case 2) Mr. S, a San living in the CKGR, owns cattle bred by relatives in New Xade. His family's food is given irregularly by his relatives living in New Xade. Using his vehicle, he transports irregularly many water containers, including those belonging to his relatives, to his settlement from a borehole outside CKGR.

(Case 3) Mr. F, a Kgalagadi living in the CKGR, receives at New Xade every month, maize, sugar, and other goods supplied by the government. He has his two houses in New Xade and the settlement in CKGR. His food, taken to the settlement in the CKGR using his own vehicle, is sometimes shared among villagers in the CKGR.

Social networks occur among people in the CKGR and those living outside it. For example, maize meal supplied by the government was routinely given by residents of New Xade to relatives in the CKGR (see Case 2). Social networks related to food and water exist among the settlements inside the CKGR (Case 1). Although it is said that no support except school service exists in the CKGR, case 1 and 2 receive food from the government. Thus people living in the CKGR do not have an isolated life, despite living in a remote area.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has presented a review of past and present interactions of the San, NGOs, companies, and the State, by examining the interconnections among indigenous rights, rights of citizens, and human rights. The results can be summarized as follows.

1) Three periods are classifiable according to differences of interactions between people, state, NGO, and diamond companies: During the first (1980s–1996) San, the State and the De Beers diamond company interacted predominantly. In the second (1997–2006), San, the State and NGOs interacted. In the third. (2007–2012), San, the State and the Gem diamond company interacted.

2) In the second period the strategy of adaptation between the San and the Kgalagadi under the influence of the Relocation Plan in the CKGR in January, 2002 was clarified. Differences in the degree of livestock-raising and social unity within particular communities account for decisions related to movement outside the CKGR. Because the amount of compensation was determined by the number of houses and livestock enclosures in this case, the San with little compensation could not return to the CKGR by themselves. On the other hand, Kgalagadi who owned a vehicle could choose themselves to return or not. Thus, this study has revealed that the coexistence of a relationship between the San and Kgalagadi held great importance in their determining acquiescence or resistance to the relocation policy.

3) Various social networks among people inside and outside the CKGR can

be observed. Maize meal supplied by the government was given by those outside the CKGR to relatives inside it. Social networks exist for food and water among settlements inside the CKGR. Although it is said that the government has provided no support except school services in CKGR, CKGR residents obtain food and water using social networks inside and outside the CKGR.

4) Diverse adaptations are recognizable among the San and the Kgalagadi in the CKGR. Social changes in CKGR settlements were apparent from observations during the past 25 years. The relocation plans in 1997 and 2002, and the court case in 2006 were influential, but San social strategies have remained unchanged.

In conclusion, the San and Kgalagadi people living inside CKGR are well known in Botswana for not having full citizenship in terms of food supply, water supply and medical services. Nevertheless, they have been able to use private social networks to acquire necessities. This demonstrates the rebirth of a moral economy of social relationships since about 1989. Although this study emphasizes social rather than political aspects in the CKGR, it is important to integrate socioeconomic and political issues to ascertain the CKGR situation in Botswana.

NOTES

- 1) "Only 17 Basarwa remain inside CKGR" *Botswana Gazette*, 21 May, 2003
- 2) According to the Minister's report on 14 February, 2002, 196 people had relocated to New Xade and 95 to Kaudwane (Hitchcock and Vinding 2001: 68).

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