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Government Policies and Indigenous Rights: A Case Study of the San and the Saami

Charlotte Buswell

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ABSTRACT

Various approaches adopted by state governments towards their respective indigenous populations, as they pertain to the Saami of Sweden and Norway, and to the San living in Namibia and Botswana, have been examined, and their impact on the socio-cultural, economic and political aspects of these societies assessed. This dissertation further analyses the rationale behind the implementation of these policies and concludes that the arguments used to justify government intervention were frequently flawed: earlier policies introduced during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were based on perceptions that native populations were 'inferior' and expendable whereas more recent government strategies revealed an inadequate understanding and appreciation of the indigenous groups to which the policies were directed. As a consequence, the Saami and San were dispossessed of their lands, forcibly assimilated into the majority population, and even subjected to campaigns of sterilisation (the Saami) and genocide (the San). It is argued that, although widespread abhorrence of these policies eventually resulted in their demise, renewed threats to the cultural traditions of the Saami and the San have appeared in the form of national economic industries including tourism, energy provision and mineral extraction. The thesis asserts that these new threats have been instrumental in stimulating ethno-political mobilisation and the formation of 'grass roots' movements amongst the two indigenous groups. Paradoxically, a degree of acceptance of government policies among these indigenous groups has led to conflicts and fragmentation within these movements resulting from the desire by some members to maintain cultural traditions and the wish by others to access the higher living standards enjoyed by the majority populations. The impact of earlier and contemporary anthropological theory on the formulation of government policies has also been examined and adjudged to have had both beneficial and adverse impacts.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Objectives

The objective of this thesis is to provide an examination of government policies concerning the land and other legal rights of indigenous peoples. My case studies are taken from the San in Namibia and Botswana, and the Saami of Sweden and Norway. This study will explore some of the more visible effects of state policies towards these indigenous groups and the various ways in which they have responded to the enforced changes. It will also enter into a discussion of some of the possible reasons and motivations underlying the implementation of government policies. The thesis will conclude with a review of how these communities have themselves attempted to take control of their future by demanding a say in it, and an examination of the successes and failures that they have had to date.

Idea behind research

The idea behind this research was first developed at a meeting with my supervisor, Professor Robert Layton of the University of Durham, during the summer of 2002. Initially, on the basis of a proposal suggested to me, I had planned to confine my study to an examination of the San, also known as the Bushmen,¹ and to contrast the policies of the Namibian government with those of the Botswana administration towards them. The Government of Botswana was at the time, and indeed still continues to attract much international attention for its allegedly forced removal of G/wi and G//ana San groups from their ancestral lands within the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (Gall 2003). Meanwhile in Namibia, following Independence and the end of apartheid rule in the early 1990s, the San were, perhaps for the first time in the country's history, being accorded a degree of political autonomy. They had for example, just recently seen one of their own elected as a representative MP to National parliament! What reasons could possibly

¹ The term 'Bushman', imbued with both racial and sexual connotations was dropped in favour of 'San' by researchers of the Harvard Kalahari Research Group in the early 1970s (Lee 1979: 30). However, the new term itself carries derogatory overtones, meaning "a rascal" in KhoiKhoi, from which it is derived (*ibid*). A number of researchers have since argued for a return to the use of 'Bushmen' (Guenther 1986), whilst others (Kent 1992) have adopted 'Basarwa' (sing. Masarwa) a Setswana term instead, although this too has sometimes been used in an insulting manner (see Lee 1979: 30). Clearly there is no escaping the problem, for certain people will refer to this ethnic group in a disparaging way regardless of the term used. I try here, when possible, to use the different names by which the people call themselves, otherwise I follow Lee and use the term San.

explain these two country's radically different approaches in their policies towards these people? I was determined to find out.

Within a few weeks of this meeting however, I was presented with an opportunity to travel to Norway. Whilst there, I visited the *Norsefolkmuseum* in Oslo, where I came across an emotive exhibition documenting the Saami,² people indigenous to northern Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Russian Kola Peninsula,³ and their long battle for autonomy. Norway is currently the leading Scandinavian country to champion Saami rights (Beach 1988:8), as is evident by its ratification of the International Labour Organization's Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Populations - a position still unfulfilled by both Sweden and Finland (Colchester 2000). Yet, at the turn of the last century, Norway was pursuing the most aggressive Saami policy of all the three Nordic countries, aimed at assimilating these peoples into wider Scandinavian society. I was intrigued as to what factors could be responsible for such a dramatic U-turn in its position. Interestingly, all three governments have in the past adopted subtly distinct approaches towards the Saami and have sought different answers to the questions of native rights and title to land. However, because of the infeasibility of tackling such a broad scope here, due to constraints of time and space, I have decided to restrict my study to the treatment of the Saami by the Swedish and Norwegian states only.

Background to the San

There is a long history of documentation on the San, with numerous descriptions of them provided in the accounts of early explorers, traders, settlers, missionaries and colonial officers in Southern Africa. However, it was not until the mid-twentieth century that systematic anthropological inquiry into these people was finally undertaken. The first such study was made by the Marshall family who, on nine separate expeditions between 1951 and 1961, recorded their observations of the Ju/'hoansi San of Nyae Nyae in South West Africa, present day Namibia (Marshall 1976: 10). Since then, a number of researchers representing a variety of nationalities, institutions and disciplines, have conducted studies among the San, including the G/wi, G//ana, Nharo, !Kung, !Xo,

² In Sweden, the Saami (their own self-appellation) were historically referred to as 'Lapps', whilst in Norway they have long been known as 'Finns' – terms that are today considered derogatory by the Saami population (Jones 1982: 5).

³ The Russian Saami will not be considered in this study due to the paucity of literature documenting their society.

?Au//eisi and Botletli River groups. Undoubtedly the most famous of these investigations are those that have been made by Richard Lee and other members of the Harvard Kalahari Research Group, which have focused on the Dobe !Kung or Ju/'hoansi⁴ of north-western Botswana. The sheer volume of study undertaken by this group of researchers, together with its multifaceted nature, has contributed towards making the Dobe Ju/'hoansi the best studied San group, even one of the most famous hunter-gatherer communities of all time (Barnard 1992a :13, 39-40).

When Richard Lee (1984) first encountered the Dobe Ju/'hoansi in 1963, he described a people who lived as nomadic hunters and gatherers. They lived in small groups of between 15-30 people, closely related to each other through ties of kinship and friendship. Wild plant foods gathered from the surrounding veld and meat obtained in the hunt of wild game animals comprised the bulk of their subsistence, and traits such as sharing, egalitarianism and non-competitiveness characterized their society. Beginning in the late 1960s and increasingly throughout the 1970s, these communities began to keep small herds of livestock and to plant small gardens, the produce of which began to supplant foraging as the means of subsistence. By the 1980s, hunting had almost ceased amongst the Dobe Ju/'hoansi, whilst any game that was caught was often sold to others. Gathering had also diminished to the extent that cultivated crops now formed the basis of the diet. Cash came to replace sharing as the medium of exchange, with migrant labour, livestock sales and craft production providing the main sources of income (Lee 1984: ix). As a result of these changes, the Ju/'hoansi have become increasingly sedentary. Today, most have completely abandoned their former nomadic lifestyle and settled down in semi-permanent villages alongside neighbouring Bantu-speaking pastoralist groups. More profound however, are the new cultural values and behaviours that have emerged with the adoption of these novel patterns of subsistence and mobility which are widely at variance with the customs and ideals previously practiced by these former foraging peoples.

⁴ The !Kung consist of three ethno-linguistic groups; the northern, southern and central !Kung. The name !Kung was traditionally used in the literature to denote the San peoples of Nyae Nyae (Marshall 1979) and Dobe (Lee 1984) who speak the latter of the three dialects. The San living there however, call themselves Ju/'hoansi (also spelt Ju/'wasi or Zhu/twasi), meaning 'real people'. In recognition of the people's recent self-empowerment, it is now considered more appropriate to call them by their self-appellation (Lee 2003: x). The term !Kung is now used to denote the northern dialect group living in Angola, the only group to call themselves as such, whilst the southern !Kung dialect group are referred to by their own ethnic name of ?Au//eisi (Barnard 1992a: 39).

Of course, the process of sedentisation, immersion into the wider cash economy and associated cultural change occurred far earlier amongst the majority of San groups living elsewhere in Namibia and Botswana. Many of these communities had lost their land in the first few decades of the twentieth century to African pastoralist peoples, and as a result of the farming and ranching activities of early White settlers. Such was the case of the Nharo, Au/esi and !Xo San, whose ancestral lands are today incorporated into the farming districts of Gobabis and Grootfontein in Namibia, and in the Ghanzi farm block of Botswana. In the face of land encroachment and dispossession, many were forced to work as labourers on the white owned farms. Others settled at cattle posts where they worked tending the herds of their Bantu-speaking neighbours. Here they were subjugated, exploited and discriminated against. Once self-reliant and independent, many now found themselves as landless squatters, dependent on employment for their very survival.

Over the years, the San were decimated in number, the result of disease, starvation and campaigns of genocide waged against them. Those who survived the fragmentation and dispersal of their traditional communities often became integrated into the societies of other ethnic groups. This is especially true in Namibia, where an apartheid regime long prevailed in government policy. There is, consequently, a discernable bias in the available literature on the San to focus on the less acculturated communities, e.g. those who have remained nomadic foragers until recently, such as the Ju/'hoansi.⁵ A bias, which despite my best intentions, I feel is also reflected in this analysis. I will argue, however, that many of the anthropologically-documented socio-cultural, political and economical transformations that have taken place in Ju/'hoan society over the last forty years can be discerned as having occurred far earlier, although for different reasons, among the other less well-documented San peoples of Namibia and Botswana.

Background to the Saami

The Saami too have a long history of documentation, dating back to the time of the Roman historian Tacitus, who first referred to them as 'Fenni' in his C1st A.D work *Germania*. He wrote of a people without houses, horses or weapons who dressed in hides

⁵ Much of the early anthropological fieldwork conducted among the Ju/'hoansi, was in fact inspired by the idea that studies of extant hunter-gatherer societies could help shed light on the evolution of human behaviour - an interest that received much attention within the discipline following Mary and Louis Leakey's discovery of ancient fossil hominid finds in East Africa in the late 1950s (Lee, 1976: 10). Today however, scholars are much more cautious as to what such studies can and cannot teach us about our ancient ancestors (Lee 2003: 2). Some of the reasons for this will become clear over the next few pages.

and slept on the ground (Beach 1988: 4). The Greek Prokopius also alluded to them as 'skrithiphinoi' in the 6th A.D whilst, in the 1200s, Saxo Grammaticus described them as a people who moved with their houses (*ibid*). Yet, despite these few insightful sources, little in the way of historical records exist on the Saami before the 1600s, forcing us to rely heavily upon archaeological and linguistic investigation for our interpretations of this period of Saami history. After 1600, the accounts of early colonists, settlers and tax collectors provide us with more detailed, although often prejudiced, information.

As in the case of the San, anthropological investigation did not commence amongst the Saami until the second half of the last century. Since then many notable works have been produced. Of particular value to this study are those by Robert Paine (1994) and Knut Odner (1992) on Saami in Norway and by Hugh Beach (1981) on communities in Sweden. Promisingly, a number of Saami scholars have themselves recently begun to engage in the monumental task of documenting their own culture (e.g. Aikio & Aikio 1989, Mulk 1999), a phenomenon linked to the development of Saami organisations aimed at securing Saami rights. However, whilst the Saami people are today involved in a variety of occupations, there has been a propensity for these studies to focus on one particular economic category - the reindeer-herders - despite the fact that they represent a 'minority within the Saami minority' (Beach 1988: 6).⁶ Such a research bias in part reflects the effects of nationalistic government policies, particularly in Norway, which forced many Saami to relinquish their native identities and to assimilate into Scandinavian society, as well as a tendency often exhibited by anthropologists to concern themselves with a more different and exotic 'other'.

Reindeer herding is, in fact, a relatively recent adaptation among the Saami, whose traditional livelihoods were based on hunting and fishing. Yet it is precisely this economic activity that has been treated by the Norwegian and Swedish states as the hallmark of Saami culture. Indeed, for the last 150 years or so, only those Saami who engaged exclusively in reindeer husbandry were recognised as 'Saami' by the state, and subsequently afforded any ethnic rights to land and resources. At the same time however, both governments have pursued courses of action that severely limited the capacity of the Saami to engage in this profession, by favouring (what they perceived to be) more

⁶ There are of course exceptions, a notable one being the work of Harold Eidheim (1971), whose studies have focused on the non-herding communities that have been incorporated into Norwegian society.

productive forms of land use including agriculture, and more recently, those of extractive industries such as mining, forestry and hydro-electric power. Today, having lost much of their land as a result, virtually no Saami continue to support themselves through the traditional economies. The majority eke out an existence through small-scale agriculture and commercial fishing, or are employed in national industries and services. Very few continue to practise reindeer herding and, for those that do, the methods and techniques now employed differ radically from those used in earlier times. The original nomadic, intensive, self-sufficient and relatively autonomous enterprise has been replaced by one that is extensive, increasingly sedentary and almost entirely market orientated.

San hunter-gatherers; real or imagined?

When anthropological fieldwork first began amongst hunter-gatherer communities during the mid part of the last century, many researchers presumed that they had stumbled across peoples who, having lived in isolation for many millennia in their current environment, were representative of the original human condition. The San communities of Southern Africa proved to be no exception. When Richard Lee first began his fieldwork amongst the Dobe Ju/'hoansi, he saw them as practising "a simple, small-scale, self-contained economy of a type that may have been characteristic of early man" (Lee 1969: 74) and regarded them as one of "the few remaining representatives of a way of life that was, until 10,000 years ago, a human universal" (Lee 1979:1). It was believed that the sheer size of the Kalahari, together with the arid conditions that prevail there, had served to shield the indigenous San groups from outside influences until relatively recently (Lee 1979: 33). In the case of the Ju/'hoansi, both white and Bantu-speaking peoples were thought to have first arrived in the area occupied by this San group only in the latter years of the nineteenth century (Lee 1976: 6, 2003: 20). Such a notion seemed highly plausible given that, unlike many other indigenous groups in South Africa, the Ju/'hoansi appeared to have adopted agriculture or pastoralism only within the last few decades of the twentieth century (Wilmsen 1989:1).

Since the 1980s however, this view has come under increasing attack from a number of 'revisionist' scholars who have voiced the opinion that very few, if any, of the extant hunter-gatherer groups have lived in total isolation from the wider world, or that they have remained dependent upon foraging alone until recent times (Schrire 1980, Wilmsen

1989, Denbow & Wilmsen 1986, Chang 1982, Headland and Reid 1989).⁷ They argue that just about all of these groups have, at some point in their history, had contact with traders, landowners, pastoral or agricultural communities (Schrire 1980: 12) and that their perceived isolationist existence is merely *'a creation of our view of them, not of their history'* (Wilmsen 1989: 3). Indeed, Alan Barnard (1992a: 105,134-6) has reported on a common belief held by a number of ethnic peoples including the G//ana San themselves, that they originated as a result of intermarriage between G/wi San and Bantu-speaking Kgalagari pastoralists who migrated to the area formerly occupied by the G/wi in the early nineteenth century (Barnard 1992a: 134-6). Is this notion of the San then, as remote hunter-gatherers since time immemorial, little more than a myth as has proved to be in the case of the Tasaday?⁸

There are, in fact, historical documents in existence which explicitly reveal that some 'Bushman' communities, on occasions in the past, kept livestock. Examples abound, but a few will suffice here. For instance, the Scottish missionary David Livingstone whilst travelling in the dry plains of the Ntvetwe Pan in the middle nineteenth century came across Bushmen with livestock (Livingstone 1857, cited in Wilmsen 1989: 83). So too did William Burchell who, writing in his diary in the 1920s, noted how one Bushman community living in the area of the Orange River carefully corralled and guarded kraal of sheep, goats and cattle (Burchell [1924] 1953, cited in Schrire 1980: 22). There is, however, a potential problem inherent in some of these early observations which leads one to question their validity – that is a confusion on the part of some authors to assume ethnic groups other than the San under the label 'Bushmen' (Wilmsen 1989: 85). Schrire provides an excellent example of a case in point... *"Stockenstrom told Dam he must defend the unarmed Bushmen and Caffres, and he readily consented to do so. Some time after, a kraal of Bushmen on the Hart River having cattle perhaps the amount of 600 was*

⁷ For an excellent overview of the literature representing the two viewpoints, see Barnard (1992b).

⁸ The Tasaday, were 'discovered' living in caves in the rainforest on the Filipino island of Mindanao in 1971. Because they collected wild plant foods and used stone tools, anthropologists concluded that they had remained both culturally and geographically isolated for over 2000 years. Since the fall of President Ferdinand Marcos and the opening up of the area to researchers in 1986, the nature of the Tasaday has been surrounded in controversy. Allegations were made that the whole story had been a complete fabrication on the part of the former President and his secretary Manuel Elizalde, who paid local Tboli and Manobo peoples to live at the cave sites whenever anthropologists, journalists or other visitors came by (<http://www.tasaday.com/>). An investigation by the American Anthropological Association eventually concluded that *"the Tasaday were not a hoax...but neither were they primitive foragers isolated for hundreds of years from outside contact"* (Headland 1992: 215).

attacked by Chaihip, a Bastard Coranna Bushman and his people, and the Bushman chief was killed and all his cattle taken” (Smith 1939, cited in Schrire 1980: 25). This excerpt, taken from Adam Smith on his travels in the Orange River area in 1834-1835, clearly demonstrates that, in this case at least, little distinction was made between the different peoples.

Although the accounts of these early explorers ought to be regarded with some degree of caution, it is not so easy to dismiss other sources of evidence suggesting that the period of interaction between the San and other pastoralist peoples may extend well beyond the last 150 years as postulated by Lee. For instance, historical records attest that pastoralists were present in South Africa from at least the fifteenth century A.D, whilst recent archaeological findings indicate an even greater antiquity. At Bambata Cave in Zimbabwe, there are remains of domesticated sheep from as early as the second century B.C (Denbow & Campbell 1980, cited in Wilmsen 1989: 65), whilst similar evidence has also been found at the site of Mirabib located 750 km south of the Dobe area and more securely dated to the third century A.D. Here, a layer of ancient sheep dung and hairs of a long-horned breed were found in association with the remains of stone tools and ceramics (Schrire 1980: 17; Sandelowsky et al., cited in Wilmsen 1989: 65). Roughly contemporaneous finds of cattle have also been made at the site of Lotshitshi in Botswana (Denbow & Wilmsen 1986: 1509). Of particular importance is the presence of ceramics, dated to the end of the first century BC, at Magopa in the western sandveld of Botswana which proponents of the revisionist school have argued provides direct evidence that people from the Dobe-Nyae Nyae area were engaged in pastoralism before the start of the Iron Age (Wilmsen 1989: 65)! Whilst there may be relatively few such sites from this early period, their numbers increase substantially during the latter Iron Age, (600A.D.-1000A.D.), especially along the eastern hardveld of the Kalahari in Botswana (Wilmsen 1989: 65-67).

There seems to be then, a significant body of evidence demonstrating that pastoralist peoples were present in the southern part of the continent from a much earlier date than previously anticipated. However, whether the San interacted with these peoples or kept cattle remains unclear. The line adopted by the revisionists is that it would have been impossible for these groups to exist so close to one another for so many years without some form of interaction or cultural diffusion. The traditionalists, of course, disagree and

reject arguments (as set forth by Wilmsen 1989) that the foraging economy of the San is a product of their relegation to servitude by dominant pastoralist overlords in prehistory. For his part, Lee (2003: 20) acknowledges the finds of metal and potsherds around the Dobe area after 500-800 A.D but argues that the sheer paucity of materials found - for example, one excavation yielded only 32 sub-surface finds of pottery and another eight fragments of iron in deposits spanning over 1000 years - is simply incompatible with the idea of Iron Age pastoralists in the area. He has also undermined the significance of what is believed to have been a bovine maxilla fragment from the Ju/'hoansi settlement of /Xai/Xai, (to date the only bovid bone to be found in an undisturbed context in the Dobe area), by stressing the similarities between the bones of cattle and those of the African Cape buffalo which make it difficult to distinguish between the remains of the two species (Yellen 1990c, cited in Lee 2003: 20)⁹. In his opinion, the evidence is far more consistent with the idea that foraging communities were engaging in occasional long distance trade with remote Iron Age populations (Lee 2003:19).

Oral histories of the Dobe Ju/'hoansi do, in fact, recount trade relations whereby desert products such as furs and ostrich eggshell beads were exchanged for goods such as iron (Solway & Lee 1990 cited in Lee 2003:19). Furthermore, many of the elderly Ju/'hoansi who Lee interviewed maintained that they had long-established trade relationships with riverine communities such as the Gobas who *they* visited. On this point, there was a high degree of convergence among the many different interviewees. The people were also insistent that no Blacks or Gobas had visited, let alone occupied their area, before the nineteenth century and were adamant that the first non-San people to the area were Europeans, not Bantu-speaking pastoralist groups (Lee 2003: 215-9). Although one ought to question the reliability of these accounts, given that many of the informants are unlikely to have remembered such distant events or that in some cases may not have even been alive when they took place, the Ju/'hoansi people themselves firmly believed that they had existed as hunter-gatherers since time immemorial without discourse to pastoralism or agriculture at any time (Lee 2003: 214).

There is however, also ethnohistoric evidence from other parts of Africa supporting the contention that some San groups may have kept cattle in the past. I refer here to Cynthia

⁹ Unfortunately, subsequent analysis on this bone is no longer possible since it was accidentally destroyed in a laboratory fire (Lee 2003: 20).

Chang's historical analysis of a hunter-gatherer population presently living in Rift Valley area of Kenya and Tanzania whom, despite their self-appellation 'Okiek', are commonly referred to in literature as the Dorobo - a term derived from the Maasai and later adopted by Europeans (Chang 1982: 269-271). Chang argues that, since at least the middle of the nineteenth century, people classified as Dorobo were more often than not disenfranchised farmers and pastoralists rather than the descendents of ancient hunter-gatherer populations (Chang 1982: 271). She draws on discrepancies existing between the first ethnographic reports of the Dorobo (mostly written during the colonial era), which describe them as pristine hunter-gatherers, with earlier accounts taken from the travel journals of late nineteenth century British explorers to the region, many of whom recognized two types of Dorobo. For instance, some explorers reported of encounters with Dorobo who were physically and linguistically distinct in relation to surrounding groups. Chang maintains that these were people with a long historical tradition of hunting and gathering. However, other groups of Dorobo were also observed whose members displayed many similarities with neighbouring groups such as the Maasai and Samburu in aspects such as language and physical appearance. Chang asserts that, in these cases, the Dorobo were actually former members of pastoral groups who, having lost their land and cattle to disease and warfare precipitated by the European trade in slaves and ivory, had resorted to a hunter-gathering way of life (Chang 1982: 278). So it was that pastoralist peoples who had lost their herds became known as Dorobo by their relatively more affluent kin who, still in the possession of cattle, used the term in a derogatory way to describe their former kinsmen now without. Reacquisition of cattle by these 'Dorobo' caused them once again to be reinstated as members of their true ethnic groups (Chang 1982: 277). According to Chang (1982: 280), it is more appropriate to consider these 'Dorobo' as '*nomads without cattle*' rather than groups who chose to subsist by hunting and gathering of their own accord.

The historian Richard Elphick has eloquently summarized the process whereby hunter-gatherers acquired stock only to later become hunter-gatherers once again upon losing their herds in his model of 'upward and downward ecological cycles'. In the upward cycle, former hunters and gatherers obtain livestock through processes such as warfare, trade and intermarriage, whilst in the downward cycle herders who have lost their stock as a result of the same processes revert to a hunter-gatherer way of life (Elphick 1977 cited in Schrire 1980: 23). Could the same be true of the San? Again, the accounts of

early explorers to the region are particularly revealing. In 1846, the missionary Tindall wrote of a Nama group (peoples of the Khoikhoi linguistic group) that had “*attacked several Bushmen villages, robbed them of their sheep and goats...south east of the place, Elephant’s Fountain*” (Tindall 1959 cited in Wilmsen 1989: 93). Around the same time, Thompson (1968, cited in Schrire 1980: 25) observed Hottentots who were forced to turn to hunting and gathering for a living after they had lost their livestock. Although Lee (2003) has amply documented contact between the San, Whites and Bantu-speaking pastoralist groups, it is precisely this relationship – that between the San and other speakers of KhoiKhoi languages - that he has ignored (Schrire 1980: 11), and to which I will now turn.

According to Lee (2003: 9), when the Dutch first arrived in South Africa they met with two different types of people. One of these groups was the Khoi, goat and cattle herding peoples, whom the Dutch called Hottentots (a term that is thought to have originated from the dance chant of a Cape tribe). The other group did not keep livestock, subsisting instead on wild plants and animals and sometimes also shellfish. The Khoi referred to these people as *San* or *Sonqua*, whilst the Dutch for their part considered the term *Bosjesmans*, literally ‘Bushmen’ or ‘people of the bush’, to be a more appropriate name (Lee 2003: 9). In contrast, Schrire (1980: 25) maintains that the first Europeans colonisers to arrive at the Cape (c. 1652) called all the peoples Hottentot, despite recognising the various economic strategies that they employed. It was only in 1685 that they began to call the (former Hottentot) hunters ‘Bushmen’, and to consider them as being a subspecies of Hottentot. Then, in the early nineteenth century, they came to be regarded as a separate group altogether - until the twentieth century when they were once again subsumed within the category of the pastoralists (Elphick 1977, cited in Schrire 1980: 25- 26).

Despite slight inconsistencies, both these accounts suggest that the Dutch created ethnic labels for people based on economic strategies. Undoubtedly, it was not the first time a ruling administration had done so, and certainly not the last. David Maybury-Lewis (1997:100-102) and Christopher Taylor (2001) both maintain that the Belgians made a

similar error in their classification of people as either Hutu or Tutsi¹⁰ when ruling the area that is now Rwanda and Burundi – a mistake that has had disastrous consequences. Until recently, both the Norwegian and Swedish Governments have also based their definition of ‘Saami’ and what it means to be included within this ethnic group on an economic interpretation (Mulk & Bayliss-Smith 1999: 361), a matter I will return to shortly. Could it have been that “...*the San were not perceived as an ethnic group, but as an undesirable social class*”? As one observer remarked in 1685, were they effectively “*the same as the poor at the Cape*” (Elphick 1977, cited in Schrire 1980: 20)? There may very well have been, as Shula Marks has argued, “*little to distinguish a landless and cattleless Khoi from a Bushman, or a Bushman who has acquired cattle, from a Khoi*” (Marks 1972, cited in Schrire 1980: 19-20).

My objective throughout this discussion has been to demonstrate the likelihood that some San today are the descendents of former pastoralist peoples who lost their cattle long ago. At the same time, however, I believe it possible that there are other groups of San alive who, although unlikely to have remained isolated, are the descendents of archaic hunter-gatherer populations that have continued to practice this mode of subsistence until only just recently (see Guenther 1986). I am inclined here to agree with the opinion of Susan Kent (1992: 48-50), who has argued that the diametrically opposed views held by the traditionalist and revisionist camps stems from the failure of both parties to acknowledge the enormous diversity that exists between the various San peoples. This diversity is itself attributable to the fact that there has been significant variation in the type and nature of interaction between them, Europeans and Bantu-speaking peoples in the past (Kent 1992: 50 & 55). Consequently, she claims that each of the two arguments can be seen as valid, depending on the San community being studied and the time at which they were documented (Kent 1992: 46).

¹⁰ According to Maybury-Lewis (1997: 101), when the Belgians first took control of Ruanda-Urundi they encountered people who, although similar in aspects of physical appearance, religion, language and culture, were differentiated on the basis of their socio-economic status. The Belgians consolidated these different socio-economic categories as distinct ethnic groups, and made it a requirement for every individual in the colony to carry an identification card specifying to which ‘ethnic’ group they belonged. When in doubt, a man was classified ‘Tutsi’ if he owned more than ten head of cattle, a ‘Hutu’ if he owned less (de Waal, cited in Maybury-Lewis 1997: 102 and Layton 1997:190).

The controversy has, in part, arisen from a tendency amongst researchers to treat the more extensively documented groups, such as the Ju/'hoansi, as the archetypical San society, together with a practice whereby generalizations based on the observations of one particular community made at a given point in time are uncritically applied to other San groups living in different eras (Kent 1992: 46-7, 52).¹¹ Whilst few scholars would today argue that these groups have remained completely isolated throughout their long histories, Kent (1992: 54) accuses those revisionists who argue that all foragers have in the past been dependent upon their agropastoralist neighbours or have themselves undertaken such activities of merely substituting one inaccurate overgeneralization with another equally erroneous one.

The Saami: from hunters to herders

In direct contrast to the current controversy surrounding the nature of past interaction between the San and other peoples living in the Kalahari, there is comparatively little disagreement on such matters regarding the Saami. Today, scholars of Scandinavian prehistory are almost unanimous in their agreement that there has been a long history of co-existence between the Saami (or peoples of Saami ancestry) and other ethnic groups present in Scandinavia stemming back many millennia. Indeed, Knut Odner (1985: 8-9) has even suggested that it was this very interaction, based on the trade of hunting products with Baltic and Eastern European tribes, which caused Saami ethnicity to evolve in northern Scandinavia during the early part of the Iron Age.¹²

The long period of contact existing between groups of Saami ancestry inhabiting the interior with Scandinavian communities on the coast and to the south has been demonstrated archaeologically by finds of imported artefacts, such as southern flint, at

¹¹ It is worth noting that many of the aforementioned accounts, whereby early explorers and missionaries encountered groups of 'Bushmen' with cattle, referred to communities living in South Africa where white penetration and associated problems of land encroachment was most concentrated.

¹² It is, however, still not known from where exactly the Saami originated or when their specific culture developed. Various hypotheses have been proposed. Some are rather fanciful, such as claims that these people represent a lost tribe of Israel (Beach 1981:1). However, the seminal view holds that the Saami arrived in Scandinavia from the East beginning in the Bronze Age, if not before (*ibid*; Mulk & Bayliss-Smith 1999: 377; Odner 1985: 10), and are probably the westernmost representatives of hunters and herders extending across Siberia. Some authors of prehistory, such as A.W. Brogger, have asserted that these migrations took place much more recently. These claims, which were influenced by the highly nationalistic climate that prevailed within Scandinavia during the early twentieth century, have now largely been dismissed (Mulk & Bayliss-Smith 1999: 380).

inland Norrland Stone Age sites (Janson 1962, cited in Anderson 1981: 2). Contact is thought to have arisen through trade in which furs are often assumed to have played an important part. Whilst there is no direct evidence that this was the case, such a theory seems plausible given the prominence of these goods in the existing historical records from the Viking and Medieval Periods and the lack of convincing alternative trade items (Anderson 1981: 10-11).

Beginning in the early Iron Age (around the first century A.D), a number of coastal cultural elements, such as funerary structures, gradually started to appear in the interior, indicating permanent habitation there by Scandinavian farming communities. Bjornstad (1962, cited in Anderson 1981: 7) has argued that these early settlements were established as trading posts for obtaining skins and meat from the surrounding areas. Interred finds of scales, crampons and sleighs in some of these gravesites, e.g. Rösta, clearly identify them as belonging to traders (Kjellmark 1905, cited in Anderson 1981: 10). Indeed, it is highly probable that the fur trade itself, rather than agricultural expansion, provided the original impetus for Scandinavian settlement in the interior. It is unlikely that population pressure at the coast, where there is evidence of agricultural practices dating back to 2500 BC, was at the time so great as to force people to move further inland (Anderson 1981: 9).

There is wide consensus that increasing pressure placed on the land and its resources by Scandinavians eventually led to the adoption of new subsistence strategies among the hunting Saami, with different groups adapting according to the prevailing ecological conditions (Ingold 1976: 2). For example, communities inhabiting the lowlands, where some opportunities existed for agriculture, responded to the increasing scarcity of game by establishing small farms. Meanwhile, those groups living in fertile valleys alongside the inland rivers and fjords reacted by combining farming with fishing. In the mountainous and inland forest regions, where the possibilities for farming were poor, the Saami began to move with the migrating reindeer, herding rather than hunting them (*ibid*).

The point debated is *when* exactly the Saami abandoned their hunting way of life and began to adopt these new economic strategies. Such beginnings are difficult to ascertain due to the relative paucity of historical records relating to the inhabitants of Scandinavia prior to the 1600s (Mulk & Bayliss-Smith 1999: 371). It is known that some Saami

communities began to farm by the third century A.D, and it is likely that they continued to practise mixed economies of agriculture, hunting and fishing for many years (Odner 1980). However, it was undoubtedly not until centuries later that they were forced to turn to such alternatives out of necessity rather than choice. As regards the transition from hunting to herding, the prevailing opinion holds that this did not occur until around the sixteenth century when increasing demands imposed by trade and taxation, Scandinavian state expansion in the north and the introduction of firearms eventuated the killing off of the dwindling wild reindeer population (Ingold 1976: 17). Not everyone agrees though and some, such as Paul Simonsen and Inger Storli, have argued a far greater antiquity for the adoption of reindeer herding by the Saami. Storli (1993) has, for example, dated the beginnings of reindeer pastoralism amongst the Saami to around the tenth century A.D, whilst Simonsen (1972) has postulated the even earlier date of around the third century A.D. Both arguments are based on evidence of changing settlement patterns at these times.

Using studies of faunal assemblages and artefact finds at coastal habitation sites, the earliest of which date to 3000 B.C. and which become more abundant after 1500 B.C, Simonsen (1972: 189) argues that they were occupied by peoples of Saami ancestry during the winter months over many successive years. Contemporaneous habitation sites, suggesting summer occupation, have also been found in the interior (*ibid*). Such a pattern is consistent with the idea that these prehistoric peoples were relying on marine resources during the harsh winter months, when game was difficult to catch and fishing unproductive in the frozen-over lakes and rivers, then moving inland to pursue these latter activities in the warmer and more plentiful summer months.

According to Simonsen, there was a reversal in this pattern around 200-300 A.D when coastal sites appeared to be occupied during the summer. He remains unclear about whether these settlement were utilised year round or whether corresponding winter habitation sites now existed in the interior (Simonsen 1972: 190). Nonetheless, he argues that the impetus for such change could only have arisen from the adoption of domesticated reindeer, which necessitated that man follow his animals as dictated by the natural annual migratory cycle of the reindeer herds (Simonsen 1972: 191). However, his claims for exclusive winter habitation on the coast prior to the third century A.D have been challenged by a number of archaeologists (Renouf 1981 and Engelstad 1984, both

cited in Odner 1992: 33), whereas recent evidence also suggests that summer habitation on the coast began much earlier, possibly around 600 B.C. (Olsen 1984 cited in Odner, *ibid*).

Storli (1993) also refers to changing settlement patterns, as evidenced by the so-called 'stallo' sites, to argue her tenth century A.D date for the adoption of pastoralism by the Saami. Found in the northern mountainous regions separating Sweden from Norway and dated by radiocarbon techniques to the Late Iron /Viking Age and early Nordic Medieval Period, (c. 700-1500 A.D), (Mulk & Bayliss-Smith 1999: 382-4), these sites are widely thought to have been seasonally occupied by peoples of Saami ethnicity, in particular by small groups hunting reindeer (Badou 1988, Mulk 1988, Hanson 1990; all cited in Storli, 1993: 4).¹³ This interpretation is based predominantly on the relatively little evidence of occupation in the mountainous areas prior to the stallo sites, a number of which are furthermore found in close proximity to large-scale hunting pits. Hence, their establishment is considered to reflect the growth of the fur trade between Scandinavians and Saami at this time, which necessitated the extension of reindeer trapping to these areas (*ibid*).

However, Storli points to a number of affinities between the stallo sites and other sites located in the coniferous forest regions of northern Sweden, dated to the same period. Similarities include the presence of rectangular and oval shaped hearths, organised along a single row, indicating a linear arrangement of dwellings. Interestingly, the hearths at both sets of sites were orientated crosswise to the row of dwellings (Storli 1993: 3 & 7). On the basis of these analogies, Storli has suggested that the stallo sites in the mountains together with those in the forested areas represent the seasonal habitation settlements of Saami who migrated between the two zones - from the high mountains in the summer to the forests in the winter – a migratory pattern that has been ethnographically documented among mountain herding Saami and which is thought to have emerged with the transition from hunting and fishing to reindeer pastoralism in the past (Storli 1993: 8).

¹³Although Kjellestrom (1983, cited in Mulk & Bayliss-Smith 1999) has argued that the stallo sites were initially inhabited by Norwegian chiefs during the Viking period, and only later (beginning around 1600 A.D.) occupied by Saami.

Less persuasive is Storli's post-processual analysis of the spatial organisation of the stallo dwellings, which she argues lends further support to the earlier adoption of reindeer pastoralism. It is known historically that, among Saami reindeer pastoralist groups, the processing and preparation of products obtained from the domesticated herds was women's work, and was normally undertaken in the front part of the dwelling. In contrast, the preparation of wild meats and fish was considered the work of men, and took place in the posterior part of the dwelling (Ränk 1949, cited in Storli 1993: 11). Women were in fact forbidden from moving into the space occupied by the men, and it was not uncommon to find the boundary between the two spaces demarcated by the positioning of a large stone, known as a *boassu* stone, situated behind the fireplace (*ibid*). Storli (1993: 12) claims to have found evidence of these stones at over a third of the stallo sites she investigated in the Lønsdalen valley of northern Norway. They have also been identified at localities in the coniferous forest regions of northern Sweden (Bergman 1988, cited in Storli 1993: 12). Together with finds of spinning whorls, Storli argues that the stones clearly affirm that women were present at these sites, thereby counteracting the claims of Tegengren who, from his analysis of forest Saami of the Kemi Lappmark in Norway, argued that the stallo dwellings were seasonal hunting camps occupied solely by men (Tegengren 1952, cited in Storli 1993: 13). Given that the *boassu* stones are unknown at sites which predate the first stallo settlements, Storli asserts that their presence can be thus seen as evidence of a restructuring of gender relations that occurred with the transition from a hunting and fishing way of life to one centred on reindeer pastoralism taking place at this time.

I remain unconvinced by this part of Storli's argument. Whilst Tegengren (1952, cited in Storli 1993: 11) has argued that only men were engaged in the hunt, many have suggested otherwise (for example Mulk 1986, cited in *ibid*). Indeed, Tacitus (1999: 59-61), as well as authors from the later medieval period (e.g. Magnus, cited in Odner 1992: 27) wrote explicitly how women also participated in the quest for game. I am therefore inclined to reject Storli's contention that the presence of women at stallo sites and the gendered division of space at these settlements represents the emergence of new gendered relations precipitated by the adoption of pastoralism. However, I see no reason as to why reindeer pastoralism could not have emerged amongst the Saami well before the advent of sixteenth century as she suggests. There are historical sources from the Viking and early Medieval Period, such as Othere's account recorded by the English King Alfred in c. A.D

890, which document Saami use of reindeer as draft and decoy animals from an early date (Zachrisson 1976: 86, Mulk & Bayliss-Smith 1999: 385). In which case, is it not possible that reindeer were not only tamed and harnessed well before the sixteenth century, but that they were milked and herded as well?

Atholl Anderson (1981: 13) has claimed that such activities, if conducted on the same small scale that has been ethnographically documented among forest Saami communities, would be archaeologically invisible. In support of his argument is linguistic evidence which demonstrates that Saami terms for milk and milk products, as well as for processes associated with milking, were adopted from Scandinavian before or during the Viking period (Rank 1965 and Mubius 1965, both cited in Anderson 1981: 13). This may merely reflect contact with Scandinavian communities practising animal husbandry, which are known to have been present along the northern coast of Norway and Sweden by the sixth century A.D (Mulk & Bayliss-Smith 1999: 384-5), rather than the adoption of herding amongst the Saami themselves. However, the similarities between reindeer and sheep herding have been commented upon by a number of researchers (Nesheim 1967, Hultbald 1968, both cited in Anderson 1981: 14) and this idea of cultural diffusion should perhaps not be dismissed as an explanation – one that is lacking from Storli’s argument – as to why the Saami may have adopted pastoralism so early on. Indeed, Anderson (*ibid*) suggests that the Saami may have begun to milk reindeer in response to a decline in beaver numbers brought on by over-trapping. Beaver are known to make an important contribution to the diet of many circumpolar peoples and are believed to have been of considerable importance amongst the fauna exploited by early Norrland hunters (Iregren n.d, cited in *ibid*). As Anderson reports, “*Presented, in these circumstances, with the opportunity to learn the arts of milking and of turning milk into the alternative winter fat supplies of butter and cheese, the Lapps whose territories bounded the mountain pastures may have become adept seasonal herders and milkers of sheep and goats. As reindeer seem to have been increasing in abundance at the same time, and since reindeer milk is remarkably rich in fat...there would have arisen both the incentive and the means to transfer the techniques of husbandry and milking to reindeer*” (Anderson 1981: 14).

Could it have been then, that some pre-sixteenth century Saami communities were maintaining small herds of domesticated reindeer alongside their draft and decoy animals and supplementing this practice with the hunting of wild animals from time to time? Then,

in the sixteenth century, when the excessive demand for wild reindeer finally caused a sharp decline in their numbers, these communities may have relinquished their hunting activities and instead concentrated on building up their small herds, whilst others communities who, until this point, had maintained a solely hunting lifestyle, took it up for the first time. Indeed, Olaus Magnus, in his history of the Nordic peoples written in 1555, in which he is credited with making the first known reference of pastoralism amongst the Saami, simultaneously depicts the Saami as hunters (Odner 1993: 27).

Kjelle-Åke Arronson (1993) has reached a similar conclusion from his analysis of pollen cores taken from the arboreal forests of northern Sweden. From his investigations, Arronson could only discern a very weak influence of reindeer herding on the forest vegetation from the beginning of the first millennium A.D to the end of the seventeenth century. The upper pollen stratigraphy levels indicate that the large-scale expansion of reindeer herding took place only relatively recently, within the last 200-250 years (Arronson 1993: 21). Like Storli, Anderson is also of the opinion that the stallo sites can be attributed to Saami groups practicing a semi-nomadic form of reindeer pastoralism, in addition perhaps to small-scale cattle, sheep and goat rearing as suggested by the osteological remains of these species at Saami sacrificial and dwelling sites (Zachrisson 1976: 86, 1992: 18, cited in Aronsson 1993: 20).

Curiously however, little allowance has been made for the co-existence of the two different economies of hunting and herding among the Saami of the past. Claims for the early development of this economic activity often tend to be dismissed on the assumption that it would simply have been incompatible with the continued existence of a large number of reindeer and elk hunting pits spread over a wide area of Fenno-Scandia (Mulk & Bayliss-Smith 1999: 386; Manker 1960, cited in Storli 1993: 17). There appears to be a prevailing assumption that reindeer pastoralism could only have arisen upon the cessation of reindeer hunting – which is known historically and archaeologically to have continued amongst the Saami throughout the Medieval period (Odner 1992: 27). However, I would suggest that, if these herds were small and intensively managed as has been ethno-historically documented amongst the Saami, claims of incompatibility between these two forms of livelihood are implausible.

What I hope to have emphasized throughout this discussion is that neither the cultures of the San or Saami have remained static throughout time. In the past, both have undergone many significant changes in their social, economic and political structures as a result of various forms of interaction with outsiders; interaction which eventually necessitated the adoption of new forms of subsistence and livelihood by these people. But even today, the ability by which they can practise these economies remains threatened, perhaps more so now than at any time in the past. The little land, together with the few rights and privileges, they currently enjoy are progressively dwindling in the face of competing industries, prominently among which are the mining, forestry, farming, diamond and tourist sectors, as they attempt to meet the insatiable demands of a growing world market. Government policies, sometimes conscientious but misguided, and at other times purely economically motivated, are furthermore reducing the capacity of these indigenous peoples to maintain their unique cultures and way of life. Recent efforts to conserve and commercialise both them and the environments in which they live have had significant impacts on their well-being, more often than not, rendering them 'victims of progress' (Biesele & Hitchcock 2000:2-3).

In the next chapter, I will review past and present government policies taken towards the San, first under colonial rule and more recently under the independent administrations of Botswana and Namibia. Some of the more striking socio-cultural impacts of these policies on San culture will be explored. Chapter III will provide a similar historical analysis of such matters as they pertain towards the Saami of Norway and Sweden. In Chapter IV, I will examine the various political, economical and ecological motivations that are likely to have influenced the implementation of such policies. Two particular theoretical paradigms will be discussed, that of Social Darwinism and the concept of the Tragedy of the Commons. I will also explore how popular perceptions of the San as pristine hunter-gatherers and the Saami as a reindeer herding culture have shaped government policies towards these peoples, and how these stereotypes have been reinforced through anthropological studies. I will finish with a discussion of the various achievements and setbacks experienced by these communities in their fight for rights to land, resources and self-autonomy. Despite the setbacks they have suffered, I will argue that these efforts are commendable, particularly in light of the difficulties experienced in ethno-political mobilisation.

Chapter II

Government Policy and Cultural Change amongst the San

Although the San's early relationship with other Khoi and Bantu-speaking peoples remains a topic of considerable debate, the history of their contact with the white man is more clearly documented. The first Europeans to permanently settle in Botswana, (known as Bechuanaland until Independence in the mid-1960s), were Dutch Boers who had travelled with their cattle from the Cape Colony in the last years of the nineteenth century (Barnard 1992a: 42, Guenther 1976: 125-6). Despite the fact that many of these individuals were likely to have been fleeing antagonism in the build-up to the first Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), or possibly unpaid bank debts (Wilmsen 1989), the British Protectorate Government was quite willing to offer them large areas for development. Perhaps part of the incentive was to safeguard the land from the possible expansion of neighbouring German South West Africa (Guenther 1976: 123). The area set aside - recognisable today as the Ghanzi farm block - heavily encroached upon the traditional lands of the Au//eisi in the north and on the lands of the Nharo to the west (Barnard 1992a: 46 & 134). Yet, rather surprisingly, the first half-century of contact between the San and the Boer in the Ghanzi district has been described as a period that was largely free of conflict (Barnard 1992a: 140). Indeed, Guenther (1976: 125-6) asserts that the relationship between them was essentially, '*a symbiotic one of mutual dependence*'. Following the Rinderpest epidemic of 1896, which killed off large numbers of wild game animals as well as cattle in the Kalahari, the San appeared willing to intermittently help out on the farms in return for food, water and protection from other raiding ethnic groups. Meanwhile, the impoverished Boer was equally dependent upon the Nharo and Au//eisi for a supply of veldfoods, such as the maroma bean, which was exchanged for meat, blankets and tobacco. However, whilst economic interdependence might have prevailed, the white farmers most certainly assumed an elevated social position in relation to the San (Guenther 1976: 126).

The 1950s saw a dramatic increase in the number of farms within in the district, which had escalated from 36 to 166 by the end of the decade (Guenther 1976: 126). Many of the new settlers attracted to the area were British from South Africa, lured by the prospect of making vast profits. The new settlers brought new methods of cattle rearing

with them; rather than being herded, the animals were now kept in fenced-off fields and paddocks (Guenther 1976: 126, Barnard 1992a: 140). They also preferred to hire other Africans, such as the Herero and Tswana, as farm hands instead of the San. With long histories as pastoral peoples they were considered to be more skilled in handling cattle, as well as more reliable and familiar with European work attitudes learnt in schools and mission stations. No doubt European ignorance and derogatory views of San culture also contributed to this preference (Guenther 1976: 126). The following statement, made by a Commissioner in the South West African farming District of Grootfontein, serves to reflect prevailing European attitudes towards the San at the time; *"I have constantly refused their applications on the grounds that I do not consider the Bushmen as sufficiently advanced to understand the obligations of an ordinary contract"* (N.C. Runtu 1948, cited in Gordon 1984: 210-211).

The demand for new farm labourers caused a significant influx of other ethnic African populations into the area (Barnard 1992a: 134-6). As the San found themselves ousted from employment opportunities, tensions existing between them and the other ethnic groups became all the more strained (Guenther 1976: 127-8). The situation was further compounded by an escalating incidence of diseases afflicting the farm San, notably tuberculosis, smallpox, infections of the upper respiratory tract as well as venereal disease; the result of increased contact with others. This did little to ease relations, for the San attributed these ailments to sorcery and witchcraft activities of the Bantu-speaking peoples (Guenther 1976: 127-9). Without jobs, the San were now forced to support themselves from the proceeds of foraging alone. However, the massive increase of livestock in the area had severely depleted available plant resources, whilst the farmers had killed off much of the wild game with their high-powered rifles (Barnard 1992a: 140). The huge consumption of water by the ranches had also, within a few decades, led to a dramatic lowering of the local water table. Natural waterholes and pans that had been abundant in the late nineteenth century, vanished to be replaced by farm, government and district owned boreholes (Barnard 1992a: 138 & 140). The extent of the damage can only be guessed at. However, the botanist G.M. Chippendale observed how, after only one year of pasturage on previously ungrazed aboriginal land in Central Australia, the cattle belonging to the white man had reduced the quantity as well as the diversity of vegetation by two thirds (Chippendale 1963, cited in Layton 1986: 2).

Unable to find work and incapable of supporting themselves by means of foraging alone, increasing numbers of Ghanzi San began to cross into South West Africa/Namibia (Silberbauer & Kuper 1966: 178).¹ The situation was, however, little if any better across the border. As in Bechuanaland, the first white settlers to arrive in Namibia during the 1880s were Boers from the South African republic of Transvaal. However, unlike in Bechuanaland, their encroachment on the territory of the Hei//om San had not been passively accepted. The Boers who settled in the area of Grootfontein, where they declared the Republic of Upingtonia in 1885, were often too afraid to occupy their farms for fear of Bushman raids and robberies (Gordon 1984: 205). The Hei//om, equipped with guns that they had acquired through their participation in ivory hunting, frequently pilfered the farmer's cattle and eventually caused the Republic to collapse in 1886 - only a year after its formation - following the murder of its leader, William Worthington Jordan (Gordon 1984: 205).

NAMIBIA: The Policies of the German State

Soon after, the area occupied by the Upingtonia Boer was expropriated and incorporated into the German State of South West Africa, founded in 1884. Like the Boers before them, the Germans exhibited a total disregard for any pre-existing native rights. Not only were the lands of the native populations confiscated, the herds belonging to pastoralist groups were also seized, and the people themselves subjected to forced labour (Morel 2001). It was actions such as these that led the Herero, under the leadership of a British merchant and prospector, to revolt against German settlers in their territory and which, in turn, provided the necessary justification for the German administration to implement its widespread campaign of genocide against the indigenous population. Morel (2001) estimates that a quarter to a third of the territory's 80,000 Herero population perished in the wars that ensued, although others believe the figure was in fact far higher (<http://berelo.net/page95/95en-namibia.html>). Many fled to Bechuanaland where they eventually settled on lands belonging to the San (Barnard

¹ These migrations were reportedly commonplace until border controls were introduced in 1963. Prior to this, it was relatively easy for San to obtain work on European-owned farms in Gobabis. Subsequent to the new controls, visas and passports became a necessity for all non-Europeans wishing to enter or leave the territory (Silberbauer & Kuper 1966: 178).

1992a: 64). With the Herero out the way, the campaign of ethnocide was later extended towards the San. The Hei//om in particular, were decimated in large numbers, whilst those that survived were deposed from their lands in the districts of Grootfontein, Gobabis, and Tsumeb as well as in the Etosha Game Park area (Marshall & Ritchie 1984: 16). Indeed, Marshall and Ritchie (1984: 15) have speculated that, in contrast to their counterparts in South Africa, the survival of the San in Namibia was largely due to the early recognition of them as a potential source of labour by the colonists. Already by 1913, a German administrative census recorded that almost 1000 San were employed as farm hands in the Grootfontein district alone (*ibid*: p 15-16)!

Under South African Rule

The appalling mistreatment of the San was only ameliorated after 1915, when the German Colonial Forces were defeated by the Union (later Republic) of South Africa. Germany eventually renounced its sovereignty over the area with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles and, in 1920, South Africa was granted mandate over the territory by the League of Nations. The new administration immediately set about passing a series of laws, including one that made it a criminal offence for the San to carry bows and arrows, that severely hindered their ability to hunt. At the same time, they could be imprisoned on the mere suspicion of killing livestock which, given the circumstances, was an activity to which many were forced to resort. Furthermore, a 'Vagrancy Act' permitted the authorities to arrest any San who they considered to be 'unemployed.' As a matter of course, these individuals were often sent to work in diamond mines such as the one at Luderitz (Marshall & Ritchie 1984: 17). As farming activities expanded, increasing numbers of Nharo and southern !Kung San were reduced to landless squatters (*ibid*). Unable to legally hunt and provide for themselves, many were forced to take up work on the European-owned farms in order to sustain themselves. However, as the earlier quote by the Commissioner of Grootfontein revealed, the San, unlike other black workers, were not given contract labour so that the terms and conditions of their employment remained outside government regulations. Essentially, there were no legal requirements at all which stated that the San should be paid for their work (Marshall & Ritchie 1984: 20).

The Proclamation of Homelands

However, it was not just San living in the farming districts who suffered. Within a year of coming to power, the South African Government had begun a programme to relocate the territories' indigenous peoples from areas of white settlement. It was hoped that by doing so, the possibility for conflict between the natives and the farmers would be dramatically reduced. Influenced by the apartheid ideology of the Motherland, the policy adopted was one of segregation. Over the next few years, a number of ethnic 'homelands' were proclaimed. All of them were created specifically for Bantu-speaking pastoralists tribes, such as the Herero, who had been displaced from their homes by white ranchers. The reserves were established on lands that had, because of a paucity of vegetation and water, the presence of gifblaar (*Dichapetalum cymosum*) – a plant poisonous to cattle, together with their distance from the markets, been deemed unsuitable for white ranching (Wellington 1967, cited in Gordon 1992: 120 & 165). Furthermore, they were situated in areas that were known historically to have been occupied by the San (Gordon 1984:216; 1992: 119-120). Bit by bit, much of land which the San recognized as theirs, was parcelled out to other ethnic minorities to the extent that by the mid 1950s, the Ju/'hoansi of the Nyae Nyae region were the only San group in Namibia who still retained possession over their lands and waters (Marshall & Ritchie 1984: 18).

Before the establishment of the reserves, San communities living beyond the area of white settlement had, for the large part, successfully managed to retain their cultural, economic and political autonomy. Now forcibly incorporated into the homelands of other ethnic groups, the situation for many of them was to change. Some were more fortunate than others. Take for instance the Hei//om, who, almost overnight, found themselves living in Ovamboland. The two groups are known historically to have had amiable relations; trade between them is reputed to have been conducted on the most equitable terms known for South West Africa and there were instances in the past when Ovambo kings appointed San to act as foremen of their bands (Schoeman, cited in Gordon 1984: 214). As a result of these relations the Hei//om prospered in Ovamboland. By the 1930s it was reported that many had acquired significant herds of goats and cattle (Marshall & Ritchie 1984: 19) and, later, that they had settled in Ovambo-style houses and possessed fields as well as livestock of their own (Schoeman,

cited in Gordon 1984: 214). Whilst substantial assimilation occurred, it appears to have been peaceful and even desired by the Hei//om. This was in stark contrast to the San whose lands were incorporated into Herero reserves and who, as one missionary reported, “*were regarded by the Hereros as having no right there at all.*” She continues that, “*... they were looked upon as pests. They were killed wherever they were encountered. Women and children were carried off and put to work at domestic tasks and as herdboys*” (Vedder 1938:143, cited in Gordon 1984: 217). Unable to continue foraging due to the deterioration of their land base by the Herero cattle, and with little opportunity for acquiring their own fields, the San in Hereroland often resorted to stealing animals and robbing migrant workers.² Such acts of survival only exacerbated the already hostile relations that existed between the ethnic groups and, more often than not, initiated severe acts of retribution (Gordon 1992:174).

By the mid-1930s, a number of missionaries and academics concerned by the detrimental effects that government policies were having on the San, together with some prominent farmers alarmed at the escalating incidence of livestock thefts, began to petition for the creation of a Bushman homeland (Gordon 1992: 147-149, 251-2). However, it was not until 1970, with the proclamation of Bushmanland, that a reserve was finally established for the San (Marshall & Ritchie 1984: 5). Its purpose was not to help protect the people or their culture. Rather, its creation reflected attempts to prevent San labourers from abandoning their jobs on white owned ranches and fleeing to Botswana, where the Bechuanaland Administration had in the early 1960s, set aside an area of land (the CKGR) for their use and had appointed an official to deal with their affairs (Olivier 1961, cited in Gordon 1992: 167; Gordon 1990: 7).³ It was decided that the reserve be situated in the northeastern part of the country where the last San group in Namibia, the Ju/'hoansi, continued to live off their land. Yet, despite the fact that a government census recorded some 21000 individuals of San ethnicity living in country in 1970, the reserve was essentially to only provide for this one small community of

² The timing of these raids, as has been ascertained from court records, shows that they often coincided with periods of low rainfall suggesting that these activities were often necessary simply for the San's survival.

³ It is interesting to note here that San were deserting their jobs in the Gobabis district of South West Africa and travelling to Botswana (Olivier 1961, cited in Marshall & Ritchie 1984: 18) at the same time as San were leaving the Ghanzi District and heading to South West Africa. Although undoubtedly a case of the grass being greener on the other side, it clearly demonstrates the discontent and despair felt by San working in the farming districts of both countries.

less than 500 people. The 6000 or so individuals living in the homelands of other Black peoples and the 15000 San working on white owned farms did not benefit from the plans (Marshall & Ritchie, 1984: 20). Nor, in fact, did the Ju/'hoansi. With the creation of the reserve, they lost over 70% of their ancestral lands (including a number of permanent waterholes) as the southern part of Nyae Nyae was turned over to Herero pastoralists and a northern portion made into the Kaudom Game Reserve (Marshall & Ritchie 1984:5, Marshall 2002). Whilst, by the 1950s, Herero homelands had covered some 2,463,000 hectares in the Kalahari alone, the San were allocated little more than 19000 square kilometres. Furthermore, the western two thirds of this area encompassed an arid and waterless belt of land that could support few plants or animals and for which reason had not been traditionally utilised by the local Ju/'hoansi (Marshall & Ritchie 1984: 5; Ritchie 1988: 35).

Having lost their land, many Ju/'hoansi were forced to settle at the reserve's administrative centre Tjum!kui (Tsumkwe). Others were lured there by promises of agricultural training, medical care and employment, with guarantees of an easier and better life than they had experienced in the bush (Marshall 2002). Between 1965 and 1975, the permanent population at the centre increased by over 50%, from 550 to 830 persons (Marshall & Ritchie 1984). Foraging in the area quickly declined and people were required to travel increasing distances to obtain food once the resources nearer to the camp became depleted. The building of a fence along the Botswana and Namibia border in 1965 only exacerbated the situation by further diminishing the foraging area available as well as interfering with the migration routes of wild animals (Lee 2003:168). Some small-scale cattle-rearing and crop-growing schemes were initiated by the government but, for various reasons, which I will explore in more detail later, largely failed. A few jobs were available at the centre, but they were menial in nature (e.g. clearing and shovelling roads), poorly paid and often only given to men. Those without employment had little else to do. As the supply of local bushfoods became exhausted, the formerly self sufficient people of Nyae Nyae became entirely dependent on the meagre wages of these few breadwinners and on government handouts for their survival (Kolata 1981: 562). The effects were devastating. In stark contrast to their former diet of bushfoods and game, the rations provided by the government - approximately 4 pounds of cornmeal per person per month - were both poor in quality and quantity. The ensuing malnutrition, together with the crowded conditions that

prevailed at the settlement, contributed to the spread of disease, notably tuberculosis. Marshall and Ritchie (1984: 54) have reported how the death rate soared amongst the inhabitants of Nyae Nyae during these years, despite the presence of a modern clinic at the settlement.

Militarization of the San

The social problems that prevailed there were, in fact, only aggravated in the late 1970s when the South African Government stepped up its war effort against the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO). Already since 1971, the South African Police had been incorporating these excellent hunting peoples into paramilitary tracking units against SWAPO, which had been fighting for the liberation of the country from South African rule since 1966 (Lee 2003: 175; Lee & Hurlich 1982: 334). From the mid 1970s, San men also came to be actively recruited as soldiers for the South African Defence Force (SADF) and in 1978 a military base was established at Tjum!kui. Whilst a few Nyae Nyae men and some from the Dobe area were tempted by the handsome wages on offer and enrolled, the majority of new recruits were in fact !Kung refugees, fleeing civil war in Angola (Hitchcock 1988:31). Fortunately, the army had decided to settle these mercenaries together with their families at boreholes drilled in Western Bushmanland. Not only do the Angolan !Kung speak an unintelligible dialect of the Ju/'hoan language, they are culturally different in many ways; the Ju/'hoansi are, furthermore, afraid of these highly militarised peoples whose long experience with war has made them aggressive (Marshall & Ritchie 1984: 7, 12 & 22).

Although the San at Tjum!kui were a considerable distance from the front line and so were never exposed to the full force of the war,⁴ the mere presence of the army in the area was itself to prove catastrophic. The influx of Ju/'hoan recruits coming from other parts of Namibia and Botswana caused severe overcrowding at Tjum!kui, placing an overwhelming demand on already scarce resources. Foraging as a subsistence economy completely collapsed. By 1982, it was estimated that over 2000 Ju/'hoansi were living in Eastern Bushmanland, just about all of them dependent on army rations and the pay-checks of some 160 Ju/'hoan soldiers (Marshall & Ritchie 1984: 7-8). However, the

⁴ Of course, not all San were quite so fortunate. One Bushman Battalion located in the Caprivi Strip had, by the 1980s, brought 600 San (predominantly !Kung and Barakwengo or 'River Bushmen'), together with some 2000 dependents directly into the firing zone (Poos 1980:47, cited in Lee & Hurlich 1982: 335).

large salaries of the servicemen did little to alleviate the prevailing conditions of poverty. With few opportunities for long-term investment, vast amounts of money were squandered on alcohol or on ingredients, such as sugar, needed to produce a home-brew. It was hardly surprising, given the existing situation of despair and idleness enforced upon so many San at the settlement, that alcoholism there became rife; the filmmaker Claire Ritchie found that on an average day in the early 1980s, 12% of the population consumed nothing but homebrew, whilst a further 9% ate nothing at all (Marshall 2002).

The escalation of violence among the San at Tjum!kui must be seen in relation to the aforementioned factors. By the late 1970s, fighting had become an almost everyday occurrence at the settlement, a far cry from life in the bush. I do not mean here to espouse the idea of the hunting and gathering Ju/'hoansi as 'The Harmless People' as presented by Elizabeth Marshall Thomas (1959). Intra-ethnic violence was certainly not unknown or even that rare among nomadic foraging San. Richard Lee, for example, estimated that there had been at least 22 instances of homicide and another 15 cases of wounding among the Dobe Ju/'hoansi between 1920 and 1955 - estimates which he based on interviews with both eye-witnesses and participants in the disputes (Lee 1979: 382).⁵ Meanwhile, at Tjum!kui, there were no less than seven cases of homicide reported between 1978 and 1980, whereby Ju/'hoansi killed other Ju/'hoansi, often in drunken brawls (Lee & Hurlich 1982: 341). Compared to Lee's records for the period 1920-1955, the increased incidence of murder at Tjum!kui - almost 5 times as high - is striking! The military was partly responsible; creating inequalities, providing money with which to buy alcohol as well as creating ideological divisions among the people, some of who supported SWAPO (Lee 2003; 175). Indeed, its involvement is most clearly attested to by the fact that the murder weapons were more often than not, army-issued guns, knives and bayonets (Lee & Hurlich 1982: 341). However, other social, economic and political changes brought about by the transition from a nomadic to sedentary way of life should also be seen as contributing to this pattern.

James Woodburn (1982) has remarked how the mobile and flexible nature of band structures in nomadic societies not only permits a rational distribution of people in

⁵ Although the causes of the arguments which gave rise to these events were not always easy to ascertain, Lee believes that accusations of adultery was the most single common factor (1979: 377) followed by charges of improper meat distribution and gift exchange, laziness and stinginess (1979: 372).

relation to available resources at any particular time, but also serves to promote egalitarianism and offset incidences of conflict. When disagreements occur, or when people try to impose on others, individuals or groups of individuals may simply leave the group, thereby allowing raised tempers to cool. Foraging Mbuti (Turnbull 1965: 205), Batek (Endicott 1988: 122) and San (Lee 2003: 63 & 112) peoples have all been observed employing this mechanism as a means of avoiding potential or real conflict. In sedentary contexts this course of action is much more difficult, if not impossible. Having invested considerable time and energy in building dwellings, clearing and planting fields, and acquiring livestock, settled individuals are far more likely to endure grievances than their foraging counterparts who, as a result of the restrictions that mobility places on the accumulation of material wealth, have little to lose by moving on (Draper 1975:97-8; Woodburn 1982:435-6). The acquisition of wealth by some individuals and the subsequent creation of inequalities is itself also partly responsible for the emerging pattern of increased aggression, since people now have more to fight over. Associated with this are the relationships of dependency that emerge in sedentary contexts. As we have already seen, the majority of people at Tjum!kui were, by the early 1980s, entirely dependent for their survival on the income of a small number of individuals; chiefly those employed by the military but also by the administration and those in possession of small herds and gardens. This is in contrast to the bush where, despite the existence of cultural norms dictating the distribution of resources, every able-bodied adult has the potential to access resources and to obtain enough food to support him or herself (Woodburn 1982: 438-9; Endicott: 1988).

Relocation back to *n!oresi*

The situation at Nyae Nyae eventually became so bad - indeed one anthropologist who visited the area had likened it to a place of death - that by 1981 a number of Ju/'hoansi decided to relocate back to their *n!oresi* (traditional territories). Their efforts were assisted by Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia, which sold the reformed *n!ore* groups cattle at subsidised prices and helped those communities without a permanent supply of water to drill their own boreholes (Lee 2003: 178). Back in the bush, the Ju/'hoansi constructed kraals to protect their livestock from predators and during the rainy season maintained small gardens planted with melons and maize. Since the communities were relatively small, and included older knowledgeable individuals, foraging was still possible (Marshall & Ritchie 1984: 9). Away from Tjum!kui, the

Ju/'hoansi experienced significant improvements both in their diet and in their way of life, and dramatically reduced their dependency on the government. Marshall & Ritchie (1984: 9-10) estimated that although cash from the salaries of relatives employed by the army or administration still provided for between 30-40% of the annual subsistence requirements of these communities, the rest was obtained through livestock and crop production and by hunting and gathering.

However, the Ju/'hoansi's efforts to establish themselves as independent mixed economists were severely undermined when, in 1984, the Namibian Department of Wildlife and Nature Conservation announced its plan to create a nature reserve in the area of Eastern Bushmanland (Marshall & Ritchie 1984: 10). Here, it was promised the Ju/'hoansi could live their 'traditional' way of life, hunting and gathering. This, of course, would only be done with 'traditional' weapons (e.g. bows, arrows and digging sticks) and would take place before the eyes of fee-paying tourists! However, all modern developments, including the agricultural practices and herds of livestock which the Ju/'hoansi had (as a result of much government coercion) spent the last twenty years acquiring and developing the necessary skills for, would be prohibited (Hitchcock 1985b: 31; Marshall & Ritchie 1984). The establishment of the reserve would have proved devastating for the Ju/'hoansi. Their traditional lands, drastically reduced in size, could no longer support the number of people now living there by the proceeds of foraging alone (Ritchie 1988:35). Furthermore, having grown up in Tjum!kui, many members of the younger generation had never learned how to support themselves by hunting and gathering and completely lacked the knowledge to do so. Those communities that had recently relocated to their *n!oresi* would have been forced to leave their traditional homelands and, with their animals, either return to the poverty and dependence at Tjum!kui or move to the arid and lifeless Western Bushmanland, an alien land to which they had no ties. There they would have been forced to coexist with the Angolan !Kung, a group of whom they were afraid and who would more than likely gain the upper hand in the inevitable conflicts that would ensue (Marshall & Ritchie 1984: 22 & 27).

Fortunately, in 1986, after several years of considerable local protest and international opposition to the proposal, awareness of which was promoted by the !Kung San Foundation, the then Minister of Nature conservation, Andreas Shipanga, officially

declared that there was to be no game reserve (Ritchie 1988: 34). He also announced that the San were free to live and raise crops and livestock wherever they liked in Eastern Bushmanland (*ibid*). Yet, these claims were almost immediately contradicted by a series of edicts, such as one which prevented the Ju/'hoansi from settling with their cattle within 25km of the border with Botswana for 'veterinary reasons'.⁶ At the same time, the !Kung San Foundation was also instructed not to drill boreholes for any resettling communities in the area, given that it 'belonged' to the Department of Nature Conservancy. The Department furthermore removed pumps from the boreholes that it owned in the region, forcing the people to share the muddy waters used by game animals or to go without (Ritchie 1988: 34). Contrary to its claims, the Ju/'hoansi were not free to practice agropastoralism. Indeed it appeared as though the Department was making considerable effort to prevent them from doing so.

One reason for this became apparent in 1988, when Eastern Bushmanland was officially declared a trophy hunting area, the franchise for which was to be granted to a private safari company. The San, as usual, were not consulted about, nor given any say, in the plans. Subsequent protests, including those voiced by a small group from the Ju/'wa Farmers Union which travelled to the capital, fell on deaf ears. The Government rebutted opposition with promises that the revenues obtained from licence fees would be redirected back to the area to finance development there, and so benefit the local people. They also provided assurances that trophy hunting would help to reduce the number of problematic animals, notably lions and elephants, which the Ju/'hoansi complained persistently interfered with their attempts at achieving self-sufficiency (Ritchie 1988: 35). At the time, Ritchie (*ibid*) dismissed these claims arguing that, in reality, the revenues would never leave the Government's central fund. She also maintained that trophy hunting would do little to alleviate the problem of destructive animals. For instance, trophy hunters are only permitted to shoot male lions, whereas it is the female of the species that engages in most of the hunting. Similarly, the number of elephants they were permitted to kill would have a negligible impact on their population numbers. Indeed, the San feared that the predation on these animals would only serve to increase their aggressiveness towards man (Ritchie 1988: 35).

⁶ This was despite the fact that even the Director of Veterinary Services had stated that such measures were unnecessary (Ritchie 1988: 34)! Nor, interestingly, were these restraints ever implemented around the border areas immediately to the north or south of Bushmanland (Ritchie 1984: 34).

BOTSWANA: Rural Area Development Programme

Following independence in 1966, the Botswana Government initially showed some interest in the problems facing its ethnic minorities. In 1974, it implemented the Rural Areas Development Programme that aimed to identify and help resolve many of the difficulties facing small-scale peoples.⁷ The programme assisted the San by helping them send their children to school, to drill their own bore holes, to purchase livestock as well as offering agricultural advice and marketing San craft (Lee 2003: 165; Hitchcock & Holm 1985: 9). It had some successes – by 1977, over 70 Ju/'hoan children in the North West District had been enrolled in schools established at /Xai /Xai and at !Kangwa (Lee 2003:165). By 1980 the number of cattle owned by the Dobe Ju/'hoansi had increased significantly as had the number of agricultural fields registered by them with the land board. Botswanacraft, a government launched craft-marketing organisation, had also begun to purchase significant quantities of San handicrafts, such as ostrich-eggshell bead necklaces, and on far more equitable terms than had previously been negotiated by European traders. Before long, craft production had become a major source of income for several San communities. In the Dobe area, it helped bring in an additional \$300-\$500 each month (*ibid*).

To the government's credit, and in stark contrast to the policies adopted by the South African Administration in Namibia, some conscientious attempts were made to develop Botswana's rural peoples. However, despite being based on humane principles, many of these attempts were largely ineffective, misdirected and even down right destructive for the very people they were trying to help. As had happened at Nyae Nyae, the influx of wealth into the Dobe area created inequalities between people in this former highly egalitarian society, whilst much of the cash was also spent on ingredients with which to make beer (Lee 2003: 165 & 172). Subsistence activities were soon abandoned as drinking became a popular pastime, and drunkenness, conflict and violence all ensued. The situation was especially acute at !Kangwa where a store had been opened, that many parents, fearing for their children's safety, removed them from the school (Lee 2003: 165). Furthermore, whilst some individuals had successfully acquired small

⁷ This was originally called the Bushmen Development Programme when first established. The name was later changed to Remote Area Dweller Programme so that the agency would not appear to be associated with any one particular ethnic group (Lee 2003: 165; Hitchcock & Holm 1985: 9).

herds and planted gardens as a result of the programme, little was achieved on the front of providing them with a reliable supply of water - perhaps the single most important factor in determining whether these attempts would be successful in the long term. Although by 1977, twenty applications had been submitted by the Ju/'hoansi for well-digging permits, fifteen were effectively blocked by the local land boards. Of the five that were approved, only one was successful in striking water (Lee 2003: 165).

Tribal Grazing Land Policy

Any beneficial developments that were in fact made by the Rural Area Development Programme were largely negated when, in 1975, the Government of Botswana initiated a land reform and livestock development programme known as the Tribal Grazing Land Policy. The policy aimed to prevent further land degradation occurring, whilst simultaneously raising production levels and reducing income disparities within the livestock industry (Republic of Botswana 1975, cited in Hitchcock 1987:28). This was to be achieved by the privatisation of land which had until then been held under a tribal form of land tenure. Effectively, large areas were to be fenced off and leased out on long-term contracts to cattle owners at subsidised prices. The San, unable to attend or actively participate in the legal proceedings of land board meetings that were held in distant towns, did not benefit from the change in tenure. Rather, they found themselves being dispossessed of what little land had not already been usurped from them by white farmers and Bantu-speaking pastoralist peoples (Lee 2003: 164; Hitchcock & Holm 1985:9). Although a government White Paper insisted that the land requirements of the country's rural poor would be met by the provision of 'Reserve Areas,' even this solitary promise was not kept. When the final drafting of zones for lease had been finalized, it was realized that absolutely no land had been marked as 'reserved' (Hitchcock & Holm 1985: 9-10).⁸ As livestock production expanded, the opportunities for foraging were reduced, forcing San in the heavily stocked areas to seek alternative modes of subsistence. This was also necessitated by the fact that some Tswana headmen and Land Boards were discriminately only granting rights to water points, which in turn provided access to land, to people who had sufficiently large herds to warrant it (Hitchcock 1987: 28). It soon became apparent that, if the San wanted to

⁸ Although some land which people could access for subsistence and social purposes, as well as for generating income, had been set aside in commercial areas, these areas were small and insufficient for the needs of the San (Hitchcock & Holm 1985:10).

secure any land of their own, they would have to begin acquiring significant herds of cattle.

However, the San's attempts to establish themselves as agropastoralists have met with considerable difficulties. Besides facing a number of adverse ecological conditions such as the semi-arid environment and recurring drought which prevails in the Kalahari, as well as the destructive effects of certain wildlife (notably elephants, lions and hyenas) on crops and livestock,⁹ there are also social factors hindering those San hoping to establish themselves as herders and farmers (Lee 2003: 159; Hitchcock 1987: 30). The crux of the problem lies in the fact that there is significant social pressure on those individuals who have acquired livestock and fields to share their productive wealth among their relatives and those less fortunate than themselves. Unfortunately, this obligation to share the assets of food production is simply incompatible with a successful approach to herding or farming, for grain and animals must be left aside each year to ensure their continued propagation. Yet those individuals who refuse to share their wealth are often perceived as being mean and hardhearted, and may be shunned or ostracised by their fellow kinsmen and friends (Hitchcock 1987:30; see also Lee 2003: 159). Many San have consequently abandoned these endeavours when it becomes apparent that they do not stand to benefit either socially or economically from their hard work. These issues, reflecting the contradictory values of ownership and distribution necessitated by hunting and gathering on the one hand and agropastoralism on the other, have plagued foraging communities around the world in their attempts to adopt new subsistence strategies. Kirk Endicott, (1988) has, for example, reported that similar principles of sharing held by Batek De' communities living along the Aring River in the Kelantan state of Malaysia, undermined attempts by the country's Department of Aboriginal Affairs to help the Batek establish their own fields of rice and other crops during the mid 1970s.

There are often significant consequences for social relationships in those societies that do successfully manage to make this economic transition. For some, the adoption of agropastoralism and associated sedentary behavioural patterns not only promotes inequalities between the 'haves' and 'have-nots', but also between the sexes. Many

⁹ For a comprehensive review of these problems, see Hitchcock (1988).

researchers have commented upon the equality that existed between men and women in nomadic Ju/'hoan society. In foraging communities, women were seen to exert a similar degree of political power and influence in group-matters as their men folk. Their relatively equal status was also reflected in the fact that core membership to a band and its associated territory was inherited matrilineally as well as patrilineally (Shostak 1990: 242-3). Moreover, as in so many African societies, whilst parents traditionally arranged the marriage of their daughters – normally whilst the girl was still in her teens and to a man much older than herself – these first marriages frequently ended in divorce; the termination more often than not being initiated by the young girl (Shostak 1990: 130 & 240). It is likely that the organisational features of the band itself helped to promote this egalitarianism; since these nomadic groups tend to be quite small in size it follows that there are only a few able bodied adults in each to undertake the responsibilities of food procurement. It is therefore useful, if not necessary, for all the adults within the group, whether male or female, to be relatively interchangeable in function and to occasionally participate in activities that are normally associated with the opposite sex. This is especially true among the Ju/hoansi in the rainy season, when the abundance of resources causes temporary fractionalization of groups.¹⁰ Although men and children do occasionally help to collect wild roots, nuts, seeds and tubers,¹¹ gathering nonetheless remains a predominantly female activity, whilst the hunting of large game animals is almost exclusively a male pursuit.¹² Whilst meat is more highly valued than gathered produce (Shostak 1990: 243), it is wild plant foods that contribute the bulk of subsistence. Lee (1979: 450) estimated that, in 1964, gathered foods provided as much as 60% to 70% of the calories needed by the Dobe Ju/'hoansi, whilst the rest were supplied by the proceeds of hunting (although these proportions would fluctuate seasonally). Women also maintained a greater degree of control over their collected food in comparison to the meat hunted by men, the distribution of which

¹⁰ Other San groups, such as those living in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, split up in the dry season, permitting a more rational distribution of people to scarce resources.

¹¹ Lee (1979) observed that foraging done by men could contribute as much as one fifth of all gathered produce.

¹² For instance, during her many years of fieldwork amongst the San, the anthropologist Marjorie Shostak, (1990:244) had only heard of one woman who actively participated in hunting. Shostak reports that other members of the community considered this woman somewhat eccentric, and that conversations in which she was discussed were often accompanied by sniggering.

follows recognized social guidelines (Draper 1975).¹³ In my opinion, it is this important economic contribution that women make to the diet by women that best explains their equal status in nomadic San society.

In her comparison of the relations existing between San men and women in a group maintaining a 'traditional' foraging way of life and a recently settled group subsisting by means of agriculture, animal husbandry and only minimal amounts of foraging, Draper (1975) found that women in the latter group appeared to be far less politically influential. The inequalities that had emerged between the sexes in the settled community were further manifest in the more rigidly defined sexual roles, and by the fact that men in this community were far more reluctant to undertake "women's work"; work that has become increasingly time-consuming and specialised as the San have gradually become more settled and acquired more material wealth following their immersion into the cash economy. Women have become progressively housebound with clothes to sew, dishes to wash and as a result of new foods in the diet, some of which require lengthy preparation times. Men however, have maintained their mobility to a far greater extent, and often leave the settlement to herd animals or to engage in paid work (Draper 1975). The transformed status of women in sedentary San society was also made apparent to James Suzman when conducting fieldwork in the Omaheke farm region in the mid 1990s; as one informant told him "*a good wife is one who stays at the house while you work so that when you come home everything is ready; the house is clean, the food has been prepared, dishes washed and the children are okay*" (Suzman 2000: 117)! Many of the Ju/'hoansi he found working there had come to accept some of their employer's concepts of gender, including male and female domain over 'public' and 'domestic' space, respectively.¹⁴ It is also worth noting that San women in sedentary contexts are actually having more children, with shorter time intervals between each birth, than had been observed among women in nomadic

¹³ Shostak (1990: 243) has argued however, that although men may have less control over how the meat is distributed, the process which requires acts of reciprocal meat giving actually helps to empower them in that it allows them to establish wider ranging social networks with other people.

¹⁴ Suzman (2000: 118) reports that life on the farms is itself a predominantly male focused affair. Contracts between the San and farmers are almost invariably conducted between males, and the physically demanding farm work is itself primarily a male activity. Although some women have obtained work in the farm's kitchens and laundries, Suzman found that their employment status was almost always dependent upon that of their male relatives. Moreover, although they worked similar hours, women were often paid much less than their men-folk.

contexts.¹⁵ Clearly, with more children to care for, and with more domestic duties to attend to, women are less able to travel to the bush to collect wild plant foods than was once the case. The fact that these women are no longer able to make a significant, let alone majority, contribution to their families' subsistence needs appears to be jeopardising the traditionally high social status that they enjoyed in foraging communities (Shostak 1990: 217-218).

An Increasing State of Dependency

Today, very few San continue to hunt and gather in Botswana. By the mid 1960s, the Ju'hoansi were one of only a few communities in the country that did so, and the extent to which their subsistence practices have changed in recent years is dramatic. In the early 1960s, Lee (2003: 168) estimated that approximately three-quarters of the San population at Dobe were living in camps and subsisting primarily by hunting and gathering, with the remainder working and living at Bantu cattle posts. Furthermore, foraging provided them with 85% of their calories. Today, this activity contributes a mere 30%, with the majority coming from the milk and meat of domesticated stock, farmed produce, stores bought and government provided goods (Lee 2003:170). Indeed, the latter is currently making an alarming contribution to the Ju'hoan diet. As a result of a prolonged drought that devastated much of the north-western Kalahari, the government initiated relief feeding and menial work programmes for the San population at Dobe in the late 1970s. Whilst the measures helped alleviate the immediate hardships facing these people, it also had the effect of increasing their dependency on the state. The situation became increasingly acute in the early 1980s when the government tightened game laws in the area and abolished the previous exemptions held by bow hunters. Many San were unable to afford the necessary licences and hunting in the area declined as a result (Lee 2003:169). When the government eventually relaxed these laws in 1987, allowing each individual to kill each year a quota of one male and female of many large game species, there was a revival of hunting and the feeding programmes were stopped. A number of older men once more took up their bows and arrows, whilst a number of younger men, unskilled in the use of

¹⁵ The reasons behind this emerging pattern are somewhat unclear. One possibility is that the today's increased availability of cow's and goat's milk are causing San women to stop breastfeeding much earlier than was the norm in foraging contexts. Prolonged and frequent nursing is thought to stimulate the hormone progesterone that suppresses ovulation. Another explanation is that sedentary life leads women to be better fed and less active, making it easier for them to conceive and maintain pregnancy.

such equipment as a result of growing up on government handouts, took to hunting on horseback using spears (*ibid*: 158). Unfortunately, the programmes were reintroduced in the late 1990s when an outbreak of Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (lungsickness) in the district forced the government to order the destruction of all cattle in the area. At the same time, the increased presence of military personnel in the area, the result of government plans to build a military base north of Xai Xai, has meant more San being arrested for hunting offences.

The eviction of the G//ana and G/wi from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve

Over the last few years, the Government of Botswana has received increasingly adverse international criticism regarding its removal of G/wi and G//ana San communities from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR). The 52,000 square kilometre reserve was established in 1961 by the Bechuanaland Protectorate Government, on the basis of recommendations made by the anthropologist George Silberbauer (Hitchcock 1999: 52). Its design was to help “*protect the food supplies of the existing Bushmen population in this area, estimated at approximately 4,000, from the activities of the European farming community at Ghanzi*” (Government Savingram no 10840 (25) of February 9, 1961, cited by Kalahari Peoples Organisation). In 1985, a Fact Finding Mission commissioned by the then Independent Government of Botswana found that many of the San living inside the CKGR wished to grow crops and raise livestock, or were already doing so. The government argued that these forms of land use were simply unsustainable activities when conducted inside the reserve and, furthermore, were incompatible with preserving wildlife there (Government of Botswana pers. comm.). In 1997, the government began a campaign to resettle the inhabitants of the CKGR. One of the reasons given for the move was that it would help promote the conservation of resources inside the reserve, measures that were necessary given that the San employed dogs and horses in their hunting activities (Hitchcock 1999: 51 & 53). The relocation exercise was also to aid the “development” of the San by improving their living conditions through the provision of services and amenities that could more easily and effectively be implemented in areas with existing infrastructure (*ibid*).¹⁶

¹⁶ However, according to the government’s own figures, it cost only 20 pula (approximately US \$3) per person per week to maintain the provision of basic amenities within the reserve – a cost that the European Union had recently offered to fund (Mmegi 8/03/02). Indeed, it became apparent at the start of the resettlement process that the San were being removed from areas where services such as water existed and taken to camps where there was none (*ibid*). The cost of pumping water into the new

The first major resettlement took place in May, when several hundred inhabitants of !Xade were relocated to New !Xade in the Ghanzi district (Hitchcock 1999: 53). By December, 1,257 people had been resettled there while several hundred others had also been moved to camps at Kaundwane in the Kweneng District (Malema 1998, UN Integrated Regional Information Networks 11/11/02). The conditions and problems facing the people at the new settlements mirror many of the issues that developed when the Namibian Ju/'hoansi San of Nyae Nyae were relocated to the settlement of Tjum!kui (Chum!kwe) in the 1960s (Lee 2003: 174). The people at New !Xade have complained about the lack of trees there and the need to travel increasing distances in order to gather wild plant foods and acquire firewood (Hitchcock 1999: 54, Kalahari Peoples Organisation). Consequently, many of the inhabitants are almost entirely dependent on government handouts for their survival. The lack of employment has created idleness and despondency among the people at the new settlements who feel that they no longer have any purpose or sense of belonging. Social problems are manifest as alcoholism is rife (Omaar 2001). The G//ana and G/wi have also complained that their local patterns of kinship and social organisation were poorly acknowledged in the relocations, to the effect that some people were separated from their friends and relatives when the distribution of people within the new settlement was decided (Hitchcock 1999: 53). The G/wi and G//ana clearly feel that their lives have worsened, rather than improved, as a result of government intervention.

The Botswana Government has maintained throughout the relocation exercise that the resettlement of the San is completely voluntary and that at no time have they been forced into moving. Indeed, it argues that the few San who today remain inside the reserve testify to this fact, even though the government is still continuing with its efforts to "persuade" them to relocate (Mmegi 12/04/02). However, in January 2002, the government announced plans to discontinue with the provision of water and other essential services inside the reserve, including mobile health clinics and welfare handouts for the elderly and orphaned (BBC News 23/01/2002). Within weeks, water tanks had been removed from the settlements inside the CKGR and the water pump at the Mothomelo borehole had been dismantled (Dempster 2002). Game permits, which

settlements has been estimated to be as much as 1 million US dollars (Survival International cited at http://www.survival-international.org/bushman_gov_0225.htm).

allowed the San to hunt and gather within the reserve, have likewise been revoked (BBC News 23/01/2002). I would argue, as others have done, that the discontinuation of these basic services has itself obliged the San to leave the reserve. Whereas a government population and housing census conducted in 2001 reported that there were some 689 San still inside the CKGR, the termination of services has in itself forced all but the last few San to leave. Today, only 17 individuals are thought to remain living there (UN Integrated Regional Information Network 11/11/02). Disturbingly, there have also been reports of incidents whereby the San claim to have been mistreated and even tortured by game scouts and officials whilst others allege they have been threatened with violence if they did not leave the reserve (Hitchcock 1999: 53, see also Survival International).

Conclusion

It is apparent that, during the 1960s and 1970s, the approach adopted by the Namibian and Botswana Governments towards their San populations was quite similar. During this time, the administrations in both countries were implementing policies that aimed to 'develop' the San, encouraging them to become more sedentary and to adopt more 'civilised' and 'progressive' modes of subsistence, chiefly livestock and crop production. However, by the mid 1980s, the Namibian government had completely reversed its position. Development was actively discouraged whereas the 'traditional' San way of life - one based on hunting and gathering - was promoted. Meanwhile, in Botswana, earlier concerns regarding the development of the San have continued to characterise the country's San policies up to the present day. However, whereas in earlier policies these objectives were originally based on humane values, today they appear to be increasingly inseparable from other national economic interests.

Chapter III

Government Policy and Cultural Change amongst the Saami

Introduction

The Saami as an ethnic group have fared better than indigenous peoples elsewhere in the world for, unlike the Aborigines of Australia, the Native Indians of South and Central America or the San in Southern Africa, they have never fallen victim to deliberate campaigns of ethnocide. In fact, Roger Kvist (1994: 203) maintains that, until the mid-nineteenth century, the Saami were treated in much the same way as the Scandinavian population at large – although, of course, that does not mean to say they were treated well. Following the discovery of mineral wealth in the north during the early seventeenth century, they were burdened with tasks of transportation forced upon them by the state, which disrupted their herding activities. Soon after this, their religion came under persecution and many a traditional shamanic practitioner was persecuted in the name of Christianity (Kvist 1994: 205- 206). Yet this was little worse than the treatment suffered by the Scandinavian peasantry. At least the Saami were spared military conscription that took a heavy toll on numerous Scandinavian communities, whilst hundreds of peasant women were executed in the witch hunts of the late 1600s (Göthe 1929, cited in Kvist 1994: 207).

In the 1850s, the ruling administrations of Sweden and Norway began to adopt new policies towards the Saami. Increasingly, they came to be treated as inferior, their needs subservient to those of farmers, industrialists and other Scandinavian entrepreneurs to the north. This bias is clearly reflected in legislation that was introduced over the course of the next century, which served to dispossess the Saami of much of their land and forced many to leave the herding economy. However, in the last few decades, the attitude of the social democratic Scandinavian states towards the Saami has, in some respects, improved considerably. Nonetheless, the ability of these people to maintain their cultural identity and to retain rights to their lands continues to be compromised. This chapter will review the deleterious effects of Swedish and

Norwegian state policies on Saami culture. It is important to note that the Saami have undergone continuous social, political and economic change as a result of contact with others (for example, many of the transformations that have recently taken place in Saami society are likely to have occurred far earlier among the Saami as they shifted from reindeer hunting to reindeer pastoralism). However, only those changes which can be historically attested to will be documented here.

Peace at the Time of Strömstad

The first significant infringement of Saami rights to occur was the carving up of their land between two, then later four, different states. Often the international boundaries that were drawn up were established with a total disregard for the traditional land uses of the Saami, hindering the movement of both people and their animals across ancestral Saami lands. For instance, the Russo-Finnish and Norwegian border established in 1826 dissected not only a number of *siida* territories, dividing the inhabitants unnaturally between different states (Ingold 1976: 4), but later also prevented Saami utilising their grazing pastures in both countries when the border was closed in 1852 (Paine 1994: 157). One notable exception, however, was the treaty of 1751, known as the Peace of Strömstad, which was signed by the kingdoms of Denmark-Norway and Sweden-Finland and which established the present day border between Sweden and Norway (Beach et al., 1992: 56-7). An important appendix, the Lapp Codicil, was attached to the treaty. It declared that the Saami should not be coerced into paying taxes to more than one state and, furthermore, stipulated that their rights to access seasonal resources on either side of the border were to be respected at all times, even if the two countries went to war (Beach et al., 1992: 60, Forrest 1997: 5, Aikio & Aikio 1989: 120).

At the time the Strömstad treaty was signed, colonisation of the northern regions was still relatively insignificant. This was despite incentives, such as free land, tax privileges and exemption from military service, which had been promised by the Swedish state since 1673 to Scandinavians settling in Lapland (Marainen 1982: 63; Olofsson 1974 cited in Kvist 1994: 206). There was effectively little need for the

treaty to impose restrictions on the Saami, given that there was minimal competition for the resources that they exploited. Indeed, throughout the early part of the colonial encounter, there existed an implicit assumption that Saami herders and Scandinavian farmers settling in the north could live amicably together given that, strictly speaking, their livelihoods were not dependent on the same land (Marainen 1982: 63; Kvist 1994: 206; Kormso 1993: 34). After all, the Saami pastoralists spent winters with their herds in the coniferous forests and summers in the mountains or on the coast with, what the Scandinavians perceived, little need for the fertile inland valleys.

Farmer-Herder Relations

As had happened with the San and the first Boer to arrive in Bechuanaland, relations between the herders and Scandinavians were initially often peaceful and mutually beneficial (Beach 1981: 280-1). Some Saami even considered it desirable to have farmers settle in their territories and encouraged them to do so by offering up attractive plots. In exchange, the Scandinavians allowed their homesteads to be used as stations on the long migration routes, where the pastoralists could exchange goods and pick up supplies (Campbell 1948, cited in Beach 1981: 281). However, as the rate of colonisation accelerated during the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, competition over resources became more pronounced and relations between the herders and settlers turned progressively more sour. Increasingly, farmers began to complain of damage caused to their fields by wandering reindeer. The Saami were also becoming incensed that the hunting and fishing activities of the settlers were depleting their food resources. Furthermore, they lamented that the lichen and vegetation upon which the reindeer depended were being destroyed as farmers burned the forests to clear land for planting (Campbell 1984, cited in Kormso 1993: 34). Initially, the Saami fared well in these disputes, with the local courts often ruling in their favour (Kvist 1994: 207). But this was to last only as long as Saami herding and labour profited the state. As the fixed taxes paid by the pastoralists became almost insignificant in value (particularly in Sweden), and as farming superseded herding in importance in terms of its contribution to the national

economy, the needs of the settlers were increasingly afforded priority (Beach 1981: 281).

This change in priority was clearly evident in the Swedish Grazing Law of 1886, implemented to help mitigate the growing number of conflicts between the Saami and the Scandinavian settlers. The new law dictated that all Saami be registered with a village, or *lappbyar*, whilst those who participated in herding should also become affiliated with a damage compensation area (Beach 1981:79-80, 362). The former measure was an attempt to make the Saami more sedentary and more integrated into Swedish culture, whilst the latter was to ensure that farmers could extract payment for damage caused to their fields by reindeer, even when the owner of the guilty animals could not be determined (Kormso 1993: 34-35). A few years previous, the Swedish government had drawn an Agricultural Line (known as the *odlingsgräns*) through its northerly regions, which acted as a means to remove the Saami from some of the most contested areas. Land above and to the west of the line was reserved for the use of the reindeer herding Saami, whilst land below it and to the east was set aside exclusively for the purpose of agriculture (Beach 1981: 309). Together, the line and the law marked a significant shift in government policy, a rejection of the earlier notion of parallel development and its replacement by a programme of segregationalism. Thereafter, it was decided that the best way to minimise disputes between the farmers and herders was to separate them as far as was geographically possible (Beach et al., 1992: 68). However, whilst the new measures certainly helped to protect the interests of farmers, they yielded little benefit for the Saami. Not only did the drawing of the agricultural line severely curtail their rights to the east and south, where many Saami were subsequently forced to abandon herding, but it failed to protect their lands in the north and west as, over the years, farmers steadily continued to encroach on the land set aside for grazing (Beach 1988: 6 & 8, Beach et al., 1992: 68).

Curtailment of Swedish Saami Rights

In Norway too, where the first Herding Act was passed in 1854, “*rights (with compensation for their infringement) were, for the most part enjoyed by the sedentary farming population, and responsibilities (legal liabilities) were left, for the most part, with the pastoralists*” (Paine 1994: 157). Like the Swedish authorities, the Norwegian government was keen to protect the interests of its farmers and, later, the industries of forestry, mining and tourism which expanded in the north during the latter part of the nineteenth century (Beach 1981: 281; Otnes, Berglof, both cited Marainen 1982: 66). On no account were the anachronistic undertakings of the Saami herders to interfere with these ‘culturally and economically superior’ forms of land use (Sillanpää 1994: 70, cited in Forrest 1998: 58). However, it was not just the Norwegian Saami who were targeted by the Norwegian policies but the Swedish herders too for, besides the aforementioned economic factors, there lay also a political determinant.

Throughout the course of the late nineteenth century, a nationalistic ideology had been steadily growing in Norway. It was, as I will discuss in more detail shortly, partly in response to demands for independence - an end to its union with Sweden into which it had been forced in 1814. The migrations of the Swedish Saami to their summer pastures in Norway each year was therefore not only seen as an interference in Norway’s agricultural and industrial development, but as a further infringement from a country with which it desperately wanted to sever its connection (Forrest 1998: 58). It was in this context that Norway made increasingly vociferous insurances for the curtailment of Swedish Saami rights within its lands, as stipulated by the Lapp Codicil. In 1883, after years of mounting pressure, the Swedish politicians eventually gave way and a Joint Herding Legislature was passed. As demanded by Norway, the new law limited the ability of the Swedish Saami to herd their animals across the border. Although crossings were still permitted, there were now strict regulations governing the duration and place of their visits, with violations subject to fines (Beach 1981: 60, Marainen 1982: 64). Following the dissolution of the Union between the two countries in 1905, the predicament of the Swedish herders went from

bad to worse, with restrictions imposed on them by the Norwegian state culminating in legislation introduced in 1919. Not only were the grazing areas and the time the Saami could spend in them further reduced, it was now necessary for each herding unit to submit an application to the authorities requesting permission to move to the permitted pastures (Prop 1919, cited in Marainen 1982: 64). The Norwegian laws were to prove nothing short of catastrophic for the reindeer pastoralist communities of northern Sweden who, having been extremely dependent on access to their summer pastures in Norway, were hardest hit by the new measures. Indeed, they only exacerbated existing problems of pasture availability and farmer-herder conflict, both of which had been slowly escalating in severity over the years.

In 1852, Russia had initiated the closure of the Finnish-Norwegian border.¹ The new border regulations made life particularly difficult for the nomadic Saami, who were prevented from moving with their herds between the two countries (Enoksen 1982:13). At the time, some 15,000 reindeer belonging to 'Finnish' Saami were dependent upon summer pastures in Norway, whilst around 50,000 'Norwegian' animals were equally reliant on the use of winter pastures in Finland (Landbruksdepartementet 1932, cited in Paine 1994: 157). In order to escape the dilemma in which they now found themselves, a number of Norwegian reindeer-herding families decided to officially emigrate with their animals to Karesuando and Jukkasjärvi in Sweden, from where it was hoped they could continue to access their grazing lands in Finland (Arell, cited in Aikio & Aikio 1989:121). However, this too became impossible following the closure of the Swedish-Finnish border in 1888 (both these borders remain closed to reindeer traffic to the present day) (Marainen 1982: 68; Beach 1981: 144). Subsequently, several of the recent Norwegian émigrés returned to their homes across the border whilst a few moved again, this time to Finland.²

¹ The reasons behind this move remain unclear, although Cajanus (1870 cited in Beach 1981: 144) has speculated that it may have been a consequence of Norway's refusal to grant Russia's request for an ice-free port in the Varanger area. Whilst others have rejected this claim (Duben 1873, cited in *ibid*) there is little doubt that international politics, not 'undesirable' Saami activity, were responsible for the decision (Beach 1981: 144).

² Aikio and Aikio (1989) have documented the fate that met the descendents of those families that moved to Finland, many of whom had their reindeer requisitioned by the state to feed the military and

However, many remained in Sweden, intensifying pressure on the pastures there (Beach 1981: 145).

The Enforced Relocation of the Northern Swedish Saami

The influx of herders from Norway, together with the increasing loss of pasturage - first in Finland, then in Norway, and also as a result of the Swedish state's own development of agriculture, mining and forestry – resulted in severe overcrowding on the diminished grazing lands of the northern Swedish Saami herders. Already by 1898, the Riksdag had perceived it necessary to reduce the number of animals kept in the region, and passed legislation that allowed for the relocation of Saami, “to the nearest Lapp village with grazing land for additional reindeer” (Cramer n.d, cited in Marianen 1982: 69). It was not long, however, before all the northern villages became filled and, as the situation increased in severity, the steps taken by the Swedish authorities only became more drastic (Beach 1981: 145). In 1925, a new act was passed which allowed for the forced slaughter and sale of reindeer. Relocation also became a matter of moving the Saami further and further south, often to distant provinces, where population pressure was less severe and grazing still available.

Both the northern and southern Saami experienced considerable cultural and social upheaval during the course of these events. Made to leave behind their family and friends, many of the northern Saami were settled in regions to which they had no familial ties and where the natives spoke unintelligible dialects (Beach 1981: 145, Marainen 1982: 70). Often their reindeer, disorientated and confused in the new terrain, attempted to return to their former homes in the north and it was not uncommon for herders to have to travel long distances in order to recover strays (Beach 1981: 150). The situation was further compounded by the fact that relations were often less than amiable between the northern Saami who were forced to move and the southern Saami who were, often involuntarily, made to accept them. The most

civilian population during the Finnish Civil War (1918) and World War II. Like the Saami in Sweden and Norway they also suffered from agricultural and industrial expansion in the post war period.

common source of conflict to arise between the two groups stemmed from the fact that they practised radically different herding techniques (Marainen 1982:173).

In the early decades of the twentieth century, the majority of southern Saami were still practising the traditional intensive form of herding, with each family closely following its own animals throughout the year (Marainen 1982: 72). In contrast, many northern Saami had long been engaged in an extensive form of herding whereby the animals belonging to several families were largely left to roam freely in search of pasture, especially during the summer months (*ibid*).³ The practice of extensive herding by the new arrivals to the south severely disrupted the intensive routines of the Saami who lived there. The latter would frequently lose control of their animals as they became enmeshed within the larger, almost-wild herds. From the 1920s onwards, articles documenting the conflict between the two herding cultures appeared regularly in the Saami newspaper *Samefolkets Egen Tidning* (Marainen 1982: 73). Several of these reported how the older generations of southern Saami perceived the new techniques as a threat to their very identity (Park 1924, cited in Marainen 1982: 73). Despite much initial opposition, however, increasing numbers gradually began to adopt the herding methods of their northern counterparts. Whether this was out of choice, a realisation by the southern herders of the advantages offered by the new technique, or whether it was of necessity due to the general incompatibility of the two methods, extensive herding had, by the 1940s, “*become a full reality almost everywhere*” (Beach 1981: 46).⁴ As predicted, the employment of the extensive

³ It is unclear exactly as to the impetus which first gave rise to this practice among the Saami. Ingold (1972) suggests that the method was most probably borrowed from early Finnish settlers to the north, who developed this unique way of herding reindeer in tandem with their agricultural pursuits. Beach (1981: 151) however, has observed how the islands and peninsulas along the Norwegian coast allowed for the herds to be naturally contained with little or no effort, whilst the overcrowded conditions that existed there from the mid-nineteenth century would itself have necessitated the development of such a herding technique.

⁴ It is worth noting that some southern herding communities, for example in the Tuorpon saameby in the Jokkmokk district, had already by the late nineteenth century and for several years prior to the relocation of northern Saami groups there, started experimenting with incipient extensive summer herding techniques (Beach 1981: 119). Whilst it is important to acknowledge this partial relaxation of intensive herding having occurred independently before the relocation of the northern Saami, it is essential to stress that the scale of its abandonment and the ultimate outcomes were incomparable to what took place afterwards (Beach 1981: 119-120).

methods did result in significant cultural change for the southern Saami, as traditional migration routes fell into disuse and settlements became more permanent. The economy of the southern herders transformed too, from one based on self sufficiency to one largely orientated towards the cash economy. Whereas the reindeer had once served as a provider of milk, meat and transport, their multiple functions were now reduced to one - as a source of meat only (Beach 1981: 120).

Unfortunately, these large-scale relocations, which dramatically transformed the lives of hundreds of northern⁵ and many more southern Saami, did little more than provide temporary relief to the problems afflicting the northern pastures; chiefly the overly-high reindeer/ pasture ratio and frequent farmer-herder conflict, caused by the loss of much grazing land. Often, the very efforts taken by the government to alleviate or eliminate these problems often only exacerbated them and contributed in spreading them further south (Beach 1981: 145 & 156). In fact, government policies inadvertently created a 'knock-on' effect whereby new policies were continually required to address the problems created by previous legislation. For instance, with the announcement of forced slaughters in the north during the 1920s, many of the larger herders, aware that their herds were to be targeted first, let their animals loose on the tundra so that they could not be counted, much to the consternation of the farmers and the smaller, more intensive herders (Beach 1981: 285). In the past, the latter had been fairly adept at controlling the damaging extensivity of their wealthier counterparts, but their ability to do so was severely hindered by roughly contemporaneous legislation that outlawed the practice of reindeer rustling (Beach 1981: 286). As overcrowding and farmer-herder conflict spread to the south with the relocation of the northern Saami there, the Storting introduced a series of laws aimed at reinforcing intensive herding techniques and reducing the number of animals through compulsory reindeer slaughters. Once again, their efforts were to prove largely futile.

⁵ It has been estimated that approximately 411 northern Swedish Saami, representing some 130 households, moved south between the years 1894 and 1947 (Ahren 1979, cited in Beach 1981: 144). Whilst some moved by their own accord, the majority did so involuntarily (Beach 1981: 145).

The Era of Rationalisation and Modernisation

Following the decline of agriculture in the north after the Second World War, Nordic Saami policies shifted in emphasis. No longer was there need for legislation to help mollify farmer-herder conflict, or to protect the homesteads of settlers. The development of the welfare state also redirected attention towards the living conditions of the herders. Many lived in poverty, forced by the meagre profits to be made from herding into a dependency on welfare handouts (Beach 1981: 320). Mortality rates were high, the figures from some northerly provinces comparable to those of peoples living in the developing world (Haraldson 1962, cited in Beach 1981: 320). The circumstances of the herders did not fit with the ideals of the socialist states with their newly found principles of equality for all (Olsson & Lewis 1995: 141). From the late twentieth century, herding legislation in both countries has been founded on the objective of eliminating wealth disparities between the herders and raising their living standards to the level of their more affluent countrymen. This was done by transforming reindeer herding as practiced by the Saami into an efficient and profitable commercial enterprise through rationalisation and modernisation. Such legislation came into being in Sweden with the Reindeer Herding Act of 1971, and later in Norway by the Grazing Act of 1978.

In Sweden, the rationalisation measures were applied to both the structure of the industry, as well as its means of production. With regards to its structure, the *lappbys*, renamed *saamebys*, were to be remodelled into a communal economic enterprise. Each *saameby* was to be responsible for overseeing herding in its territory which was now, at the governments' insistence, to be undertaken collectively with individual owners paying a herding fee per reindeer to the collective (Beach 1988:9). In order to prevent the possibility of overgrazing, rational herd numbers were imposed, dictating the maximum number of animals allowed to be grazed within the *saameby* by its members. Should the reindeer population rise above this figure set by government, the *saameby* would be responsible for enforcing slaughter (Beach 1981: 9).

The government had argued that the new measures were to help preserve the culture of the Saami although, of course, given that an economic interpretation of Saami ethnicity prevailed (see below), this effectively meant the culture of the reindeer herding Saami only. It was claimed that if the living standards of the herders were improved, then fewer would be forced to leave the occupation as a result of poverty (Beach 1988: 9). The “catch 22” of the situation was that in order for this to be achieved, it was first necessary to reduce the number of herders, for a smaller number meant that each could own a greater number of animals and thus accumulate more wealth. In Sweden, the authorities decided that 30% of the existing herders would have to go (Beach 1981: 353). With good reason then, many herders opposed the new legislation. They felt that further reductions in the already nominal figure of Saami involved in pastoralism were something not at all positive for their culture (Beach et al, 1992: 86). Furthermore, many expressed the opinion that a living standard comparable to that of a Swede was considerably less important to them than being able to live with their animals in the north (Beach 1981: 9). Due to the lack of alternative employment opportunities, those forced out of the herding occupation often relocated to the south. The majority settled in the cities such as Stockholm, which today has the second highest concentration of Saami of all the districts in Sweden (Beach 1981: 350).

Even for those who successfully managed to remain in herding, the practice was to become altogether very different, since the period following the implementation of the reindeer acts saw unprecedented state interference in the management of Saami reindeer pastoralism. In order to maximise meat production, the government laid down a set of guidelines recommending how the Saami should go about their everyday herding activities. For instance, the Saami were encouraged to slaughter as many of their one-year-old calves as possible. The government argued that this was the most rational option since reindeer grow more during their first year of life than at any time thereafter (Paine 1994: 163; Beach 1981: 339). By culling them younger, a better carcass-weight to pasture-consumption ratio would be obtained. The government also recommended that slaughtering take place in the late summer and

autumn, (rather than predominantly in the winter as was custom), when the animals were in a better physical condition and before they could consume the scarce winter pastures – the bottleneck in the Swedish Saami seasonal grazing cycle (Beach 1981: 339 & 342). Often these recommendations conflicted with the traditional practices and ideas of the Saami. Indeed calf slaughter, beyond culling the weakest calves or in order to meet immediate household needs, directly opposes the ideals of Saami husbandry; that is to acquire ever larger herds and to only cull animals once they had reached their peak weight (Paine 1994: 164; Beach 1981: 339).

In Norway, another source of conflict has been the government-run abattoirs. The authorities have coerced the Saami to bring their animals to the abattoirs for slaughter in order to ensure the quality of reindeer meat as a product suitable for the market. At the abattoir, staff will butcher the animals, and grade the meat in order to determine the price paid to the herder (Paine 1994: 131-4). It is not uncommon, however, for the meat to be graded at a value lower than that accorded by the herder, often a consequence of different cultural ideas regarding product desirability (*ibid*: 134). Whilst the Saami appreciate most meat with fat, the non-Saami market prefers it to be lean (*ibid*: 138). Moreover, many herders resent demands by the slaughterhouses that they sell live animals, since this denies them access to other reindeer products.⁶ In a similar fashion, they oppose the butchering techniques that are employed, perceiving them to be wasteful. Traditionally, the Saami would utilise all parts of the reindeer, or would keep what they wanted for themselves and sell other parts when they needed cash (Paine 1994: 133). At the slaughterhouse, the sinews (which the Saami value for sewing their clothes) are severed, whilst the blood of the animals (traditionally made into sausages or mixed with flour and used as a feed for dogs) left to spill onto the floor (Paine 1994: 138). Such wastefulness only serves to reinforce the idea among the Saami that Scandinavians do not understand reindeer, let alone what they mean to Saami (Paine 1994: 134). The herders consider themselves experts on all matters regarding reindeer because *they are Saami*, because reindeer are *their* way of life and

⁶ Some Saami have also expressed annoyance at government pressure to sell *all* their excess animals since this precludes their use for other cultural expressions, e.g. as wedding gifts (Paine 1994: 133).

culture. It is quite an affront to their autonomy then to be told by others, with demonstrably less expertise on such matters, how they should slaughter their animals and when exactly this ought to be done. Much of the pastoralists' former sense of self and independence acquired through their control over their animals, including the means of their disposal, is thus lost in the process of selling their animals to the slaughterhouses (Paine 1994: 113 & 138).

Associated with the government's plan for rationalisation of the herding industry was the idea for its mechanisation. Today, the Saami have available all manner of technological means to assist them in the herding quest, from long distance telephones to naval landing craft, even helicopters. Whilst these have proved advantageous to the herders in many ways, they have also had adverse effects. Take, for example, the snowmobile. Alongside other technology, the government introduced and supported its adoption with the objective of making herding more efficient and, by implication, more productive. Certainly, the 'tin-plated reindeer' have cut journey times considerably but, rather than making herding easier, some Saami complain that their work is made harder than ever. The reindeer, scared by the roaring engines of the machines, have become increasingly difficult to handle [cf. helicopter mustering of cattle in Australia (Layton, pers. comm.)]. Hence, in order to maintain control of their animals, the herders now require more mechanisation, thereby perpetuating a vicious cycle that draws them ever further into the market economy (Paine 1994: 145-8). Of course, none of this technology comes cheap, as Robert Paine discovered among a community of pastoralists herding in Kautokeino. Approximately two thirds of the group's annual expenditure was spent on mechanised equipment, 35% on the purchase and upkeep of snowmobiles alone (NIBR 1990 cited in Paine 1994: 145)! Yet, those herders who can ill-afford or would prefer not to use this technology have little choice in the matter if they wish to remain within the industry. Given the advantages that the machines confer in terms of mobility and time efficiency, as soon as one family within a given area purchases one, it becomes essential for all others to follow suit in order to maintain the *status quo* (Paine 1994:145). However, it quickly becomes apparent how this increasing competition

through mechanisation may become counterproductive: when all the herders have snowmobiles, no one will be ahead of another, but all may be worse off (Paine 1994: 155).

Apart from economic considerations, modernisation has also had profound socio-cultural consequences. For instance, in the pre-snowmobile days, each member of the Saami pastoral family owned their own *her'gi* (draft reindeer) and thus had independent means of transportation. Mobility, whilst time consuming, was attainable by all. Today, most families can best afford one snowmobile, the wealthier perhaps two or three - far less than the number of family members (Paine 1994: 148). Thus, access to transportation has become prioritised and tends to favour the young men in charge of herding. Accompanying this trend has been a pattern of increased sedentisation among the Saami herders⁷. Since the 1960s, progressively greater numbers have settled down in modern permanent dwellings in the small villages and towns on the tundra, from where their snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles allow them easy access to their herds pasturing many kilometres away (Paine 1994: 147). The use of new transportation technology, the mobility that it allows and the sedentisation it promotes, have together completely altered the relationship that the Saami had with their reindeer, a relationship that is not only interwoven, but lies at the core of Saami culture. As the herders spend less time, and subsequently lose the bonds of familiarity that they once shared, with their animals, there is a feeling among some that their unique cultural heritage is slowly dying away. For many, this is most clearly manifest by the loss of traditional husbandry knowledge among today's younger generations who, because of the aforementioned changes in settlement and mobility, are growing up having had very little contact with the reindeer herds.⁸ Yet,

⁷ The introduction of the snowmobile, and the ability to complete long journeys in a matter of hours, has perhaps contributed to the breakdown of social relations between herding families. Travel by *her'gi* necessitated overnight stops at other camps, a social component that is today largely lacking from many Saami journeys (Paine 1994: 148). However, this factor may be offset by the fact that Saami are today living in larger localised communities on the tundra.

⁸ Traditionally, the sled reindeer were an important source of education for the children, who would learn to distinguish between the animals on the basis of characteristics such as their size, sex, colour and stage of antler-development. Later, this knowledge would be applied to the herds (Paine 1994: 148-9). The Saami language is extremely rich in technical vocabulary used to describe both the

whilst for some this is a grave cause for concern, for others it is an accepted inevitability.

Occupationalists vs. Culturalists: Tradition vs. Profit

In my opinion, the most negative effect of the rationalisation and modernisation policies of both states is the gulf created between the reindeer herders themselves. They remain divided in opinion as to the benefits offered, the importance of their traditional customs and the true motivation of the government as regards the new measures. Some, for example, see state interference in their livelihood as help that is long overdue. Others however, perceive it as unwarranted intervention, an attempt by the government to exert increasing economic control (Paine 1994: 141). I adopt Snell and Snell's (1975) labelling of 'occupationalists' and 'culturalists' here to describe the two conflicting ideological orientations.

On the one hand, the culturalists wish to pursue herding in accordance with their traditional customs. They continue to value the importance of the Saami language in their work and appreciate their native arts and crafts, whilst many still possess an active and intimate knowledge of their herds and the landscape where they graze (Snell & Snell 1975: 174). In contrast, the occupationalists feel it necessary to abandon many of the old practices if reindeer herding is to become a profitable economic enterprise. Like the government, they perceive the replacement of traditional expertise and knowledge with scientific techniques and modern equipment as a necessary prerequisite (Snell & Snell 1975: 173). The culturalists are extremely resentful of the success experienced by the occupationalists in building up their herds,

behaviour and physical appearance of animals. For instance, the name given to the male reindeer changes every year until it is seven years of age (Jones 1982: 10). There are also many linguistic terms to describe the various conditions of weather, pasturage and natural features of the terrain. The language itself can be seen as a prerequisite to pastoral competence, in that it allows the herders to communicate information about their animals or conditions of the pasturage, when neither are in sight (Paine 1994: 149). Now that the *her'gi* are no longer used, combined with the fact that less children are actively participating in herding (a consequence of the increasing sedentary nature of the Saami family as well as children's low priority access to transportation) means that fewer are today acquiring this knowledge (see also Chapter 5).

and of the fact that they have accomplished this by abandoning traditional ethnic idioms. Nevertheless, they are finding themselves forced into a position where they too must adopt the very practices and technology that they oppose if they wish to maintain a competitive edge and remain in the industry.

The occupationalists have an additional advantage over the culturalists in that they are often better able to manipulate their interests through the weighted voting system of the saameby, introduced in Sweden with the 1971 Herding Law. The system works on the basis that it is more rational, i.e. more conducive to efficient herding, to allow larger herders a proportionately greater say in the collective herding and economic decisions of the sammeby (Beach 1982: 138). The government reasons that, since the owners of large herd have more at stake, they should also have more say in herding matters. In theory, they also pay more to the sammeby in herding fees and should therefore be accorded more influence as to how that money is spent.⁹ As the law stands, a herder will acquire one vote on any saameby decision for every increment of 100 animals. Thus, a Saami with 199 reindeer will have one vote, an owner of 200 animals will have two votes, whilst the unfortunate herder with a herd of only 99 reindeer will have no say in the 'collective' decisions (Beach 1981: 386). Although the law restricts the power of any one herder (for instance, no saameby member may account for more than one fifth of the total vote on any particular issue), it is still possible for the larger herders to promote interests that maybe disadvantageous to the smaller herders, even pursuing deliberate measures of driving them away from the occupation so as to gain more of the scarce grazing for themselves (Beach 1981: 386). Although this accusation is perhaps taking matters too far, it is hardly surprising that many of the smaller herders in particular consider the laws of the Swedish state as part of a conscious plan to set the Saami against each other (Beach 1982: 141).

⁹ In practice however, the fee is not paid unless the annual budget of the saameby shows a deficit, so that in saamebys receiving compensation for industrial land encroachment, members will rarely need to part with their money. In these circumstances, the smaller herders argue that the saameby ought to adopt a one-herder-one-vote policy on economic matters, and preferably on practical herding matters also (Beach 1982: 133).

Besides creating divisions between the larger and smaller herders, the administrative policies of the Norwegian and Swedish states have also promoted inequalities between the sexes. Like the foraging San, the pre-pastoral Saami also appear to have been egalitarian in nature, perhaps even more so. Tacitus, for example, wrote that both men and women participated in hunting and fishing activities, and for many centuries it was the custom for newly married men to take up residence with his bride's family (Jones 1982: 6). Saami women continued to keep their maiden name following marriage, frequently passing it on to their children (Sara 1982: 23). As seen in the previous chapter, the adoption of pastoralism by a former foraging group necessitates changes in the social and economic relationships between individuals in that society (see Goldschmidt 1979). However, in the case of the Saami, previously existing inequalities between the sexes in herding societies have been exacerbated by government policies that have served to undermine the legal position of Saami women (Beach 1982). For example, the Swedish Reindeer Act of 1928 stated that, if a female saameby (then lappby) member were to marry a man who did not possess the herding right, she would as a consequence forfeit her own eligibility. Yet the same law declared that, if a man with herding rights were to marry a woman lacking such rights, he would not only retain his rights and bestow them to his wife (Beach 1982: 131). Amft (2000) reasons that the legislation was to ensure that reindeer herding rights would not be conferred to non-Saami men and that Saami privileges therefore would not transcend the ethnic group. Fortunately, since 1971 this aspect of outright discrimination has been eradicated, and today a female sammeby member will likewise retain her rights and convey them upon her partner at marriage (Beach 1982:131). However, the impact of the earlier law, in causing a significant decline in the number of female saameby members over the years, continues to be felt. One demographic study conducted in 1974 revealed an extremely low proportion of Saami women over 24 years of age living within the core herding areas (Johannson 1974, cited in Beach 1982: 131).

In actuality, the 1971 Act did little to improve the position of women in the saameby. The current herding law recognises three distinct membership classes within the

saameby. Class one is composed of individuals who hold herding rights and who actively participate in herding, class two encompasses elderly or retired individuals, whilst class three is made up of individuals who are either married to, or are the children of, a class one or two member (SFS 1971, cited in Beach 1982: 129). The law stipulates that reindeer owned by either class two and three members be cared for by a class one member, who counts these animals together with his own in order to determine his voting power (Beach 1982: 137). Whilst the wives of many Saami herders concede that they spend less time than their mothers or grandmothers participating in physical outdoor activities such as earmarking or rounding up, they claim that herding not only constitutes work done in the forest but also in the home. They argue that the role of the herding wife goes beyond mere domestic chores, in that it makes essential contributions to the Saami livelihood. Consequently, many feel bitter that the Act denied them voting rights (Beach 1982: 130-2).¹⁰

So what factors are responsible for this inequality? I am inclined here to agree with the opinion of Hugh Beach (1982: 132) who asserts that the discrimination against women in the saamebys today is similar to that experienced by small herders, non-class one members and even non-members in general, and stems not so much from sexual prejudice but is rather an outcome of scarce resources. For, as industries continue to encroach on the land set aside for grazing and as the minimum number of reindeer necessary for subsistence continues to rise, it is apparent that fewer Saami will be able to make their living from herding (Beach 1982: 136). Government policy has fostered this trend by favouring 'more economical' forms of land use and by imposing legislation that actively sought to reduce both the number of Saami able to engage in reindeer herding and the number of reindeer in existence. But what has

¹⁰ It is possible for women to become active herders, and thus be granted class I status. For instance, in the Sirkas (Sirjes) Saameby, if a woman wants to become the guardian of her own reindeer, she must undertake a three year trial period at herding. At the end of the trial period, the other herders will decide, on the basis of her skills, abilities and commitment, whether to accept or reject her (Beach 1982: 139). However, the discrimination in the process is clearly evident since a young boy, upon reaching the herding age, will automatically be elevated from a class three to class one member regardless of his herding competence (*ibid*).

happened to those Saami who were not involved in herding or have been forced to leave the occupation over time? It is to this question that I now turn.

The Fate of the Non-herding Saami

It is apparent that an economic interpretation of Saami ethnicity has long dominated Swedish and Norwegian policy-making, to the effect that only those individuals who pursued a reindeer herding way of life were regarded as Saami by the state and subsequently afforded any ethnic rights. Otnes (1970, cited in Marainen 1982: 64) has argued that such a bias can be traced back to the time of the Lapp Codicil which he claims made provisions for the reindeer herding Saami only. However, Cramer (n.d. cited in Marainen 1982: 64) holds that the division along the lines of occupation did not occur until the implementation of the Norwegians Common Act of 1883. In Sweden, this prejudice is apparent in the legislation of 1886 that conveyed the rights of hunting, fishing and grazing upon reindeer herding Saami only. Yet, whilst the Swedish laws of the nineteenth century permitted all Saami to engage in herding, and hence enjoy the accompanying privileges, these rights were severely curtailed by new legislature passed in 1928 (Kvist 1994: 209). From then until the present day, only Saami whose parents or grandparents were actively involved in herding have been allowed to enter the profession, and on the further condition that they possessed saameby membership (Cramer & Prawitz 1970, cited in Kormso 1993: 35).

No longer afforded any rights as Saami, the non-herding population was forced to compete for the limited opportunities presented to the Scandinavian population as a whole (Snell & Snell 1975: 169). However, their ability to establish an equal footing in Scandinavian society was severely compromised by the fact that the dominant population stigmatised their ethnic identity. Eidheim (1971: 56) describes the dilemma of the Norwegian non-herding Saami thus; "*in order to achieve the material and social goods they appreciate, and to share the opportunities available in society, people have to get rid of, or cover up, those social characteristics which Norwegians take as signs of Lappishness*". He observed the extraordinary lengths that Saami living in an ethnically mixed Norwegian coastal population in Western Finnmark

went to in order to under-communicate their ethnic identity. For example, many refrained from speaking their native tongue in public arenas, and from discussing topics that had Saami themes or which pointed to ethnic differentiation in the community. Indeed, on arrival in the community, Eidheim recorded how the Norwegian non-herding Saami made concerted efforts to always pursue conversational topics in the local Norwegian dialect in order to show off their 'Norwegianess'. Only later, once he had established better rapport with his informants, did he discover that, in the privacy of their own homes, some continued to wear their traditional dress and to cook characteristic Saami dishes (Eidheim 1971: 53-5). In all aspects of public life, however, ethnic identity was suppressed, for not to do have done so would have entailed far too great a social cost (Eidheim 1971: 63-4).

The Rise of Nationalism

Saami suppression of their own ethnicity was especially pronounced in Norway, where deliberate policies aimed at assimilating the country's ethnic minorities into the dominant population were implemented. In the years leading up to and following Norway's emancipation from Sweden, there was an urgent desire in government policy to create a national identity. All things un-Norwegian were effectively to be stamped out (Snell & Snell 1975:168). Whilst much of this hostility was directed against the Finnish Kven population, who had over the years been migrating to Norway in their hundreds (no doubt keen to escape life under Tsarist Russia to which Finland had been attached as a Grand Duchy in 1809), the Saami too suffered considerably (Beach 1988: 5). Of particular detriment was the Land Regulations Act of 1902, which declared that land could only be sold to individuals who could speak, read and write Norwegian, and who did so on a daily basis (Minde 1984: 2). The law effectively forced the non-herding Saami to buy land which had been theirs from time immemorial, yet at the same time prevented them from doing so unless they first relinquished their native identity.

Far more sinister however, was the line adopted by the government towards education. Already by 1860, the Storting had demanded that teachers in the so-called

“transitional zones” (areas with a large sedentary, i.e. non-herding, Saami population) use Norwegian as the sole language of instruction in their lessons. In fact, teachers were rewarded with bonuses if they succeeded in teaching their Saami students to speak Norwegian to a high proficiency, and faced pay cuts if they failed to follow orders. The children too were later coerced into relinquishing their native tongue with prizes of money (Solem & Stormo 1982: 14). Then, in the early years of the twentieth century, the government introduced boarding schools for the children of the non-herding Saami. At the new schools, away from their parents, they were forced to speak Norwegian at all times (Solem & Stormo 1982: 15). For much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Saami language was neither taught nor tolerated.

In Sweden too, Saami children whose parents were involved in occupations other than herding were ushered into the national schooling system where they learnt the language and culture of the majority population (Upman 1978, cited in Kvist 1994: 210). However, the Riksdag adopted a somewhat different approach to the children of reindeer herding Saami, based on the policy of '*Lapp skal var Lapp*'; that a 'Lapp should be a Lapp' (Snell & Snell 1975: 170). In contrast to the Norwegian assimilation policy, which by 1900 had been extended to include children from herding families (the law now dictated that they also be taught Norwegian in schools), the Swedish approach was based on the philosophy that schooling should not entice herding Saami children away from their traditional lifestyle (Kvist 1994: 210). For this reason, classes were held in huts and tents and the academic standard kept at a lower level than the mainstream schools (Solem & Stormo 1982: 15).

The long-term effects of these assimilationist policies, especially the way in which they have evoked the loss of the Saami language, have been striking. For example, one study of Saami linguistic capacity conducted in Sweden in 1975 found that 20% of the non-herding population could not understand the Saami language, a further 40% could not speak it, 65% were unable to read it, and a staggering 85% could not write it (Sweden 1975, cited in Kvist 1994: 209)! In Norway too, the extent of cultural loss can be tentatively discerned from official censuses undertaken during the

course of the last century. Two such censuses made in 1890 and 1930 tallied the national Saami population at about 20,000. Yet another study made in 1950 indicated that their numbers had dropped significantly. In that year, only 9,000 Saami were recorded to be living in Norway (Snell & Snell 1975: 168) – a reduction of over 50% in less than 20 years! It is improbable that peoples of Saami ancestry declined so rapidly in number in so few years; indeed the Saami are regarded as having a ‘notoriously’ high birth rate. The enormous discrepancies are in fact attributable to the differing sets of criteria used to establish Saami ethnicity in each of the studies; in 1890 descent was used, in 1930 both descent and language, and in 1950 only language (Snell & Snell 1975: 182). Rather than a reduction in the actual number of people of Saami ethnicity, what the figures more accurately reflect is a reduction in the number of people who spoke Saami, together with an increasing reluctance of Saami to admit their ethnic identity. In Norway, many non-herding Saami consciously decided not to pass on their culture or their language to their children, believing that to do so would handicap them (Eidheim 1971: 57). Irimoto (2000:215) has reported a similar response among the indigenous Ainu population of Japan who, likewise subjected to acculturative policies, believed it was in their children’s best interests to become fully integrated into the dominant society.

Conclusion

By adopting an economic interpretation of ethnicity in their policies towards the Saami, both the Swedish and Norwegian governments have strengthened the relationship between reindeer herding and Saami culture. However, by selecting this occupational category of Saami for special treatment, they have effectively made reindeer herding the only sphere where it is legitimate to be Saami (Beach et al., 1992: 64). This approach has been detrimental, especially to Saami pursuing other livelihoods, resulting in significant cultural loss and their eventual assimilation into dominant society. In turn, it has also contributed to a certain isolation of reindeer herders. Many non-herding Saami, having assumed a Scandinavian identity, now view their own culture in negative terms. Hence, they too contribute to, and further perpetuate, the stigmatisation of all things Saami (Snell & Snell 1975: 169-70). This

has resulted in the breakdown of relations, and created severe antagonism, between the reindeer herding and non-herding Saami populations, as clearly evidence by the changing nature of *verde* partnerships as reported by Eidheim (1971).¹¹

However, despite implementing policies aimed solely at preserving Saami reindeer herding culture, both Scandinavian states have continuously favoured the interests of other industries that directly compete with the herding Saami for land and resources. As a consequence, both governments have effectively forced Saami to leave the very livelihood that they claim to be helping to protect. The 1971 and 1978 herding laws, which introduced herding fees and a weighted voting system affording greater power to those Saami owning the largest herds and which imposed restrictions preventing saameby members from engaging in economic activities other than herding, have effectively driven many smaller herders away from the occupation. Consequently, these Saami will forfeit the privileges associated with herding. Moreover, their children and grandchildren will also be disinherited of those rights afforded by saameby membership. In Sweden today, it is estimated that only 900 individuals out of a national Saami population of around 30,000 (Beach 1982: 1) are actively involved in herding - hardly a sufficient number to sustain a cultural identity! The Saami recognise that, should this pattern continue, their eligibility to practise their

¹¹ *Verde* partnerships were long-term reciprocal relations forged between sedentary Saami fjordal communities and nomadic Saami herders who utilised summer grazing pastures on islands in the fjords. Villagers would help the herders to safely swim their animals across the water to and from the islands and would also perform a number of casual services, such as taking care of the herder's seasonally adapted equipment when it was not in use. In return, the nomads would usually offer their *verde* partners joints of meat following the slaughter of an animal or make gifts of other reindeer products, such as winter clothing (Eidheim 1971: 26). Researching the history of these relations in a fjordal Saami community near the Norwegian-Finnish border, Eidheim found that the villagers had maintained stable and harmonious *verde* partnerships throughout much of the early twentieth century. Beginning in the 1930s however, their relations with the Saami herders began to change. Subject to assimilation policies and their incorporation into the wider national economy, many of the sedentary Saami came to shun their *verde* partners (Eidheim 1971: 29-30). The new cultural identity assumed by the villagers had effectively produced a set of behavioural patterns that ran contrary to, and even conflicted with *verde* behaviour (Eidheim 1971: 30). By the 1950s, Eidheim reports that the *verde* partnerships were frequently '*chaotic*' and '*conflict loaded*'. *Verde* partnerships, which traditionally involved long-term interaction between the same herding and village families over many generations, had become little more than temporary transactions between individuals.

native rights will not simply be hindered, it will ultimately cease to exist (Beach 1986, cited in Kormso 1993: 34)!

Chapter IV

Explanations for Government Policies

In the two previous chapters, I documented several of the more profound socio-cultural effects of policies adopted by the Norwegian and Swedish governments, and the ruling administrations of Botswana and Namibia, towards their respective indigenous minorities, the Saami and the San. In this chapter, I seek to explain the various factors, motives and rationales underpinning the implementation of these policies. I begin by examining why the European Powers appropriated the lands of the native peoples they encountered in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and how they justified this course of action. I argue that the answers must be understood in the context of Social Darwinist sentiments prevalent at the time, and in the significantly different concepts of ownership and territoriality frequently held by indigenous and Western groups. These explanations are applicable not only to the early colonisation of Africa and Scandinavia, but also to the Americas, Asia and Australia. On each occasion, the expansion of the European states proved detrimental to the indigenous cultures of the colonised country; significantly diminishing native territories, and in some cases entire native populations as well. ¹

Since the 1960s, governments have increasingly cited ecological arguments as justification for policies that have served to dispossess indigenous peoples of their lands and intensify governmental intervention in their affairs. These arguments, which claim that the common ownership of natural resources precludes the sustainable use of those resources, are generally credited to Garret Hardin's 'Tragedy of the Commons' model. By documenting various shortcomings of the model on

¹ The expansion of the British Empire into South Africa during the mid-nineteenth century led to the extermination of large numbers of San in the Imperial quest for land (Lee & Hurlich 1982: 327). Numerous reports of large-scale exterminations of whole communities of /Xam living in the area between the Sak and Orange Rivers in the northern Cape, some numbering hundreds of persons, exist from the 1850s onwards (Cape Archives CO 4414, cited in Deacon 1996: 13-14). Other examples of entire communities eradicated by the processes arising from the European's desire for land include the Yahi Indians of the Sierra Nevada Foothills (Coles 1979:6).

which these policies are based, I will show how these arguments have been erroneously applied to the situation of the Saami and the San. Rather, I will argue that when the equilibrium existing between indigenous communities and natural resources is upset, it is often the result of misinformed and unnecessary intervention on the behalf of authoritative institutions. Anthropologists and other social scientists have played a pivotal role in exposing flaws in these models. However, the adverse impact that anthropology has had, and continues to have, on government policy towards indigenous populations should not be ignored.

Social Darwinism: A Tool to Colonise the World

In Europe, since the time of the Enlightenment, there had been a scholarly preoccupation with the nature of the world's societies, and various theories were expounded to explain the enormous variation that existed among human cultures as reported by early missionaries, travellers and traders abroad (Trigger 1989: 110). For example, a number of eighteenth century scholars, inspired by theological arguments which claimed that all men had been born equal and in a state of civilisation, believed that the non-literate indigenous peoples represented a fall from grace; the so called 'degradation theory' (Beals & Hoijer 1965: 711). Others argued that the natives encountered in Africa, Australia, Asia and the Americas were not human, but belonged to entirely different species altogether (see Long 1774, White 1799, both cited in Trigger 1989: 112)! One view that became particularly prominent in the last few decades of the nineteenth century was that shared by the British anthropologist, Edward B. Tylor, and his American contemporary, Lewis Henry Morgan. In his book, *Ancient Society*, first published in 1877, Morgan argued that there were seven stages of culture. The lowest stage of savagery, where '*man was but little advanced over the animals*', was occupied by foraging peoples. From there, culture progressed with advances in technology, social organisation and religion until it reached the seventh and final stage of civilisation, which was synonymous with European society (Beals & Hoijer 1965: 711).

The ideas of Morgan and Tylor were inspired by those of Charles Darwin, who expounded his theory of evolution and survival of the fittest in the *Origin of Species*, although it was more than a decade later (1871) that he applied his ideas to human society in the *Descent of Man*. Darwin's own conviction was that human populations that had lagged behind in the evolutionary process would eventually become extinct, to the advantage of the more superior civilisations (Eriksson 1982:90). These ideas, known today as the paradigm of Social Darwinism, proved invaluable to the Imperial Powers. Accounting as they did for the superiority of Europeans over other human groups, they were used to justify European political and economic control abroad and formed a platform from which it was argued that they were promoting the general progress of the human species (Trigger 1989: 117-118). However, this 'progress' did not necessarily involve the indigenous peoples - as is demonstrated in the writings of Sweden's Supreme Court Justice, Knut Olivecrana,² who in 1884 expressed the view that, *"Those people unwilling to give up nomadic life must remain on an inferior cultural level, must make way for more civilised settled groups and, in the end, grow smaller and smaller until they become extinct. The history of mankind is proof that this has been the case in all parts of the world, and the nomadic Lapps must be subject to the same law of nature and die out, unless they, in time, become willing to cultivate the land and engage in other occupations requiring permanent settlement. The state, whose interest must lie in the promotion of a higher civilisation, is completely justified in favouring land cultivation"* (Cramer 1975, cited in Lapping 1986: 130).

Clearly, both Scandinavian governments perceived farming, mining and forestry to be more advanced economic pursuits than reindeer herding, hunting or fishing. It is also evident that the early ruling administrations in Botswana and Namibia considered both farming and herding to be superior to foraging. As Feit (1982: 373) has remarked, it was only in the 1970s that anthropologists first began to demonstrate, contrary to previous opinion, that hunting and gathering were productive, reliable and

² Judge Knut Olivecrana was instrumental in the drafting of the 1886 Herding Law in Sweden (Marainen 1982, Eriksson 1982).

efficient economic activities.³ However, throughout the early decades of the twentieth century, the prevalence of discriminatory opinions helped morally justify the establishment of farms on San lands, first by the Boer and later by the Germans, British and Afrikaans. They also explain why, in the late nineteenth century, when the British Protectorate Government and the pastoralist Tswana tribes began negotiating land distribution, the San were excluded from the process (Hitchcock & Holm 1985: 9). As a result of the negotiations, it was decided that 23% of Botswana's land belonged to the Crown (today state land) whilst another 6%, the majority of which was already in European hands, was allocated as freehold. From the remaining 71%, which was demarcated as tribal, each of the major Tswana tribes, such as the Batawana, were allocated a portion into which were incorporated the traditional lands of the San (*ibid*). In Norway too, the state's Department of Finance announced in 1848 that, "*Finnmark has from ancient times been regarded as being owned by the King or the state, because it originally was inhabited by a nomadic people, the Saami, without permanent dwellings*" (Norway 1848, cited in Pederson 1992: 79).

Indigenous vs. Western Ideas of Land Ownership

Social Darwinist sentiments were pivotal in the process of dispossession, contributing as they did to the notion that 'primitive', 'backward' and 'uncivilised' indigenous peoples could not possibly conceive of ideas of land tenure. As Hugh Beach remarked, "*it is easier to deny ownership rights to Saami nomads whose brains are proclaimed to be abnormal (Retzius, 1889: iv) than to deny such rights to fully developed biological and 'cultured' humans*" (Beach 1981: 278). However, there was another

³ Indeed, Richard Lee's early fieldwork amongst the Dobe Ju'hoansi proved a direct challenge to the beliefs of earlier anthropologists, who viewed foraging as little more than '*an incessant quest for food*' (Sahlins 1974). Prior to his study, the San had often been taken as '*a classic illustration of a people whose economic resources are of the scantiest*' to the extent that '*only the most intense application makes survival possible*' (Herskovits 1958, cited in Sahlins 1974: 14). Contrary to popular conception, Lee showed how the Dobe Ju'hoansi actually experienced relative ease and abundance in their subsistence activities. Their work was not hard and did not take long, leaving plenty of time for leisure. Moreover, with approximately 85 species of edible plants and over 50 different types of edible animals available to them, their diet was more than adequate in both quantity and quality (Lee 1979). In fact, Lee found that, on average, the Ju'hoansi worked a shorter week and enjoyed a more nutritionally sound diet than many people living in the west; observations which lead Marshall Sahlins (1974:1) to herald the hunter-gathering way of life as '*the original affluent society*', one where people's material wants were easily satisfied.

fundamental reason why the colonial powers were ignorant of native territorial concepts, one which explains why, even as late as the 1990s and decades after Social Darwinist ideas had fallen into disfavour, indigenous peoples such as the aboriginals of Australia continued to be denied title to land⁴. This was the enormous disjuncture existing between indigenous and Western notions of ownership. In Western society, property is thought of in terms that it ‘*connotes the absolute control, use and enjoyment of things*’ (Scott 1988: 36). Meanwhile, our perception of territoriality, ‘*is the exercise, by groups or individuals, of exclusive rights to the use or control of resources in a particular area*’ (Endicott & Endicott 1986: 137). Not all small-scale or hunter-gatherer societies are territorial. Kirk Endicott (1986, 1988), has argued the Malaysian Batek do believe the land was created for all to use.⁵ By contrast, the Saami and the San, like the aboriginal peoples of Australia and the majority of Amerindian peoples in the Americas, clearly do recognise themselves as being the owners of land and employ certain mechanisms to control access by others to their lands and its resources. However, their concepts and practices are often very different from those held by Westerners.

The different concepts and practices held by indigenous peoples is exemplified by the Ju/'hoansi who recognise band territories called *n!oresi* (sing. *n!ore*) that encompass a permanent or semi-permanent water source together with the surrounding lands. Individuals inherit *n!ore* membership from both their parents (Lee 1979: 338) and, on marriage, will also acquire rights to use resources within the *n!ore* of their spouse (Lee 2003: 110). *N!oresi* are invested in a group of ‘owners’ known as *k"ausi*, typically the elder members of the band or those having the longest association with the land (Lee 1979: 334 & 339, Cashdan 1983:53). The *k"ausi* should not be thought

⁴ The concept of *terra nullis*, that accounted for the acquisition of Aboriginal land by early Western explorers and settlers in Australia, was only overturned in 1992 following the ruling of *Mabo vs the State*.

⁵ According to Endicott (1988:113), individuals may have sentimental ties with certain places (typically areas where they were born or raised), but those people connected to such areas do not claim any collective rights of ownership over them. Similarly, Endicott (1988:114) reports that the Batek regard all naturally occurring resources as being unownable, although some Batek told him that they would occasionally prevent peoples from other ethnic groups, such as Malays, from the harvesting resources which they, the Batek, had first located.

of as owners in the true Western sense of the term. Ownership among the Ju/'hoansi is essentially communal with each band member enjoying free access to resources within that band's territory. However, it should be emphasized that not *all* the resources found within the *n!ore* belong to the *n!ore* group. For example, game animals are seen as ownerless given that continuously migrate between the different territories throughout the course of the year (Barnard 1992c: 140, Heinz 1972: 409). Visitors from other bands may also camp and exploit resources within the lands belonging to another group, although etiquette requires that they first ask the permission of that band's *k"ausi*.⁶ Rarely are these requests refused.⁷ Thus, although the asking and granting of authorisation is somewhat of a formality, it nonetheless recognises the territorial and ownership rights of the *n!ore* group (Silberbauer 1981, cited in Cashdan 1983: 53). Certainly, disputes are likely to arise when individuals move into another band's territory without first gaining consent (see for example Marshall 1976: 132).⁸

Similar forms of land ownership also exist amongst the other San peoples. Yet, whilst the band is the basic unit of territorial organisation among the Ju/'hoansi (Lee 1979: 344) and also among the G//ana (Cashdan 1983), for the Nharo it is the band cluster (Barnard 1992a) and for the !Ko the roughly equivalent band nexus (Heinz 1972: 408). Heinz (*ibid*) reports that each !Ko band exerts control over its own territory and, like the Ju/'hoansi, this is exercised by a set of headmen or women on behalf of, and in consultation with, the other band members. Similarly, if one band wants to hunt or gather on the land of another band, permission must be requested - although again, this is almost always granted to groups belonging to the same nexus. However, in contrast to the overlapping band territories of the Ju/'hoansi and G//ana, where

⁶ The position of the *k"ausi* should thus be seen as one of spokesperson for the group, who reach decisions concerning visitors and the allocation of resources on the basis of consensus (Lee 1979: 335-6; Cashdan 1983: 53).

⁷ There are various ways in which this consent might be sought. For instance, Richard Lee has reported that when relations are good between the visitors (often a neighbouring band) and the *n!ore* group, requests may take the form of an invitation. However, more distant groups or those on less amicable terms are expected to ask permission more explicitly (Lee 1979: 336-8).

⁸ See also Cashdan (1983) and Barnard (1992c) for details of the territorial customs of other San groups.

neighbouring groups share resources in the boundary zones between their territories, there often exists a strip of no-man's land between the territories of adjacent !Ko nexus groups, which is avoided by the members of both (*ibid*).

The territorial and social structure of the hunting and fishing Saami was the *siida*. It is extremely difficult to ascertain the exact nature of the *siida* structure prior to the period of Scandinavian colonisation due to the paucity of records pertaining to this time. Reconstructions have been attempted, for example, that of the early Kemi by Tenegren (1952, cited in Beach et al., 1992: 57, Beach 1981: 59). These models are based on the organisational features of eastern Saami groups such as the Suenjil Skolt who, because hunting continued to make an important contribution to their economy until recent times, were thought to have remained largely isolated from the incursions of colonists and pastoralists (Hultbald 1968, cited in Beach 1981: 60, Ingold 1976:2). Following the revisionist critique of the San, the extent to which these groups remained free from external impacts has been questioned. Whether these models accurately portray the Saami *siida* structure of prehistory remains highly contentious (Kuoljok 1987, cited in Beach et al., 1992: 57). In fact, the search for a primeval, single form of Saami land tenure is perhaps misguided.

However, it is generally assumed that the territorial organisation of Saami hunting and fishing communities was similar in many respects to that documented among extant foraging societies. As in the case of the Ju/'hoansi (Lee 1979: 334), it seems as though natural features of the landscape were used to recognise individual *siida* territories in Saami pre-history (Ingold 1976:2), and that they served to denote the transitional area between adjacent *siida* rather than serving as exclusive linear boundaries (Forrest 1998: 25). Odner (1992:88) has suggested that more than one *siida* group may have occupied a single territory or perhaps, more commonly, shared resources in the boundary zones between their lands. During his fieldwork among the Varanger Saami, he observed how neighbouring groups of Inari and Utsoki Saami both possessed rights to fish and utilise resources within the territory of the Varanger

siida, whilst members of the Varanger *siida* possessed reciprocal rights to utilise resources within the territories of other *siida* groups (*ibid*: 88-89).

The adoption of new subsistence strategies precipitated changes in the social and territorial organisation of the Saami. The *siida* structure quickly disappeared among those Saami who settled in the inland valleys and along the coastal fjords to farm and fish (Ingold 1976: 2). Hultbald and Wiklund (1968 & 1918, both cited in Beach et al., 1992: 58) have also hypothesised that the collective winter village of the *siida* would eventually have ceased to exist among the pastoral Saami given that they would have been unable to keep their herds in any one place for long, as grazing quickly became depleted. The increasing demand for pasturage actually led to the incorporation of new lands among those herders inhabiting the mountainous regions during the seventeenth century (Beach et al., 1992: 65). As a consequence, the documented round, cellular shape that earlier constituted the territorial organisation of the *siida* was replaced by the *vuoma* territory, the boundaries of which followed the reindeer migration routes in a north-westerly to south-easterly direction (Beach et al., 1992: 65). Despite these transformations, the Saami still considered themselves to be the owners of the land, and took measures to avoid encroachment. For instance, one vicar from a parish near Hammerfest observed in the 1720s how the Saami there had “*the best fishing fjords, birchwoods and flourishing meadows*” and that they consciously protected these areas from Norwegian settlers; “*Saami do not tolerate the Norwegians who come near, or to settle in the fjords, even though there are places where they could make their living without harm to anyone...For that reason the Norwegians live on islands, where the living conditions are not so favourable* (Harboe 1952, cited in Pederson 1992: 74).

I have not attempted here to explain the territorial customs of the Saami and the San. My aim is to demonstrate how these people perceive themselves as owners of the land and control access to resources, and how these practices are widely at variance with our own. Perhaps it was the subtlety often involved in the process of seeking permission to use another group’s land and resources, together with the fact that these requests were rarely denied, which led early observers of the San to conclude that

they were a people “*without...even a shadow of land tenures*” (Frere 1882-3, cited in Lee 1979: 331). The fact that San territories are not clearly demarcated (Barnard 1992c: 139) or, in the case of the Ju’hoansi not even definitively fixed in time or space (Lee 1979: 334), that they are collectively rather than individually owned, and that ownership does not incur exclusive rights to use resources on the land, is also likely to have contributed to this sentiment.⁹ The rejection of proposals made by missionaries, academics and farmers for the creation of a Bushman Reserve in the 1930s is a poignant example of how the authorities have failed to appreciate the concepts of land tenure employed by the San. The South West African government regarded the idea as impractical, perceiving the San as being too nomadic and therefore unlikely to stay in any area set aside for them (Gordon 1992: 148). The Saami too clearly feel the Swedish and Norwegian administrations have a poor understanding of their indigenous ideas regarding land tenure. As one reindeer herder implored of Robert Paine (1994: 11), “*Tell them that we don’t just wander.*”

Tragedy of the Commons

Just as hunter-gatherer studies were coming to prominence, and anthropologists were beginning to dispel the colonial myth by showing that small-scale, non-literate peoples could actually embrace the concept of land ownership, a new threat to the land rights of indigenous peoples began to emerge. The threat was an ecological one, presented by the biologist and human ecologist Garret Hardin in his 1968 paper entitled, ‘*The Tragedy of the Commons.*’ Although Hardin’s argument was specifically addressed to the problem of overpopulation, he publicised a theory whereby *all* resources under common ownership would eventually be overexploited. In his paper, he envisaged a scenario of common pasturage, with access “open to all,” to illustrate this belief. He argued that, as a rational being, each herdsman using the common would attempt to maximise his own gain by increasing the number of

⁹ Anthropologists themselves have sometimes failed to recognise the territorial customs of the people they study. For example, James Woodburn (1982: 435) and Richard Lee (1968) originally asserted that the Hazda and Ju’hoansi respectively, did not practice territoriality, a position which neither researcher upholds today. Knut Odner (1992: 87-88) has also claimed that several anthropologists to work among the Saami, including Väinö Tanner, Helmer Tegengren and Ørnulv Vorren failed to recognise Saami concepts of territoriality, by mistakenly trying to understand those concepts in the ‘metaphor of national states’.

animals he kept on the pasture. By doing so, the individual reaps all the benefits to be had from adding another animal whilst sharing the costs with the other herdsmen. However, because all the other herdsmen are following the same rational course of action, the result will inevitably be overgrazing and economic loss for all (Hardin 1968). As Hardin expressed “*Each man is locked into a system that compels him to increase his herd without limit – in a world that is limited. Ruin is the destitution toward which all men rush, each pursuing his own best interest in a society that believes in the freedom of the commons. Freedom in a commons brings ruin to all*” (Hardin 1968: 1244). He postulated that government intervention or the privatisation of common lands were the only solutions to averting such a tragedy (Hardin 1968).

Coincidentally, the publication of Hardin’s article was followed almost immediately by the Sahelian drought, which caused unprecedented destruction of once productive rangeland and resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of livestock (McCabe 1990: 82). Many national governments and donor agencies therefore came to view pastoralism on common pasturage as an activity that was inherently destructive to the environment (*ibid*: 83). Indeed, Horowitz (1979, cited in Maybury-Lewis 1997: 32) asserts that a report made by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation was particularly scathing in its attack on West African nomads at the time. Hardin’s view, which had been presented as an abstract model of human behaviour, came to be uncritically accepted as an unconditional paradigm by many wildlife biologists and civil administrators alike (Bjørklund 1990: 75). Using the Tragedy of the Commons model as justification, governments around the world began to adopt policies that served to increase their intervention in the lives of indigenous peoples, which frequently resulted in the privatisation of their lands.

In Sweden, this increased intervention was clearly manifest by the enactment of the 1971 Herding Law, and in Norway by the Grazing Act of 1978. Prior to the implementation of these laws, the Saami herders had, for the large part, enjoyed considerable autonomy in their decisions regarding the size and management of herds and, to a lesser extent, access to pasturage (Bjørklund 1990: 75). However, by the

1970s, government intervention was deemed necessary, justified on economical as well as ecological grounds. As social democracies, both governments were concerned with the uneven distribution of wealth that existed between the reindeer owners (*ibid*) in addition to their poor economic status relative to that of the average Norwegian and Swede (Beach 1981). More significantly, they were worried that 'unrestricted access' to 'free' grazing resources (which had significantly diminished in size over the years as a result of the competing interests of other industries) would bring about an ecological catastrophe, which in turn would result in further poverty for the reindeer herders (Government of Norway 1985; Odelstingprop 1976-7, cited in Bjørklund 1990: 78). In order to minimise the existing inequalities and to avert the anticipated tragedy of the commons, the legislature demanded more government control over the allocation of pasture as well as a reduction in the number of reindeer. It was thought that by introducing rationalisation measures aimed at modernising the herding industry, both these objectives could be achieved. Reducing the number of both animals and herders would not only help increase the weight of the remaining animals and subsequently the incomes of the reindeer pastoralists that were left, but also eliminate the possibility of overgrazing and a tragedy of the reindeer commons - thereby ensuring the sustainability of the industry (Bjørklund 1990: 75, Forrest 1997: 8). The paradox of the situation is immediately clear. The measures inspired by Hardin's model that sought to preserve Saami culture simultaneously dealt it a considerable blow (Beach 1981: 353).¹⁰

The implementation of the Tribal Grazing Land Policy by the Government of Botswana in 1975 can also be seen as a response to the Tragedy of the Commons scenario. The Government was becoming increasingly concerned that the nation's cattle population, which had multiplied from some 600,000 head in 1940 to approximately 1.5 million by 1966 (Lowry 1984, cited in Peters 1987:194), was growing at a rate that quickly threatened to exceed available pasturage. At the time,

¹⁰ In Sweden and Norway today, there are major concerns that the use of high technological equipment, such as all-terrain vehicles and snowmobiles - the very technology which the Scandinavian governments encouraged the Saami to adopt as part of their rationalisation and modernisation policies - are doing considerable damage to the tundra (see Beach 1997: 126).

pasturage existed as a commonly held resource enjoyed by the country's various pastoralist tribes. It was, the government perceived, essentially "*a free for all*" (Republic of Botswana 1975, cited in Peters 1987: 173). Moreover, the government believed that, "*unless livestock numbers are somehow tied to specific grazing areas, no one has an incentive to control grazing*" (Republic of Botswana 1975: 1, cited in Peters 1987: 172). Without such an incentive, the authorities clearly felt that it was only a matter of time before overgrazing and land degradation would ensue. We have already seen how, as a result of the policy, communal tribal lands were transformed into 'reserved areas' (which only existed on paper), small communal areas, and substantial commercial zones where land was to be let out on long term leases to individual large-herd cattle owners (Peters 1987: 172; Hitchcock & Holm 1985: 9). The San, of course, did not benefit from the changes that took place in land tenure. Rather, private ownership and the fencing off of large areas of land on which they traditionally foraged posed a very real threat to their ability to provide for themselves.¹¹

The notion of a commons tragedy may also have influenced government policies that have imposed restrictions on the hunting activities of the San. Game populations in both Namibia and Botswana steadily decreased over the course of the last century. Droughts, disease, predation by man, but perhaps most significantly the construction of veterinary cordon fences and large scale farming activities, (causing considerable range destruction and a lowering of the water table), were responsible for their decline. Yet, despite the contribution of all these factors, it is the San who have taken much of the blame. The Government of Botswana evidently felt intervention was necessary in order to prevent the San depleting large game animal populations when, in 1987, it implemented quotas restricting the number of animals that could be killed

¹¹ It is interesting to note here that the Botswana government did not follow the path taken by the Scandinavian administrations and call for a reduction in the number of animals. In contrast to Scandinavia, where Social Darwinist views concerning nomads still persist and where reindeer pastoralism is still thought of as standing in the way of other industries (Paine 1994: 191), the herding industry in Botswana is of huge economic importance. Indeed, Hitchcock (1987: 27) has asserted that, together with wealth accumulated from mineral extraction, the livestock industry has helped Botswana to become one of only a few developing countries in the world today in possession of substantial foreign reserves.

to one male and one female of each species per individual each year (Lee 2003: 170). Given that game animals are a communally exploited resource, it was perhaps thought that, left to their own devices, the San would continue to hunt until they brought about a 'tragedy of the commons'. A similar argument lies behind the recent eviction of G//ana and G/wi communities from their homes in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve. One of the many, and perhaps most damning, reasons given for the relocation of people from the reserve was that their agro-pastoral and hunting activities were unsustainable and incompatible with preserving wildlife there (Government of Botswana, pers. comm.).¹² In both these instances then, unintentionally or otherwise, Hardin's theory has been directly utilised as a political tool to remove the San from their land.

I think it imperative here to question the true motivation behind the aforementioned policies. Were they really implemented for the reasons given, i.e. to reduce the possibility of environmental degradation and to increase the incomes and living standards of those people who depended on communally owned resources? Or have authoritative institutions been using Hardin's model as a means to achieve their own political and economical ends? In Botswana, the Tribal Grazing Land Policy, besides its stated objectives, also enabled communal land to be transformed into valuable real estate, the leases for which could be bought and sold (Lee 2003: 164). Moreover, in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, former residents believe they have been evicted in order to allow the government to grant various mining corporations mineral leases to their land (Survival International at http://www.survival-internationalorg/bushmen_031031.htm). In Sweden and Norway, reductions in the

¹² The Namibian Government has also recently expressed fears that the livestock owned by the Ju/'hoansi would have detrimental impact on the land in Eastern Bushmanland (today called Eastern Otjozondjupa). To date, this fear has not been realised, perhaps in part because Ju/'hoan herd sizes have remained small, ranging between 16-77 head of animals for each community, and totalling less than 400 animals in the entire 6,300 square kilometre region (Hitchcock 1996, cited in Hitchcock & Biesele n.d). However, there still remains the problem of other ethnic groups grazing and watering their cattle in the area. In 1997, there were over 500 Herero cattle in Eastern Bushmanland – more than the Ju/'hoansi kept themselves! The Ju/'hoansi have had some success in removing Herero herds and in preventing more animals from entering the area. However, it should be noted that, in some instances, Ju/'hoan individuals and communities, perhaps motivated by economic gain, actually assisted outsiders in bringing their animals onto Ju/'hoan land to water and graze (Hitchcock & Biesele n.d).

number of herders and reindeer have similarly favoured the growth of enterprises more profitable to the state. As Beach (1997: 122) asserts, "*Many Saami have come to regard the ecology promoted by the state as yet another instrument of Swedish colonisation*".

It would not be the first time a political entity has manipulated an argument such as the Commons Tragedy out of self-interest. McCay and Acheson (1987) have argued that the English commons tended to be well regulated by the communities that used them in the medieval and post-medieval periods, and maintain that their enclosure in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century was precipitated by conditions associated with capitalism and not as a result of commons mismanagement. Neeson (1993: 88) has documented occasions when wealthy landowners deliberately overstocked the land with the intention of precipitating enclosure and, by doing so, devalued the common right in order to eliminate the need for compensation when this occurred. Following the enclosures, individuals without land of their own and dependent upon the commons were forced to become agricultural labourers. An eighteenth century writer observed "*the inclosure of the wastes would increase the number of hands for labour, by removing the means of subsisting in idleness*" (Neeson 1993: 28). Similarly, the eviction of San from game reserves created by the authorities in Botswana and Namibia during the early decades of last century obliged many to work on European-owned farms. It is worth noting that Hardin's ideas were inspired by the nineteenth century writer, William F. Lloyd, who drew a parallel between the open labour market and common grazing land (Layton 2000: 310-11). Given that Lloyd's writings appeared at the time of the English enclosures, they were almost certainly politically motivated (Robert Layton, pers. comm.). Perhaps we should ask whether Hardin's own writings were driven by some unknown personal agenda?

The use of Hardin's model as a means of justifying governmental intervention and privatisation of land in order to prevent a commons tragedy has increasingly been questioned in recent years especially since scholars began to document numerous instances whereby individuals sharing common resources had successfully managed

to avert the overexploitation of those resources (McCay & Acheson 1987). One of the main criticisms subsequently made against Hardin's model is that it confuses common property resources with the idea of open access – that is, where there is an absence of property rights (i.e. community regulation) pertaining to the utilisation of those resources (Berkes et al., 1989: 93). By equating communally owned and exploited resources with open access, which it is assumed will inevitably lead to overexploitation, adversaries to the model claim that it mistakenly equates the commons with overexploitation. Furthermore, they argue that the model fails to acknowledge the existence of resource management strategies developed and adopted by communities sharing common resources in order to sustain those resources (*ibid*).

Indigenous Resource Management Strategies

I have already documented how the San recognise certain resources, such as bush foods and water,¹³ as belonging to individual bands, together with the various strategies that they use to control access by other to these resources. Additionally, the San employ various practices aimed at conserving the natural resources upon which they depend for their subsistence. At a recent conference organised by Ditshwanelo, (Botswana's Centre for Human Rights), ecological researchers described how the San conscientiously replant the seeds from the fruits that they collect, and how they place the roots of harvested tubers back into the soil in order for them to re-grow (Dube 2002b: 1-2). This practice has also been observed among other foraging peoples including the Gidjingali aboriginals of Northern Australia (Jones and Meehan 1989: 123). Furthermore, the researchers reported how the San are selective about which animals they kill when hunting, choosing mature animals over younger ones (Dube 2002b: 1-2).

Robert Hitchcock and Megan Biesele (n.d) have documented additional conservation measures employed by Ju/'hoansi living at /Xai/Xai, including the practice of declaring certain species of plants and animals 'off limits' for utilisation when their numbers were perceived to be low. Informants also claimed that they temporarily

¹³ Admittedly, there is an absence of such property rights concerning game animals (see above).

stopped foraging in an area if it was deemed to hold too few resources, thereby allowing the plants and animals in that area time to rejuvenate, and employed a zone rotation strategy whereby they would leave their homes in different directions over time to go out hunting and gathering. Besides a desire to maintain resources both for their own use and that of future generations, there was also an ideological argument behind conservation. Ju/'hoansi at /Xai/Xai claimed that some resources were protected "for the spirits" and "for the ancestors". These various strategies, employed by the San in their hunting and gathering activities, appear successful in helping to protect the resources that they utilise from overexploitation (*ibid*).¹⁴

Throughout their herding history, the Saami reindeer pastoralists have exploited common pasture but, again, this has not inevitably led to overgrazing. For centuries, the Saami have successfully managed their animals to overcome seasonal and other fluctuations in pasture capacity by alternatively dividing and combining their herds throughout the year, so as to maintain the equilibrium between herd size and the capacity of a given pasture at any particular time (Paine 1964, cited in Bjørklund 1990: 80). This was possible due to the social organisation of the *siida*, whereby groups of reindeer owners, often related by ties of kinship, lived and migrated together with their herds. At times when the size of the pasture was deemed inadequate for the needs of the reindeer, individuals would remove their animals from the common herd and join other kin-related herding groups according to pasture availability elsewhere within the *siida* territory (Bjørklund 1990: 81). Whilst these regroupings are unlikely to have been simple or unacrimonious affairs, they were nonetheless effective as a system of indigenous resource management.

¹⁴ I believe it important here to refer back to the archaeological and ethnohistorical evidence (reviewed in chapter one) suggesting that the San had, in the past, engaged in pastoralism (e.g. Denbow 1984, Denbow & Wilmsen 1986, Wilmsen 1989, Schrire 1980, etc). Today, this contention remains hotly debated. Nonetheless, the fact that some San peoples, such as the Ju/'hoansi, were observed as hunter-gatherers at the time when anthropological documentation of their society was first initiated implies that any previous attempts to practice pastoralism by these communities were unsuccessful. If this were the case, I would argue that the reasons for failure could most probably be attributed to the many difficulties that currently face the San of today, as they attempt to establish themselves as small-scale pastoralists, rather than the result of mismanagement of common resources.

Bjørklund (1990: 79) has testified to the success of the system by stating that there is absolutely no historical evidence that overgrazing occurred in Saami pastoralist areas.¹⁵ He maintains that the very few abrupt decreases in animal numbers that have occurred in Saami pastoral history, for example those recorded in Kautokeino between 1917-1918 and again in 1967-1968, were the result of quite irregular spells of bad weather that severely affected grazing conditions over a large area, causing them to diverge from normally stable seasonal cycles. They were not the result of overgrazing brought about by commons mismanagement. Normally, the climate of winter pastures in northern Norway is very stable, and is characterised by cold, dry weather with little precipitation – conditions which enable the reindeer to access the lichen under the snow with relative ease. However, twice in the last century, the area of Kautokeino experienced unusually early rainfall that was followed by a series of frosts and thaws. Together, these conditions created an ice cover that the reindeer were unable to break and, subsequently, many starved. In 1918, as much as one third of the reindeer population in the area was lost (Bjørklund 1990: 79). As I have already stated, these cases should not be treated as cases of overgrazing - the lichen beds upon which the reindeer grazed had not become depleted; they were simply inaccessible to the animals. Nevertheless, counter to Bjørklund, I would argue that instances of overgrazing have occurred in Saami pastoral history, for example, in many northern Swedish pastures around 1919. However, I would assert that, rather than a consequence of indigenous mismanagement, these arose as the result of government policies that not only diminished land available to the Saami but also increased restrictions on the herders.

When Indigenous Resource Management Strategies Fail

It appears that, when the cultural resource management systems employed by indigenous communities do fail, leading to overexploitation and depletion of resources, it is often because the ability of those communities to exclude non-members has been compromised. Take for example, the oyster catchers of

¹⁵ Biologists (Kosmo and Lenvik 1984, cited in Bjørklund 1990: 78) have documented cases of significant crashes in reindeer population numbers. However, these refer to wild herds and not those of the Saami, and are therefore not discussed here.

Chesapeake Bay. Until the 1960s, the waters of Chesapeake Bay in Maryland were the property of the state's counties, with each county claiming ownership of parts of the bay that corresponded to their position on the shoreline. At the time, individuals who lived off the proceeds of harvesting and selling oysters were only allowed to collect the shellfish in the region of the Bay claimed by the county in which they lived (Taylor 1988: 276-7). In 1968, the State Court decided to eliminate the traditional county line borders, effectively making the Bay an open access area. Within two decades of this ruling, many parts of the Bay had been "fished out". The once abundant oyster beds have been depleted and oyster harvests have reached an all time low. Whilst other factors, notably increasing pollution levels or changes in the natural oyster cycles, cannot be eliminated from having contributed to this situation, the abolition of county titles to the waters of the Bay appear to have been the primary factor responsible (*ibid*: 277-8).

Another example whereby resources are threatened with overexploitation following the removal of community regulation of access to them relates to the James Bay Cree of northern Quebec. Like the San, the Cree have traditionally utilised resources owned in common by the group, and have employed strategies that served to regulate the impact of their activities on those resources (Berkes et al., 1989: 91). However, the basic unit of land tenure among the Cree is the hunting ground that is utilised by a production unit made up of between two and a dozen families, often related by ties of kinship (Scott 1988: 38-9). Of all the resources exploited by the Cree, the beaver is of exceptional importance, traditionally for food but also for commerce since the Hudson Bay Company began operating in the area in the 1670s (Berkes et al., 1989: 91). Beaver are particularly susceptible to depletion at the hands of man, given that their lodges are clearly visible in the landscape. Yet, for centuries the customary laws adopted by the Cree to regulate hunting were successful in sustaining their environment and the resources it contained (*ibid*: 92).¹⁶ However, the situation changed drastically in the 1920s following the construction of a railroad that opened up

¹⁶ Although see Leacock (1954), discussed below.

Cree territories to outsiders. The area subsequently experienced a huge influx of non-native trappers, lured by the financial profits to be made from the sale of furs (*ibid*). The non-native trappers, ignorant of the Cree's traditions, would wipe out entire beaver populations within an area before moving on to exploit the next locality in a similar fashion. The Cree, having now lost control over their territories, were forced to do the same, taking what they could before the white man arrived (Scott 1988:41). As Hardin had predicted, the beaver met the fate of a communally owned resource to which there were no rules regulating access. By the end of the decade, it was apparent that both Indians and non-natives had contributed towards a tragedy of the Cree commons, forcing the Canadian government to impose a total ban on beaver hunting in the area to allow numbers to recover (Berkes et al., 1989: 92).

A Tragedy of a Model?

When conservation measures are employed, and when the ability to control access to those conserved resources has not been compromised, it is clearly possible for individuals to act collectively to sustain resources which they commonly own and thus prevent 'a tragedy of the commons'. It follows then that privatisation or government intervention are not necessarily required to prevent overexploitation and may even have the opposite effect. This is illustrated by the passing of the Private Forests Nationalisation Act by the Nepalese Government in 1957, which aimed to "*protect, manage, and conserve the forest for the benefit of the entire country*" (Ostrom 1990: 178, Berkes et al., 1989: 92). Following implementation of the law, many Nepalese villagers felt that they had lost control over their parts of the forest and, distrustful of the government, began to systematically overexploit forest resources on a large scale (Messerschmidt 1986: 458, cited in Ostrom 1990: 178). In this instance, privatisation actually led to overexploitation, which was only reversed when the Nepalese government began to re-establish village control over the forest in 1978 (Arnold & Campbell 1986, cited in Ostrom 1993: 178; Berkes et al., 1989: 92). The assumption that privatisation will guarantee responsible and sustainable management of resources is further contradicted by examples from the American

Mid-west (Maybury-Lewis 1997), the Australian outback and the African plains (Gilles & Jamtgaard 1981, cited in Peters 1987: 177).

Clearly, a number of valid criticisms can be made of Hardin's model although these should not be taken to imply that, as a theory, it is inapplicable or worthless. As the case of the Cree trapping grounds demonstrates, in circumstances where there is free or uncontrolled access to communally held resources, overexploitation of those resources may well occur. Brox (1991) underscores the value of Hardin's theory as an analytical tool and is critical of those who, using the anthropological exceptions discussed, argue for its rejection (e.g. Berkes 1983, cited in Brox 1991: 429), whereas Ostrom (1990) argues that Hardin's model is only flawed in lacking the generality that he claimed. She suggests ways of developing the model to identify variables that can be used to predict situations when individuals are likely to achieve effective governance of common property resources, as well as instances of probable failure (Ostrom 1990: 183).

Often in small scale-scale common property situations, individuals tend to be continually involved and interact with one another in a localised physical setting. As a result, shared norms and patterns of reciprocity can develop. Ostrom claims that it is in these circumstances, which allow for individuals to learn who they can trust and to understand the effects of their actions on others and on the resources held in common, that it is possible for groups to organise themselves so as to gain benefit and avoid harm for all (*ibid*: 184). It is evident that the conditions suggested by Ostrom, under which communal groups are likely to succeed in effectively utilising and sustaining their resources, are those that tend to characterise many small-scale indigenous societies. Ostrom and others therefore conclude that Hardin's model, which assumes situations in which individuals act independently, where they have little mutual trust or communication and lack the autonomous capacity to change the rules of their institution, is simply inapplicable to small-scale societies exploiting common property resources (Ostrom 1990: 183-4).

This conclusion has been challenged by Matt Ridley (1997: 222), who argues that the activities of indigenous peoples *inadvertently* help to protect and sustain the natural resources which they exploit. According to Ridley, their activities are not part of any concerted conservation effort consciously recognised or enacted by the people themselves but simply the coincidental outcomes of their other interests. Take, for example, the Cree, who rotate their hunting grounds in order to utilise those areas with abundant game and avoid localities where game is scarce. Ridley asserts that such behaviour does not reflect a primary intention to allow animal numbers in the depleted areas to replenish themselves as one might suppose, but rather expresses a realisation by the people that it will be more difficult to hunt animals in those areas. Whilst such a rationale allows animal numbers in the more impoverished localities to recover, thereby sustaining the resources on which the Cree depend, it is not thanks to any deliberate conservation effort but simply a fortuitous outcome of optimal food-procuring activities. Is this idea then, that indigenous groups possess an innate environmental ethic that prevents them from overexploiting resources, simply a relatively recent invention of Western minds, inspired by a so-called Rousseau-esque fantasy, as Ridley (1997: 216) suggests?

Raymond Hames' (1987) work among the Yanomamo lends support to Ridley's contention. Hames found that, like the Cree, the Yanomamo hunters often focus their activities in areas holding the most game. These localities were usually situated some distance from the village, as game in the area immediately surrounding the settlements had already been reduced by previous hunts. Consequently, the hunters had to walk through the more depleted parts of the forest in order to reach the more abundant areas. It is reasonable to assume that, if the Yanomamo were to practice some conservation strategy, they would ignore any game they happened to encounter when travelling through these depleted zones. However, Hames documented that the Yanomamo would, without exception, pursue any animal they came across in these circumstances, provided it was large enough to justify the effort (Hames 1987). After observing more than 1000 successful hunting trips amongst the Siona-Secoya of Ecuador, William Vickers also reported that these people do not consciously practice

any conservation strategy. He argued that there was simply no need to do so, given the population density of Siona-Secoya groups is low and the technology used too limited to bring about anything more than a slight degree of depletion of localised resources. Whilst their exploitation of resources proved sustainable then, it was not because of their recognition or employment of a particular resource management strategy (Vickers 1994, cited in Ridley 1997: 223).

However, the absence of conservational strategies has not always conserved resources in the past. For instance, when the Maori first settled in New Zealand 600-1000 years ago, they proceeded to eat their way through all twelve species of the indigenous moa bird – the largest of which are believed to have weighed up to a quarter of a ton (Ridley 1997: 218-9)! This interpretation is supported by palaeontological studies, which refute claims of significant climatic disruption around this time, and by recent archaeological excavations that have revealed a large number of moa butchering sites. At one such locality, Otago, at least 30,000 birds were butchered within a relatively short space of time. Moreover, studies on the skeletal assemblages found at these sites have revealed that only the best haunches were utilised, and that the rest of the meat, perhaps as much as a third, was simply left to rot. There have also been discoveries of large ovens containing roasted meat, some of which had been left completely unopened and untouched (Ridley 1997: 219; Diamond 1991: 289)!

Large animals are particularly vulnerable to extinction in comparison to smaller ones given that they tend to produce fewer offspring and over relatively long intervals. Therefore, their numbers do not rejuvenate as quickly. Furthermore, their very size makes them more attractive to hunters, for they provide large returns in relation to effort expenditure. Hence, when conservation is not practiced, it is these species that prove most susceptible to depletion. Of course, it might just be that, whilst other resources are protected, large game animals, because of their frequent migratory nature, are not. We have already seen how, amongst the Ju/'hoansi, game animals are seen as 'ownerless' because of this constant migration (Barnard 1992b: 140; Heinz 1972: 409) (see page 71). However, it was not just simply large game that humans

managed to eradicate in the past. In just under a thousand years of occupation, the Polynesians who had settled on Easter Island had wiped out most of the native fauna and flora, cutting down all the trees in order to clear land for their gardens, to build fishing canoes and to erect their magnificent stone statues (Diamond 1991: 296; Ridley 1997: 220). Clearly, considerable uncertainty still surrounds this issue, and more empirical studies are needed to identify conditions that determine whether or not communal management will be effective.

Indigenous Peoples in the Modern World

It is evident then, that some societies have, in the past, lacked strategies aimed at conserving their resources, particularly as regards large game animals. It is also clear that there are communities today that lack conservationist strategies (for example, many citizens of Western society) although, based on the aforementioned evidence, I would exclude the San and Saami. This may not always have been so. From the discovery of large hunting pits, we know that the Saami were primarily responsible for bringing about the demise of the wild reindeer population in Scandinavia around the sixteenth century, A.D.,¹⁷ as well as perhaps causing population crashes of other fur bearing species such as the elk, pine marten, sable and beaver in preceding centuries. We also know from historical records that San too contributed to the decline of a number of wild game animals, such as the elephant, in parts of southern Africa around the turn of last century (Gordon 1984: 201-2). However, I would argue that, in both cases, the overexploitation of resources by these indigenous communities was precipitated by a combination of external factors, notably demands by the commercial market, the introduction of new technologies (especially guns) and the inability of these communities to control access to their resources and to exclude others from utilising them. If left to their own devices and without outside disturbance, would these peoples have managed to sustain those resources up until the present day?

¹⁷ These traps, essentially large pits dug into the ground and covered with leaves and branches, were deliberately constructed along the migration routes of the wild reindeer (Vorren 1982, cited in Odner 1992: 27-8). In the Varanger peninsula alone, no less than 25 large pitfall systems, comprising between 4000-5000 individual pits, have been uncovered alongside five corral fence systems into which the wild reindeer herds were driven.

This leads to another interesting question. If it was external demands for resources and competition by outsiders which led to the collapse of indigenous resource management strategies in the past, how will the conservationist measures currently employed by small-scale communities fare in the face of demands made by the modern world? Will the social processes which these communities have developed as adaptations to particular environments, in order to sustain the resources within, withstand changes now taking place to those environments and continue to prevent a tragedy of a commons (Layton 2000: 313)? I am not sure. What I am certain of is the ability of communities to adopt new measures for conserving communally owned resources in the face of changing circumstances. Take, for example, the town of Alanya on the Turkish coast where there exists today a thriving inshore fishery. In the 1970s, the local industry was on the verge of collapse, the result of over fishing (caused in part by the adoption of increasingly sophisticated technology by the fishermen and their catering to outside markets). The fishermen successfully managed to overcome their dilemma by developing a set of rules whereby each known fishing location was allocated by lot to a licensed fisherman, in a pattern that rotates throughout the fishing season. Although the fishermen are themselves responsible for enforcing the rules, the government also recognises the system in law. Today, the fishery is both productive and sustainable (Ridley 1997: 234). Meanwhile, Eleanor Leacock (1954) argued that the Algonquin-speaking Montagnais people of Labrador developed the concept of hunting territories only relatively recently, as a result of their contact with the white man and subsequent participation in the fur trade. This contention remains much disputed, but if true would lend additional support to the contention that, as the Alanya example suggests, it is possible for communities to adapt in ways that facilitate sustainability of resources. However, I would argue that, in order for their efforts to be successful, it is essential for communities to retain clearly defined rights of property. The case of the Nepali rainforests, the Cree hunting territories and the Chesapeake oystercatchers clearly demonstrate that, once those rights or titles have been removed, the motivation to protect resources is lost, and overexploitation results. Granting indigenous people their rights to land, and the autonomy to decide how to use and exploit the resources contained within, is perhaps

the most effective course of action that can be taken to prevent a tragedy of the commons.

Fortunately, there is today an increased awareness of the limitations imposed by Hardin's model when applied to the use of commonly owned resources, recognition of which is largely attributable to the work of anthropologists and human ecologists over the last thirty-five years. Earlier Social Darwinist ideas regarding the hierarchical nature of human societies have now also been largely discredited, although Robert Paine (1994: 191) maintains that such sentiments remain prevalent in Norway where reindeer herding is still considered by some as impeding the development of more profitable economic enterprises. In Sweden too, Social Darwinism continues to have a legacy in the racist attitudes currently exhibited towards the Saami population¹⁸ whilst, in Botswana, similar sentiments are discernable in neo-colonialist statements expressed by ministers of that country (see Simpson 2002b). Only recently, in South Africa, the state owned diamond company Alexkor attempted to block a land rights claim lodged by the 4000 strong Nama community at Richtersveld, arguing that the Nama were "*too uncivilised*" to own land (The Guardian 15/10/03). The legal recognition of the Nama's rights in this case, and the increasing rejection of such discriminatory and blatant racist attitudes elsewhere is attributable, in part, to the work of anthropologists, whose documentation of societies very different from our own has promoted a growing understanding, awareness and tolerance of those societies. However, the occasional negative impact that anthropology has had, and continues to have, on government policies must not be overlooked. Thus, whilst anthropologists have served to undermine earlier discriminatory policies, the role that they initially played in according scientific credence to the theories on which they were based should not be understated.¹⁹

¹⁸ According to one survey conducted by the Swedish Ombudsman against discrimination in 1998, 75% of Saami interviewed stated that they had experienced hostility from Swedish society (Stockholm Saami Association 27/01/01).

¹⁹ We have already seen how the writings of anthropologists Edward Tylor and Lewis Henry Morgan legitimated Social Darwinist ideas, providing scientific authority to European political and economic control abroad. The acquisition of ethnographic knowledge on the indigenous non-literate peoples encountered in Africa, Scandinavia and elsewhere was itself an integral part of the early colonial

Moreover, many of their current theories have been challenged by writers such as Ridley (1997) and Diamond (1991).

process of dispossession. Frequently, the information obtained was constructed and presented in a way that emphasized the differences between the primitive and the civilised, and was so used to justify the dominant nation's stereotypes (Opandal 1996, cited in Mulk and Bayliss-Smith 1999: 379). In Sweden, Professor K.B. Wiklund, arguably the most prominent 'Lappologist' of the early twentieth century, believed (and spread his belief) that the Saami were a pygmean people whose dependence upon the 'superior' Swedish race was part of the natural social law of things (Wiklund 1932, cited in Beach 1981: 279). His influence on state Saami policy was considerable, and may have contributed to the Swedish Parliament's decision to establish the Institute of Race Biology in Uppsala in 1922. The Institute played a significant role in encouraging the Swedish population to keep their race pure and undiluted with the blood of the Saami or other immigrant populations (Beach 1981: 279). It is alleged that, in the early decades of the last century, as many as 70,000 people in Sweden and another 30,000 in Norway, many of them Saami, were forced to undergo sterilisation (www.samefolket.se/aldre_nummer/feb992e.htm-10k).

Chapter V

Ethno-Political Mobilisation

Indigenous peoples around the world have long opposed their subordination and exploitation at the hands of more powerful populations. During the early colonial encounters, their resistance was most often expressed through physical means. In the last few decades however, many groups have begun to channel their efforts through the legal structures of those states that have dispossessed them of their lands and denied them their civil rights. The timing and development of such political mobilisation among native communities can be linked to the expansion during the late 1960s and early 1970s of western extractive economies, notably mining, forestry and power. The growth of these industries posed a renewed threat to communities like the Saami and the San, re-igniting interest in their remaining lands which, because of marginal soils and extreme climates, had escaped heavy agricultural use and colonisation in earlier times. The evolution of mass media and communicative technology has also played an important role in this process, globally publicising many of the injustices that these communities have suffered in the past and continue to experience today. At the same time, economic prosperity in the west has helped spawn liberalist attitudes that have proved sympathetic to their needs (Layton pers. comm., see also Layton 1985). Testimony to this is seen in the establishment of organisations such as *Survival International* and *Cultural Survival* in 1969 and 1972 respectively. Offering technical and financial support, these and many other associations have been instrumental in helping indigenous peoples gain a platform to argue their rights at both the national and international level. This chapter will examine the various successes and setbacks experienced by the Saami and the San in their legal fights for rights to land, resources and self-autonomy, and will explore some of the difficulties they have encountered and which continue to hinder them in this quest.

Saami Ethno-Political Mobilisation

Ethno-political mobilisation began slightly earlier amongst the Saami than indigenous groups elsewhere. In 1904, the first Saami political organisation was founded in Jamtland, Sweden (Beach 1988) and several others followed in the next few years (immediately succeeding) (Minde 1984: 1-2). Two independent movements with separate agendas are discernable from the period c.1904-1920. In the south, the Saami mobilised to defend the interests of the reindeer herders against agricultural expansion, whilst in the north, efforts were directed against the assimilationist policies of the Norwegian state (Jernsletten 1995). Unfortunately, neither movement was successful in attaining their objectives; both suffered from internal disagreement among their members as whether to form coalitions with existing political parties and thereby direct their demands through the established structure of the dominant state, or whether to remain outside party politics and act independently. Division of opinion prevented the two movements from amalgamating and, as a consequence, this initial period of ethno-political activity never rose beyond the local level (Minde 1984: 2-3).

More successful have been the Saami political organisations formed in the years since WWII, their progress aided, in part, by the global post-war humanitarian climate and the adoption in 1948 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Amongst the largest and most important of these organisations today are the National Federations of Swedish (*Svenska Samernas Riksförbund SSR*) and Norwegian Saami (*Norske Samers Riksforbund NSR*), founded in 1950 and 1968, respectively (Beach 1988: 13), with membership open to all Saami regardless of economic, linguistic or regional background (Jones 1982: 10-11). In addition, there are organisations which cater to the interests of specific occupational groups, such as the Saami Reindeer Herder's Association of Norway (*Norges Reindrifsamers Landsforbund, NRL*) founded in 1947 (Brenna 1997:4), as well as the more recently established Confederations of Swedish (*Landsförbundet Svenska Saami, LSS*) and Norwegian Saami (*Samenes Landsforbund SLF*). Membership of the latter two organisations is composed almost entirely of non-herders (Beach 1988: 11). Apart from political organisations, there are committees concerned with the preservation of Saami culture.

One well-known example is Sami-Ätnam in Sweden (*ibid*). National and international co-operation between these various institutions has been aided by the Nordic Saami Council, which, since 1956, has met every two years to promote Saami interests. Together, these organisations have played a key role in securing cultural rights and a degree of self-autonomy for the Saami peoples of Norway and Sweden (*ibid*).

Sweden: The Taxed Mountain Case

In 1966, the National Federation of Swedish Saami (SSR) assisted several reindeer-herding villages in Jämtland to sue the Swedish state for a declaratory judgement that would recognise Saami ownership of the mountainous areas where they had lived as a people for generations (Kormso 1993: 36). The Saami argued that the taxes paid to the state by their ancestors during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had established their ownership of the land in the same way that tax-paying agriculturalists had acquired title to their property through generations of exclusive use (Nytt Juridiskt Arkiv 1988:1, cited in Kormso 1993: 36). The state counter-argued that the Saami had never possessed ownership rights to the taxed mountains, but had simply enjoyed the use of lands belonging to the Crown (*ibid*).

In 1981, after many years of deliberation, the Swedish Supreme Court ruled against the Saami on the matter of ownership, although it declared that they possessed a '*firm right of use*' to the mountains entitling them to the same legal protection as a property owner in cases of expropriation (Kormso 1993: 36). Moreover, the court found that it was quite possible for the Saami to have had ownership rights to land, corresponding to those of agriculturalists in earlier centuries, despite the fact that the Saami were not cultivators. Prior to this decision, the practice of agriculture had been a necessary prerequisite to acquiring land title (*ibid*). However, in order for the Saami to claim title to areas where they had hunted, herded and fished since time immemorial, it was first necessary for them to prove that their occupation had been continual, intensive and as having occurred within definable boundaries with little outside disturbance. Whilst the court judged the evidence for the Jämtland area to be unclear on these

matters, it pronounced that such conditions were far more likely to exist further to the north (NJA 1981, cited in Kormso 1993: 36).

The court's decision was significant in that it challenged many of the legal foundations underlying the 1971 Reindeer Herding Act, in particular the law's position regarding the rights of non-herding Saami. If, as the court had argued, it was possible for the Saami to possess rights from time immemorial (provided that they could demonstrate the necessary criteria of occupation), then whether or not they were a full-time herder and sameby member was irrelevant (Kormso 1993: 36). In the months following the ruling, the SSR and Same-Ätnam lobbied the government to set up a commission to review the implications of the rulings as they affected statutory law, and to consider proposals for a Saami Parliament (Svenska Samernas Riksförbund 1981, Same-Ätnam 1981, both cited in Kormso 1993: 37). Although a commission was created, it lacked governmental support and faced much political opposition from landowners, the timber industry and civil servants alike (Kormso 1993: 37- 38). By the end of the decade, efforts to revise existing Saami policy had ended in stagnation and confrontation, with little perceivable benefit for the Saami (*ibid*: 40). Indeed, I would argue that the few positive developments since made in Sweden as regards to Saami rights are the result of precedents first set in Norway.

Norway: The Alta-Kautokeino Controversy

In 1970, the Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Administration announced plans to regulate the Alta-Kautokeino watercourse in Finnmark for the production of hydroelectricity (Brenna 1997). The proposal, entailing the construction of a 110 metre high dam, met fierce opposition from the local Saami reindeer herders, in particular the community at Masi who were threatened with inundation.¹ Hundreds of

¹ Besides the flooding of valuable grazing and calving lands and ruin of traditional migration routes, the Saami herders feared that the construction of road to the site would result in the loss of their reindeer through accidents in heavy traffic (see Beach 1981: 250). The construction work on these projects would require outside labour, leading to the establishment of large towns, which furthermore would encroach on grazing lands and increase traffic flow in the area (Beach 1981: 251). Moreover, roads built for mining or hydroelectric projects frequently attract forestry companies to areas where logging would previously have been economically infeasible (for details of the detrimental effects of logging on herding activities, see Beach 1981:266-7. However, it was not just Saami who opposed the

people participated in demonstrations and marches against the dam. Construction work on a road to the site was repeatedly halted as protestors blocked its passage, sometimes chaining themselves to the road-building machines. In Oslo, the Saami erected tents outside the Storting, where sit-ins and hunger strikes were staged (Wahl 1982: 36-39, Jones 1982: 14). In 1979, the Saami, together with the Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature, took the state to the Supreme Court over the matter. However, when the court reached its decision in 1982, it unanimously supported the government.

The Saami Parliaments

Although the Saami lost their battle against construction of the dam, the considerable national and international media attention given to the case² helped place Saami rights firmly on the government agenda. Following the controversy, and in response to demands made by the NSR and NRL, the Storting commissioned two separate committees to consider various issues relating to Saami culture as well as Saami land ownership and resource rights within Finnmark.³ In contrast to Sweden, many of the initial recommendations made by these committees were well received by the Norwegian government, leading in the late 1980s to the creation of a National Saami Parliament and amendment of the constitution whereby the dual ethnic nature of the state was recognised. As a new article inserted in the constitution stated, the government had appeared to recognise its responsibility “*to create conditions enabling the Saami people to preserve and develop its [sic. their] language, culture and way of life*” (Article 110a cited in Brenna 1997). In 1990, Norway became the first country, and to date the only Nordic state, to ratify the ILO Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Populations (Kormso 1993: 32, Smith 1995, Colchester 2000, Brenna 1997).

dam; many Norwegian conservationists, fearful of the damage that the dam would cause to an area of natural beauty and historical importance, also joined in the protests.

² Not least the news of an attempt by two Saami activists to blow up a bridge leading to the dam site in March 1982, which left one of the individuals seriously injured (Wahl 1982: 43).

³ Approximately 96% of Finnmark - the only county in Scandinavia where the Saami constitute a majority in several municipalities- is under state ownership.

In 1993, a Saami Parliament was also inaugurated in Sweden. Unfortunately, its opening was fraught with conflict and contradiction. As in Norway, the Parliament's objective was to serve as an advisory body representing the views of the country's Saami population. It was not, as the state made quite clear, designed as an instrument of self-determination, nor was it to compete with national or local governments (Proposition 1992/3, cited in Kormso 1993: 43). One source of dissension concerned the rather narrow eligibility criteria for those wishing to participate in the Parliament, either by standing for election to the body or as an elector, especially when compared to those applicable in Norway.⁴ Fears were expressed that the criteria adopted would prevent the Parliament from representing the views of *all* Swedish Saami as intended (Kormso 1993: 43). Far more controversial was the fact that the same legislation establishing the Saami Parliament also opened up small-game hunting rights to non-Saami in traditional Saami areas, a decision that was widely condemned by the herding population. This has caused severe disruption to Saami herding activities since it is now possible for non-Saami hunters with dogs to traverse areas where Saami are attempting to gather their herds. It is also in contradiction to previous legal recognition of the herders as exclusive holders of time immemorial hunting and fishing rights in traditional Saami areas (Beach 2000: 234-5) Moreover, the decision has widened the rift between the herding and non-populations⁵ and may ultimately prove detrimental to the sustainability of small game resources, perhaps fulfilling

⁴ The 1987 Norwegian Parliamentary Act had declared registry on the electoral roll open to any individual who considered him/herself to be Saami (and recognised by the Saami representative body as such), or who had Saami as his/her first language, or whose father, mother or one grandparent had Saami as their first language, or had a father/mother who satisfied the above-mentioned conditions for identification as Saami (Gardiner-Garden 2003, Brenna 1997). By contrast, voting eligibility in Sweden was restricted to include only persons who spoke Saami as their first language, or whose parents or grandparents had Saami as their first language, or, in cases where these criteria were not met, individuals whose parents had been registered to vote in the Saami Parliament (SOU 1989 cited in Kormso 1993: 43). As a result of the states' earlier assimilationist policies, many ethnic Saami are no longer able to speak Saami. As previously discussed in chapter four, one study conducted on Saami linguistic capacity in 1975 found that 40% of the non-herding Saami population could not speak Saami (Sweden 1975, cited in Kvist 1994:209). It is quite possible that the two previous generations may also have lost the use of the Saami language (Kormso 1993: 43).

⁵ For many years, non-herding Saami have petitioned the Swedish government to recognise their hunting and fishing rights within Sameby territory. Many have ceased helping the herders fight against injustices imposed by the state since being awarded their small-game hunting rights, granted not on the basis of their indigenous rights but as a citizen of the state (Beach 2003: 235).

Hardin's prophesised fate of an 'open' resource, to which there are no rules regulating access (Beach 2000: 235).

In the last few years, Norway and (to a lesser extent) Sweden⁶ have made several advances in their Saami policies concerning cultural development and education (see below). Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of their attempts to reconcile indigenous rights to land, water and resources.⁷ At present, both governments continue to deny Saami title to land, recognising instead their rights as one of usufruct. Nor do they allow the Saami to veto any encroachments that may prove detrimental to their livelihoods. Although the 1987 Norwegian Act and 1992 Swedish Reindeer Husbandry Law stipulated that national, regional and local authorities, and private landowners respectively, must notify the Saami before making any decisions which may affect them, there is no legislation preventing the implementation of plans to which the Saami, once consulted, object (Baer n.d). Unfortunately, there is little sign of change on the horizon. As recently as April, 2003, the Storting presented a bill for an 'Act on Legal Rights to and Management of Land and Natural Resources in Finnmark County', also known as the 'Finnmark Act'. The bill announced that the government was to maintain control over areas of state-owned land in Finnmark. Moreover, it contained a series of provisions safeguarding the government's future right to expropriate land for national or public interests without the need to pay compensation. Worse still, the bill made public the government's intentions to extend the rights of non-Saami to use land and resources within traditional Saami territories to include all EU citizens in compliance with the European Economic Agreement (<http://www.samediggi.no/default.asp?selNodeID=313&lang=no>). The Saami

⁶ At present, the Swedish state continues to resist ratifying the ILO convention 169. Nor has it amended its constitution to recognise the Saami as an indigenous population, but continues to regard them as an ethnic minority.

⁷ In 1996, the lower court of Sveg in Jamtland province ruled that the five southernmost Swedish Samebys did not possess any rights to winter grazing pastures based on sustained or immemorial use. The case had been brought against the Samebys by private landowners in the region. The Saami have been economically crippled by the decision. Yet, despite being over one million US\$ in debt as a result of the defeat, the herding communities continue with their appeal to higher courts (Beach 2000:235-6). Spurred by this victory, other landowners have now filed similar suits against the Samebys in their own regions (ibid, <http://www.itv.se/boreale/trial2.htm>).

Parliament is currently demanding that the Government withdraw the bill. It argues that the proposals are not only in direct conflict with Norwegian judicial precedent,⁸ they furthermore contravene criteria in national and international law concerning the rights of indigenous peoples to which Norway is bound by ILO 169 (*ibid*).

Nevertheless, despite the Storting's failure to accord the Saami legal rights to land and resources within Finnmark, there has been increased recognition of the Saami's entitlement to those rights by other parties, some of whom have even expressed competing interests for those lands and resources. For instance, in May 1994, the Australian *Ashton Mining Ltd* announced that it was to terminate its diamond exploration activities within Finnmark despite having been granted the necessary permits by the state authorities earlier that year. The admission followed considerable displays of Saami protest against mining in Saami territories.⁹ A few weeks later, a delegation from the English-owned *Rio Tinto Zinc Mining and Exploration Ltd*, met with the leadership of the Saami Parliament. Afterwards, the company announced that it too was to cease all operations in the area. In a move that was interpreted as a further sign of respect for the indigenous peoples, a senior company manager for *Rio Tinto Zinc* gave the Saami assurances that mining would not recommence without the permission of the Saami Parliament (Brantenberg 1995).¹⁰ Brantenberg (1995) highlights the paradox that foreign industries appeared more accepting of Saami land rights and the role of the Saami Parliament than Norwegian politicians and bureaucrats. Unfortunately, similar recognition of Saami rights by the companies presently conducting mining operations in the CKGR seems highly unlikely. DeBeers,

⁸ For instance, the Selbu and Svatskog judgements handed down in 2001. In the latter case, a dispute between the State and Saami over a large wilderness area, the court ruled in favour of the Saami, concluding that they had acquired collective ownership of the land in the north Troms County through age-old collective use (<http://www.samediggi.no/default.asp?selNodeID=313&lang=no>). Although the Norwegian courts are exhibiting an understanding of Saami rights, the government is failing to implement such rulings in its policy making.

⁹ The Saami were also incensed that, in contravention to the Act of 1987, they had not been given notification of the proposals until after the government's decision to allow mining in the area.

¹⁰ Another, more cynical interpretation is that the mining companies were signalling the Government to clarify its policies on Saami land rights and the status of the Saami Parliament, before attracting investors (Brantenberg 1995). However, only earlier this year, Rio Tinto chairman, Sir Robert Wilson, gave similar assurances to the Mirrar Aborigines of the Northern Territories, declaring "*We won't develop it without their consent, full stop*". The Mirrar have long opposed Rio Tinto attempts to establish a uranium mine on their lands (The Ecologist 2003: 41).

accused in 2000 by the United Nations of violating ethical guidelines in the Congo (The Ecologist 2003: 35), recently admitted that it opposed the idea of recognising indigenous peoples rights, arguing that the recognition of such rights on the basis of ethnicity would be tantamount to the practice of apartheid (Survival International 20/11/03).

Mobilisation against forced evictions from CKGR

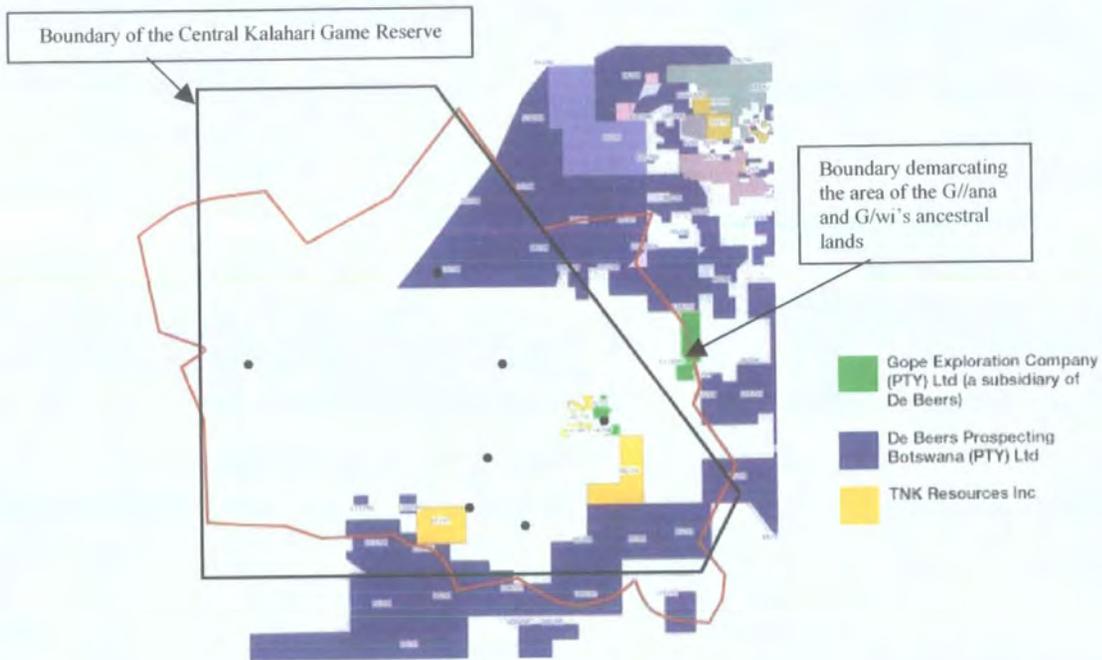
Within the last few years, G/wi and G//ana communities from the CKGR have also begun to mobilise at the grassroots level to protest against their forced resettlement and the legislation which denies them their rights to hunt and gather, and to recommend some viable alternatives (Hitchcock, 1999: 53). In 1993, the First People of the Kalahari (FPK), a non-governmental organisation, was established to represent the residents of the CKGR (BBC News 18/03/02). By the late 1990s, the FPK, in collaboration with other NGOs, had begun to formulate a strategy to negotiate the inclusion of land, resources and other legal rights within the Department of Wild Life and National Parks (DWNP) management plan for the CKGR. The FPK was also keeping a register of all the individuals living inside the reserve and, with the help of external mapping consultants, had started to map the area in order to document the land use patterns of communities living there (Kalahari Peoples Organisation). By allying with both national and international organisations, including Ditshwanelo, (the Botswana Centre for Human Rights) and Survival International based in London, and through attending press conferences and holding meetings, the San communities of the CKGR have made their plight public (Hitchcock, 1999: 53). They argue that neither their needs nor the conservational goals set out by the government are being met. They have complained that the large numbers of tourists now making their way to the CKGR are causing some of the fragile ecosystems contained within the reserve to deteriorate, and have expressed concerns that their relocation has been conducted to pave the way for the operation of private safari companies (Hitchcock, 1999: 51 & 53).

Survival International has strongly maintained that the relocation activities are designed to allow diamond mining within the CKGR. The group has launched an intensive campaign against the government, including protests outside its High Commission Office in London, and have appealed for a ban against diamond imports from the country (Kalahari Peoples Organisation). The Botswana Government vehemently denies these claims, dismissing them as “*wild and untruthful allegations*” (Government of Botswana pers. comm.) In November 2002, the President of Botswana, Festus Mogae, publicly stated that, “*There is neither any actual mining nor any plan for future mining inside the Reserve*” (Survival International 20/02/03). Other groups opposing the relocation exercise have also disagreed with the views of Survival International. For example, the U.K based NGO Global Witness believes that the government’s treatment of the San stems more from institutional racism than anything else (Ryle 2002). Ditshwanelo has also argued that Survival’s campaign has been detrimental in that it has jeopardized the San’s attempts to establish a negotiating platform with the government regarding the formation of a community-based natural resource management scheme within the reserve (see below) (Kalahari peoples Organisation). However, Survival’s fears appear to have been realised with the recent disclosure of a massive increase in diamond exploration concessions granted for lands within the reserve in the months following the eviction of the G//ana and G/wi from their ancestral homes (Survival International 20/02/03, The Guardian 19 February 2003). See maps one and two (page 102).

In February 2002, 243 former residents of the CKGR filed a lawsuit at the High Court of Botswana in which they claimed that the government’s termination of services within the reserve was both illegal and unconstitutional, and these services should therefore be restored immediately (Kalahari Peoples Organisation). By April, their case had been rejected due to a number of technicalities. These centred on whether Roy Sesana, a founding member of the KFP and the first applicant leading the court bid, had had the contents of the English affidavit explained to him. Concerns were also raised as to whether the annexure had been certified by a Commissioner of Oaths (SADOC 22/04/02). Fortunately, the judge, Justice Maruping Dibotelo of the High



Map One: Map showing diamond exploration concessions granted by the Botswana Government for lands within the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, March 2001- several months before the most recent San evictions.



Map Two: Map showing diamond exploration concessions granted for lands within the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, November 2002 – nine months after the evictions.



Source: <http://www.survival-international.org/diamonds.htm>

Court in Lobaste, granted the San leave of appeal (*ibid*). However, he also ruled that the San pay the government's legal costs (Survival International 20/02/03). These financial considerations have restricted the capacity of the San to return to court. Lawyers representing the San stated at the time that funds of between US\$15,000 and \$30,000 were needed before a new appeal could be launched (IRINnews 13/05/02). This was submitted in July 2002 and is currently still pending (Kalahari Peoples Organisation). By September 2002, it was reported that certain G/wi and G//ana individuals were taking matters into their own hands and attempting to return to their homes within the reserve. Yet, despite insistences by government ministers that the people were free to return to the reserve at any time, San were being stopped and charged with major traffic violations by guards who had set up road blocks outside the old settlements (IRINnews 13 Sep 2002). Only earlier this year, at least ten former residents were charged and prosecuted for entering the reserve without the requisite government-issued permit (Survival International 17/06/03).

Mobilisation of the Nyae Nyae Ju/'hoansi, Namibia

In 1981, the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia (NNDFN) was founded by the anthropologists and filmmakers, John Marshall and Claire Ritchie (Lee 2003: 177). The foundation arose in response to initiatives taken by the Nyae Nyae San themselves in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when small groups left the administrative centre of Tjum!kwe and returned to their *n!oresi* (*ibid*: 178). In its early days, the foundation helped drum up international awareness concerning the injustices and difficulties suffered by the San at the administrative centre and, in doing so, acquired private donations as well as the backing of international agencies. The donations were used to drill boreholes and to buy small herds of cattle that were then sold to the reformed *n!ore* groups at subsidised prices (*ibid*).

In 1986, the Ju/'hoansi of Nyae Nyae themselves established the Ju/Wa Farmer's Union (JFU), later the Nyae Nyae Farmers' Cooperative (NNFC), which is known today as the Nyae Nyae Conservancy (NNC) (Lee 2003: 178). Together, the NNC and NNDFN have made considerable progress in securing land tenure and

development for the two thousand or so inhabitants of the area (Bieseles & Hitchcock 2000: 306). They have also had substantial success in promoting community self-education and awareness. In the early 1990s, they funded and built a centre at Baraka, where agricultural and vocational training, health education and adult literacy programmes were provided (*ibid*: 315). Around the same time, the Ministry of Education also accepted the community's proposal to have a minority language literacy project included in its Basic Education Reform Programme (*ibid*: 317).¹¹ The Government sub-contracted the NNDFN to provide the first four years of schooling for the children of Nyae Nyae under what became known as the Village Schools Project (Lee 2003: 186). This programme is in compliance with current views that the key to achieving a high standard of literacy amongst children from ethnic minorities is for them to be taught in their native tongue for several years before learning other languages (Bieseles & Hitchcock 2000: 317). The project has also helped Ju/'hoan children overcome their initial culture shock when leaving their villages to attend the state schools (Lee 2003: 186).¹²

Perhaps one of the greatest triumphs for the Nyae Nyae Ju/'hoansi came at the National Land Conference held in Windhoek in the summer of 1991. The San came prepared with legal opinions and maps detailing some 200 of the traditional *n!ore* territories within the Nyae Nyae area (Lee 2003: 178). Lawyers, interpreters and press accompanied the delegation. Many of the recommendations made by the NNFC were adopted by the conference delegates (Lee 2003: 179). Moreover, the Ju/'hoansi won assurances from Marco Hausika, Minister of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation at the time, that the *n!ore* system would act as the basis for future land allocation in the Nyae Nyae area. The Minister added that similar attention would also be paid to the traditional ideas of land use and ownership held by other San groups elsewhere in the country (Republic of Namibia, cited in Bieseles & Hitchcock 2000:315; Lee 2003: 179). The Namibian Government's commitment to recognizing the land rights of the

¹¹ Prior to Independence, the 'child-like' San were denied access to schooling on the grounds that they were thought incapable of mastering any skills they might be taught (Suzman 2000: 110).

¹² The Village Schools Project is currently included in Namibia's Education Reform Programme as a pilot scheme. It is hoped that it will soon be extended to the benefit of the state's other San communities (Bieseles & Hitchcock 2000: 317).

Ju/'hoansi were confirmed a few months later by the President, Sam Nujoma, when he paid Nyae Nyae a visit. During his stay, he issued a statement declaring that anyone who wished to settle on communal lands would require authorisation from the Ministry of Lands as well as permission from the traditional leaders in the area (Bieseles & Hitchcock 2000:315). Shortly after President Nujoma's visit, the regional commissioner supported the extradition of a group of unauthorized Herero pastoralists who had settled with their cattle on Ju/'hoan land following independence (Bieseles & Hitchcock 2000:315; Lee 2003: 179).¹³ Nevertheless, despite these commendable efforts on the part of the Namibian government, San ownership of the Nyae Nyae area remains to this day unrecognised in state legislation. Clearly, this is something the Ju/'hoansi must secure if they are to gain assurances from the government that their rights will not be co-opted in the future on grounds of economic expediency (Bieseles & Hitchcock 2000:315).

Community Based Natural Resource Management Projects

Since the late 1990s, the governments of Namibia and Botswana have acted in a seemingly increased awareness of the limitations imposed by Hardin's 'Tragedy of the Commons' model. This is evidenced by the introduction of Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) schemes, which recognise that the decentralization of rights to manage natural resources helps to improve the conservation of those resources (Hitchcock 2001, Taylor 2001). To date, no less than 28 of these programmes have been started in Botswana (Lee et al., 2001), and at least another 30 are currently running in Namibia (Hitchcock 2001). Under the schemes, San in both countries can form community trusts or conservancies through which they can request the rights to utilise local resources or to negotiate business arrangements with private companies so as to derive financial benefits from tourist related uses of those resources (*ibid*). In 1995, the Nyae Nyae Ju/'hoansi formed a committee and, with some assistance from NGOs and donor agencies, submitted an application requesting conservancy status for the Eastern Otjozondjupa region (Bieseles &

¹³ Although the problem still remains of some San individuals or communities, most likely motivated by economic gain, assisting Herero peoples to illegally graze their cattle on San land (see chapter four).

Hitchcock 2000: 320). Their application was successful and in November 1997 the conservancy, the first ever on communal land, was implemented. Today, the NNC is successfully managing the area with the assistance of a group of community rangers who help monitor the natural resources as well as acting as points of liaison between the local communities and the managing body of the NNC (*ibid*). The advantages of conservancy status for the Ju/'hoansi mean that they now have far greater control over regulating access into their area. Safari-hunting and tour-operating companies must now negotiate with the NNC before they undertake activities there. The San have also taken the step of drawing up guidelines and regulations, which have been distributed among tour operators, informing visitors to the area how they are expected to behave (Biesele & Hitchcock 2000: 321). The success experienced by the Nyae Nyae Ju/'hoansi has set a precedent which other San communities have attempted to follow, although few have met with the same good fortune. For instance, the !Kung living in Tsumkwe District West (former Western Bushmanland) recently had their proposal to turn the 8,550 square kilometre area in which they live into a conservancy, rejected by the government. Instead, it was announced that some 20,000 Angolan refugees were to be resettled at the district's centre at M'Kata (Useb 2001, Hitchcock 2001)!

In Botswana, the CBNRM programmes have been instrumental in helping the San to gain usufructory rights to land in a state which has, until now, failed to recognise activities other than pastoralism and agriculture as legitimate forms of land tenure (Taylor 2001). Success stories include the /Xai/Xai Thlabololo Development Trust which, in 1997, was awarded the wildlife quota for Community-Controlled Hunting Areas NG4 and 5 (a 17000 square kilometre area). The trust promotes eco- and cultural tourism, whilst allowing limited subsistence hunting and gathering by the Ju/'hoansi themselves (Lee 2003: 184). In the late 1990s, it made revenues exceeding 250,000 Pula, approximately US\$35,000 (Hitchcock 2001). Nonetheless, San there have expressed a number of misgivings with the programmes. In particular, they feel pressured by the authorities into leasing out their rights to commercial hunting and safari companies in exchange for a monetary fee. The small number of jobs available

to a select few (often adult males), and the little cash that these schemes generate for the individual,¹⁴ is felt by some to be poor compensation for the right to choose how their resources are utilised and managed (Taylor, 2001, Hitchcock 2001). They would like to be afforded more control over resources, although the case of the Khomani San in South Africa has clearly demonstrated the disasters that can ensue if the local communities are not first equipped with the necessary skills of management, administration and finance.¹⁵ Unfortunately, it appeared recently as though the Government of Botswana might take a retrogressive step in its CBNRM programme when, in January 2001, it announced plans that would effectively prevent community trusts from managing their own CMNRM-generated revenues. The government argued that natural resources, like minerals in the CKGR, should benefit the whole nation rather than just individual communities (Hitchcock 2001). It is presently unclear as to whether these proposals will be implemented.

WIMSA - a unifying body

Perhaps one of the greatest drawbacks of programmes such as CBNRM is that they overlook the fact that very few San currently living in southern Africa retain any form of rights to their ancestral lands. The vast majority continue to work for meagre

¹⁴ For example, although the Nyae Nyae CBNRM scheme has been generating substantial revenues for the local community, much of this money is spent on purchasing game animals in order to expand the biodiversity of the area and increase its future tourist potential (Hitchcock 2001). Consequently, only a very small percentage of the profits are distributed as dividends to NNC members. In 2002, John Marshall reported that each member of the Nyae Nyae Conservancy had received little more than \$10US in cash since the NNC was established in 2001 - hardly a sum fit to live off!

¹⁵ In 1999, the three hundred strong Khomani San community, whose ancestral lands are situated south of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, had 40,000 hectares returned to them by the then Deputy President, and current President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki. The settlement, a landmark in efforts taken by the government to redress the injustices of the apartheid era, came after two years of negotiations to remove white farmers from the area, at a considerable cost to the government (<http://www.anc.org.za/elections/news/mar/en032301.html>). Unfortunately, since the transfer of the property, the farms' infrastructure has reputedly fallen into disarray, whilst many of the stock animals have been either poached or sold (<http://www.irc.org.za/3News/ArticleDetail.asp?ID=24>). More alarmingly though was the revelation, a few weeks after the completion of a second settlement awarding the community an additional 25,000 hectares late last year (<http://www.sadoc.at/news2002/2002-267.shtml>), that the Khomani were at risk of losing part of their newly-acquired land. The managing committee, having assumed individual debts acquired by members of its executive board, had been ordered by the local magistrates to sell one of the farms, in order to pay monies due (http://www.iucnrosa.org.zw/tbnrm/cbnrm_content.html). Although the Land Claims Commission eventually repaid the necessary sum to prevent the sale (Sunday Times 29 Sept 2002), the case highlights some of the problems that are likely to develop when such schemes and settlements are not followed through with external support.

wages on African- and European-owned farms, or eke out an existence in rural and urban slums. Therefore, they are not represented but totally ignored by such policies. The dispersal and fragmentation of these San communities – especially in Namibia as a result of apartheid rule - has made it exceptionally difficult for them to mobilise and take action (Bieseles and Hitchcock 2000: 307). In 1996, in response to these issues, the Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (WIMSA) was set up in Windhoek under the leadership of the NNFC chairman (*ibid*: 321). From the outset, one of the organisation's leading aims has been to persuade the Namibian government to acknowledge the traditional authorities of all six broader San communities present within Namibia, and not just those of the Ju/'hoansi and !Kung in Tsumkwe Districts East and West (Brormann 2001). Other objectives are to advocate and lobby for San rights, to facilitate information exchange between San communities, and to provide them with training and advice on development issues, land tenure, tourism and administrative procedures (<http://www.san.org.za/wimsa/wimsabody.htm>). With additional offices in Botswana, and affiliations with some 35 member and support organisations, it is hoped that WIMSA will be able to provide a platform whereby minority communities, both San and non-San, from Namibia and elsewhere, can come together to express their needs and concerns (Bieseles & Hitchcock 2000: 321, Brörmann 2001). To date, there have been a number of successes including a recent victory in the hoodia biopiracy case whereby the San were awarded payments that recognised their intellectual property rights (Mingle 2003).¹⁶ These achievements are extremely commendable, especially when the difficulties involved are considered.

The Problem of Egalitarianism

Political mobilisation and activity amongst the San has not been easy. Indeed, asserting rights that allow them to secure and preserve their culture has placed them in a double bind. The San are, by tradition, an egalitarian society lacking formal political or judicial institutions (Hitchcock and Holm 1985: 10). Decisions were made

¹⁶ The hoodia cactus has long been utilised by the San for subsistence as well as medicinal purposes. In the mid-1990s, the South African Council for Scientific and Industrial Research isolated and patented a compound from the plant that helps to suppress appetite. It is currently being developed into a much hyped miracle weight loss drug for the Western market.

largely on the basis of consensus, and leadership positions were accorded on personality traits such as modesty and non-competitiveness (Lee 2003:109). However, in order to negotiate their future with the state governments, the San have found it necessary to send representatives to attend political meetings and sign documents.¹⁷ Yet, many individuals remain apprehensive about becoming leaders for fear of arousing jealousy and resentment in others (Hitchcock & Holm 1985). Biesele and Hitchcock, (2000: 314) have reported that the first chairperson of the Ju/Wa Farmers Union, Tsamkxao ? Oma, was elected in 1986 by default since few Ju/'hoansi at the time were bold enough to stand for the position.¹⁸

Over the last few years, the San have shown remarkable resourcefulness in overcoming these leadership issues, employing all manner of strategies when electing their representatives. For instance, in one Dobe community, the people opted for a quiet man, a descendant of the original territory 'owner' (*k'ausi*), to be their headman. Meanwhile, in the Tuya region, people faced with the choice between a traditional healer, a specialised hunter and an outsider who was unrelated to any of the local people but who had extensive experience with outsiders, chose the latter individual. They did so believing that there would be less social pressure on him to respond to the needs of friends and relatives (Hitchcock & Holm 1985: 10-11). Unfortunately, consensus is not always something easily arrived at, and this causes detriment to all within the community. In Tsintsabis, Namibia, a community trust fund has long been established for the local Hai//om San. The trust has its own bank account in to which private donations are fed. Yet the fund remains untouched because the community

¹⁷ For example, the Ju/'hoansi of Nyae Nyae initially held open meetings which were attended by literally hundreds of people who engaged in the traditional practice of consensus-based decision making on matters that they wanted to take up with the government. As a result of difficulties in ensuring mass attendance and attaining unanimous agreement on strategies, the Ju/'hoansi later decided that two individuals should be elected from each community to act as representatives for those communities. In the early 1990s, in order to ensure that both the voices of men and women would be expressed, it was decided that one of those representatives would be female (Hitchcock & Biesele n.d).

¹⁸ At the same time, there are individuals who, aware of the potential benefits accorded a position of power, may seek to exploit the opportunity. The first Hai//om chief, acclaimed after Namibian Independence, has since fallen out with WIMSA and many Hai//om for this very reason (Widlok 2001).

cannot agree on the appointment of the four signatories necessary to access the donations (Widlok, 2001).

Another obstacle facing indigenous communities today in their attempts to secure rights to land, resources and self-autonomy is that, in doing so, they are required to explain their native concepts, values and practices within the ideological discourse of the majority population (Olsen 1991, cited in Mulk & Bayliss-Smith, 1999). There are, however, a series of difficulties in trying to communicate aspects of one culture into the social and cultural milieu of another, not least because a concept central to one culture may have absolutely no equivalent in the other. The unfamiliarity of indigenous peoples with the legal system of the dominant society can also be a setback to native land claims (see for example Layton 1983). Education is an essential means of overcoming these difficulties for it allows native peoples to '*participate as framers rather than followers of development programmes*' (Koma 1984, cited in Wilmsen 1989: 318). However, the ability of indigenous communities to access education, as well as the reasons why they may choose not to, poses an entirely new set of problems.

Education: conserving or destroying culture?

Whilst, in the last few years, the Namibian government has made some concerted efforts towards educating San children (see above), the situation in Botswana is quite different. In a report released in April 2002, Professor Issac Mozande, deputy director of research at the University of Botswana, claimed that teachers in the country's state school system deliberately mistreated San children in order to force them out of school (Dube 2002a). The report stated that San children experience both verbal and physical abuse from their teachers as well as from their fellow, non-San pupils. The situation is often compounded by the lack of San teachers or representatives in the school system. For instance, in January 1999, there were no San at Dobe involved in either the Parent Teacher Association or the Village Development Committee - the two organisations that deal with education at the local level (*ibid*). Nor, (with the exception of the Nharo education programme at D'Kar) are there any native language

schemes running for San children in Botswana, where Setswana is the language of instruction at both primary and secondary-school level (Hitchcock n.d). Yet, education, or more specifically literacy, among the younger generations is a fundamental prerequisite if the San are to negotiate effectively with the government in the future. The success of Kgau/O/oo, who translated for the Nyae Nyae Farmers' Cooperative at the Land Conference in Windhoek in 1991 and who was made the first ever San representative in the Namibian Parliament in 1999, is a case in point. Kgau/O/oo was the first and one of only a few San students of the Dobe area to be educated at secondary school level in the 1980s (Lee 2003: 179, 189, Biesele & Hitchcock 2000: 189).

Although the San recognise the potential value of education for their children as a means towards employment and empowerment, many are still reluctant to send their children to school, in part because it remains in conflict with their traditional customs and ways of learning (Katz et al., 1997: 71). This is particularly true in Botswana where the schools are predominantly run by Tswana teachers and follow a Tswana-based curriculum. These schools often fail to recognise the value of indigenous knowledge and do not teach the skills (or use the language) that are important to San community life. Quite often, the problem is compounded by the lack of job opportunities available to those children who do successfully manage to complete school, a result of perpetual societal discrimination against peoples of San ethnicity (Katz et al., 1997: 72-75). Perhaps, the current levels of low attendance by San students are above all indicative of their dedicated commitment to their culture, a commitment that frequently conflicts with the state school system. For example, among the San that still forage for part of their subsistence, children may be expected to help with gathering tasks although it may mean a day away from school. Likewise, children are often encouraged by their parents to attend healing dances, many of which continue into the early hours of the morning (Katz et al., 1997: 76). Unfortunately, the Botswana authorities have continuously failed to acknowledge these challenges as they persevere with a policy to integrate the San within wider 'developed' society. At one point, there was talk of introducing residential schools

which, as the regional educational officer for the /Xai/Xai area hoped, would help to 'free those Ju/'hoan children from the influence of their parents' (Katz et al., 1997:77). It is only relatively recently that the government has begun to seriously consider the possibility that mother tongue languages be taught in schools (Hitchcock n.d).

Education has also proved to be an important, albeit contested, issue amongst the Saami. The Saami were highly critical of the dual assimilationist (towards the children of non-herders) and segregationalist (towards the children of herders - especially in Sweden) education policies of the Scandinavian states in the early twentieth century. Parents were upset that children were being taught in the language of the dominant culture, and many herders also lamented that their children's education was of a lower standard than received by the rest of the nation (Jones 1982: 12). Today, many commendable improvements have been made in the educational policies of the two Scandinavian countries. In Sweden, there is a law dictating that Saami children have a right to receive instruction relating to the development of their culture, whilst in Norway, children have been granted the right to receive their first three years of schooling in their native tongue (Jones 1982:12). The fact that Norwegian teachers now receive a salary bonus if they are able to teach Saami is a clear indication of the extent to which things have changed (*ibid*). Nonetheless, many herders in particular continue to express misgivings with the new schooling system, criticizing its inflexibility with regards to the herding cycle. In Norway, they are concerned that the eight-month school year (which replaced the mandatory four months of schooling for the children of Saami herders during the mid-1960s in order to help them attain national academic standards)¹⁹ is to the detriment of their children learning about their cultural heritage (Paine 1994: 148). One herder from Kautokieno complained to Robert Paine that children of Saami herders should be allowed to leave school after completing the elementary levels only (Paine 1994: 137). The various opposing, even contradictory, interests are reflective of the numerous divisions that

¹⁹ It was also decided that Saami children should start school a year earlier than Norwegian children to allow them a head start (Jones 1982: 12).

are to be found in present day Saami society. Indeed, it is this very discord, existing both between and within the reindeer-herding and non-herding populations, that today poses the greatest obstruction to the Saami as they strive to obtain some degree of political and cultural autonomy. For the Saami, as an ethnic group, cannot agree on a common political agenda that will meet the needs of all concerned (Snell & Snell 1975:165-7).

A People Divided: additional problems in political mobilisation

The most extreme manifestation of this disunity is evidenced by the fact that a significant proportion of ethnic Saami directly oppose the Saami political movement, aimed at securing the ethnic minority a more favourable position in their negotiations with the state governments. Having become assimilated within wider Scandinavian society (especially in Norway), many of these individuals feel that they have successfully attained equality alongside ethnic Norwegians and Swedes; a position they now wish to enjoy and benefit from. They do not want to be accorded aboriginal status for this would be seen as “*an act of cultural regression,*” a return to a condition that many had eagerly left behind (Paine 1991: 396). They ask “*What rights do Saami lack today?...It is difficult to suppose that any so-called ‘special rights’ would be an improvement over what we already have in our democracy*” (SLF 1979c, cited in Paine 1991: 397). Their dissension was clearly expressed in 1979 when the *Norske Samers Riksforbund* (NSR) lobbied the Norwegian Parliament on the issue of native rights to land and water during the protests over the Alta-Kautokieno dam (Paine 1991: 389). In the same year, a dissenter group, the newly formed *Samenes Landsforbund* (SLF), broke away from the national association. Members of the new organisation complained that the NSR, like the government, had come to romanticize the reindeer pastoralists as the flag bearers of Saami culture and were no longer concerned with looking after the interests of the ‘ordinary’ Saami (Paine 1991: 395). Indeed, Paine (1991: 396) reports that this claim, whilst widely exaggerated, was not without some justification.²⁰ Yet, not all Saami whose livelihoods are independent of

²⁰ Members of the SLF, composed predominantly of Saami living in mixed ethnic communities in coastal and fjordal areas (Brenna 1997), oppose both the Saami Parliament and the question of Saami

reindeer herding feel the same way. Since the 1970s, there has been a revival of ethnic consciousness in many Saami stronghold communities of the interior (Eidheim 1971:70) as manifested by the numerous institutions and organisations that have been set up there to help preserve and promote Saami culture. The Saami Library, Museum and Folk High School in Karasjok, the Saami National Institute at Kautokeino, the National Saami Writers Union, the Saami theatre group *Beaivvas*, and *Saamid duodji* (an organisation supporting Saami handicrafts) are but a few examples of this growing ethnic pride in Norway, whilst many similar associations and establishments of culture and learning have also been set up across the border (Jones 1982: 11, Beach 1988: 14).

Conflicting interests have divided the Saami reindeer herding population too. Whereas some herders wish to retain the old practices and customs, which they view as the cornerstones of their culture, others desire that the industry, as it has now become, continue to move with the times. The changing values of the 'occupationalists', which Paine (1994: 109) has identified as signifying a shift from pastoral possession to pastoral production, have simply become incompatible with maintaining native ethnic identity (Snell & Snell 1975: 175). This is clearly evident when we compare how the two groups perceive and respond to dilemmas arising from competing land claims. Whilst the 'culturalists' view their problems as resulting from their ethnic minority status, the 'occupationalists' see theirs within an economic framework. In arguing against competing land claims, they under-communicate their ethnicity and instead emphasize the economic viability of their occupation (Snell & Snell 1975: 173). In Norway, the National Reindeer Herder's Association (NRL), which supports modern reindeer management, has the backing of the occupationalists but faces considerable opposition from the culturalists. Yet it is the NRL that provides the central administration with information that underlies policy and decision-making. Indeed, a section of the current herding law concerned with the future of herding was

land rights (<http://home.online.no/~sveilund/skole/adeden1.htm>). It seems as though the issues with which they are concerned are those that affect northern peripheral communities in general, the legacies of policies pursuing southern industrial development and northern neglect (Snell & Snell 1975: 176-177).

seen as expressing the opinion of the leading occupationalists (Snell & Snell 1975: 174).

Similar, although less pronounced divisions exist among the San, specifically between those individuals who have long worked on the white and African-owned farms and cattle posts, and those who continued to practice hunting and gathering until relatively recently. Over the years, many of the San forced into farm labour gradually began to stigmatise and reject their traditional values and beliefs, as they came to emulate the European life and all things Western instead. Guenther (1976: 128) reports that, by the late 1960s, a number of San living in the Ghanzi farm block of Botswana had started to regard their foraging contemporaries with contempt, even embarrassment. They saw those San still subsisting primarily as hunters and gatherers as being '*kauka kwe*', that is 'behind' or 'backward', whilst perceiving themselves as '*gaba kwe*' meaning a new and advanced person (*ibid*). However, the number of revitalisation movements that have since sprung up in the Ghanzi area, especially amongst those living in the most deprived and conflict ridden parts, testify to the fact that not all San there share these sentiments (*ibid*: 129). These movements, most clearly articulated in the religious sphere, help the people to reflect on their traditional life in a positive light, for the past is remembered as a time when life was good and resources plentiful, when disease was less common and conflict largely absent (*ibid*).

In corroboration with these movements, there has emerged a common San identity amongst the various cultural and linguistic communities now living within the farm block. This Pan-San identity is known to have been absent among the various San peoples that, in the past, lived as foragers (Guenther 1976: 130). The only similarities they shared were ecological adaptations suited to hunting and gathering. Whereas San identity was once primarily concerned with creating and negotiating identities both amongst and between themselves, the encroachment of whites and Bantu-speaking peoples onto their lands, has meant that they now come to express their identity in relation to other ethnic groups (Suzman 2000: 119). Shared feelings of deprivation and poverty experienced by the San in the farm block are likely to have acted as a

unifying factor, whilst the fact that the other ethnic groups do not distinguish between the various San communities there may also have contributed (Guenther 1976: 130). The emergence of a common ethnic identity has helped to unite the farm San in political mobilisation, as voiced by their growing demands that the government allocate them land.

Discussion

As the UN-declared '*Decade of Indigenous Peoples*' (1995-2004) nears an end, it is clear that the vast majority of the world's native communities have, despite commendable efforts, covered only a small distance on the path towards recognition of their land and other legal rights by the political states in which they live. Perhaps nowhere is this more true than in Botswana today. Yet, whilst Botswana's treatment of the San (especially those communities from the CKGR) has been marred by numerous alleged human rights abuses (and even characterised by some as being genocidal in nature), San communities across the border in Namibia have benefited from several government initiatives regarding education, land and resource management, and presently enjoy a degree of political representation. In order to understand the two countries' radically different approaches towards their indigenous populations, and the limitations inherent in each, we must examine the philosophies embedded in these policies.

Since the 1980s, the traditionalist anthropological notion of the San as 'pristine hunter-gatherers' has formed the basis for Namibian government policy towards the indigenous minority. This was clearly evident in the Bushman report released by the South West Africa administration in 1984. The report followed the assertion by the government ethnologist, K. Budack, that '*the San (or Bushmen) can only be defined today on an ethno-historical basis: the starting point must always be the hunter-gatherer culture, even among those groups whose livelihood is now obtained by other*

means' (Volkman 1984). That this principle continues to form the main tenet of Namibian San policy is reflected by the emphasis currently given to nature conservancy and eco-tourism projects, and the general lack of support afforded to those individuals wishing to establish their own small gardens and herds (see Marshall 2002). It is also apparent in the government's tendency to focus attention on those communities that, until recently, continued to practice hunting and gathering. Whereas the Ju/'hoansi living in Eastern Otjozondjupa have, during the last few years, attracted the attention of international donors and benefited from several hugely expensive development projects, other less well-known San communities have experienced little in the way of support. For instance, James Suzman asserts that a hat-making project which he initiated among the Ju/'hoansi of the Omaheke farm region during his fieldwork there in the mid 1990s, was the first income generating programme to be established in the region (Suzman 2000: 6 & 162). In the same way that the farm San have remained invisible in scholarly and popular literature, so too have they remained unseen and neglected in government policy. Yet, the Namibian approach, if it continues along this direction, will ultimately prove detrimental to the select category of San peoples that it seeks to 'protect'. Massive encroachment, dispossession and competing land activities mean that hunting and gathering are no longer viable subsistence strategies – something that the Nyae Nyae Ju/'hoansi were only too aware of when they opposed the creation of a nature reserve on their lands. The government's failure to realise this reality is further testimony to its conditioning by traditionalist anthropological discourse.

In order to disprove earlier ethnocentric views of hunter-gatherers, Richard Lee emphasized many of the more remarkable and positive features of Ju/'hoan society, often glossing over the more unsavoury aspects. Certainly, the lives of these people was not '*nasty, brutish and short*' as Hobbes (1970 [1651]: 65) had claimed, but neither were they as free from worry, hardship, risk and uncertainty as Lee, and other

contemporaneous researchers to work among the San, extolled²¹ (see Smith 1988). Food was occasionally hard to come by for the Ju/'hoansi, especially towards the end of the dry season (Wilmsen 1989: 304-305), child mortality was high and diseases frequently infiltrated their nomadic camps (Biesele & Hitchcock 2000: 310). As Harpending and Wandsnider (1980, cited in Wilmsen 1989: 305) have argued '*Lee's (1968, 1969, 1979) studies of !Kung [Zhu] diet and caloric intake have generated a misleading belief among anthropologists and others that !Kung are well fed and under little or no nutritional stress.*' Konner and Shostak (1986: 73) similarly concluded that, '*Data on !Kung fertility in relation to body fat, on seasonal weight loss in some bands, and on the slowing of infant growth after the first six months of life all suggested that the previously described abundance had definite limits. Data on morbidity and mortality, though not necessarily relevant to abundance, certainly made use of the term 'affluent' seem inappropriate.*' By attempting to preserve the past, current Namibian government policy is criticised on the grounds that it is precluding the future progression and development of the San. In John Marshall's words, it is quite simply '*death by myth*' (Marshall 1984).

It was for this reason that Edwin Wilmsen (1989: 315) commended the people of Botswana for rejecting the historically created notion of the San as hunter-gatherers, and for recognising that the needs of these people extend beyond foraging (see Gordon 1986: 27). Today, as under colonialism, Botswana's policy objectives are to 'develop' the San – encouraging them to rear livestock and participate in the market economy. Yet, whereas immediately following Independence this approach reflected humanitarian concerns, today it appears to be inextricably linked to the economic interests and discriminatory opinions of those holding office. In a meeting with Survival International last year, Lt General Merafhe, Botswana's Minister for Foreign Affairs, spoke of '*elevating*' the '*backwards*' San (Mmegi 8th March 2002), mirroring earlier alleged statements by the President, Festus Mogae, who declared that the '*stone-age*' people '*must change, otherwise... they will perish*' (The Star 19th June

²¹ John Marshall has freely conceded to his romanticizing of the San in his earlier films of the Nyae Nyae Ju/'hoansi, and is only too aware of the profound consequences of his idealised depictions of these people on current government policy towards them (Marshall 2002).

1997, cited in Mmegi 8th March 2002). Paradoxically, the widespread prevalence of these attitudes, which demand the 'development' of the San in policy, simultaneously preclude any such development in reality. For instance, many San now attempting to establish themselves as small-scale herders have complained that slaughterhouse staff discriminate against their animals (see Hitchcock 1987). One game warden working in the CKGR also told Robert Hitchcock how, on a matter of principle, he would arrest any San he saw wearing trousers whilst hunting (Hitchcock 1985: 59)! Contrary to appearances, Botswana's San policy is not based on the writings of the revisionist school (Government of Botswana pers. comm.). Indeed, I would argue that, like that of Namibia, it is entrenched in traditionalist ideas of hunter-gatherer culture. By his own admission, even Wilmsen (1989: 316) concedes that the greatest weakness of Botswana's policy is its founding on the premise of an ethnographically constructed static San social condition, from which integrative mechanisms for incorporating new features are thought to be lacking. Without such mechanisms, it is assumed that San peoples are incapable of achieving the higher levels of 'development' obtained by the majority national population. As the anthropologist and first Bushman Development Officer, Elizabeth Wily, stated, "*Bushmen generally retain (in the face of changes) the attitudes and philosophy of a hunter-gatherer way of life. It is this more than anything that makes their survival today problematic and precarious...Progressive attitudes which expect and deal positively with changes were not necessary and therefore have not been cultivated or embedded in their society, unlike agricultural, pastoral and later societies*" (Wily 1979, cited in Wilmsen 1989: 320). Unfortunately, it is this view that acts as the basis for the gradualist ideology currently governing Botswana's San policy and which provides the theoretical justification for limited and piecemeal governmental input. The San are left to determine their own rate of 'development,' a rate that is assumed and, with minimalist government input and expenditure, proven to be slow, and which in turn serves as renewed justification for continued neglect (Wilmsen 1989: 317) Clearly, the San living in both Namibia and Botswana are victim of unequal opportunities resulting from the false stereotypes by which they are portrayed in anthropological and popular discourse.

By contrast, anthropological writings have had little influence on Norwegian and Swedish government policies towards the Saami. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Norway was pursuing the most retrogressive Saami policy of the two Scandinavian countries, which was aimed at assimilating the Saami into the dominant culture. Norway has since reversed its position and, during the last few decades, has actually set many precedents recognizing Saami cultural rights as exemplified by the creation of the National Saami Parliament and the signing of the ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples. This change has been precipitated by a growing global awareness of indigenous rights, stimulated in part by the political activity of the indigenous communities themselves. Nevertheless, despite presenting themselves as leading advocates of indigenous rights worldwide, both Norway and Sweden have continuously balked at introducing any real political change that addresses the land and resource rights of their own native populations.

CONCLUSIONS

Today, indigenous peoples inhabit marginal environments; the tundra, deserts and rainforests of the world. In some cases, they have inhabited these environments for millenia, although more often they have been forced into these locales by past encroachment of their traditional habitats by more powerful populations. Consequently, many indigenous peoples today occupy lands that escaped outside interest in earlier times but are now recognised to be rich in minerals and valuable natural resources. This is a mixed blessing since the greater the amounts of timber, minerals or hydroelectric power that can be extracted from these areas, the more expendable the indigenous peoples and their cultures have become (Beach 1981: 280).

The inescapable dilemma is that, whilst indigenous subsistence strategies like hunting and gathering and reindeer-pastoralism are economically and culturally important on a local level, they are of minor industrial significance on a national scale. Moreover, they frequently demand large areas of (resource-rich) land. For instance, reindeer grazing in Norway, despite supporting only a fraction of the national Saami population, currently utilises over 40% of the country's land mass (Beach 2000:240). Understandably, it is difficult for governments to justify protecting indigenous peoples' lands, resources and livelihoods when they directly compete with industries that are of calculably greater national economic importance and/or would better serve the wider interests of the general populace and state. For example, the net export value of Sweden's timber industry, perhaps the greatest competitor for Saami land today, constituted 5% of the country's Gross National Product (GNP) and 20% of the state's total export income during the 1980s (Skogsstatistisk Arsbok 1990, cited in Kormso 1993: 38). Moreover, in Botswana, diamond sales last year (marketed entirely by the DeBeers owned Diamond Trading Company) amounted to a staggering \$1.8 billion dollars. Approximately 70% of the country's foreign exchange earnings, 30% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and as much as half of the government's revenue is accounted for by diamonds (The Ecologist 2003: 11)! Together with the country's cattle industry, diamonds have aided Botswana's

economic growth from one of the poorest southern African nations at Independence into one of today's richest (Burger 1987: 172). Perhaps then it is hardly surprising that the rights of indigenous populations are often regarded as secondary to the welfare of the national populations alongside whom they live.²²

Governments often argue that their indigenous communities will derive benefit from competing industries, and overlook or downplay the adverse effects. Certainly, many of the Saami cultural organisations that flourish in Sweden today (e.g. those promoting the Saami language, arts and crafts) do so largely thanks to money paid into the Saami fund as compensation for industrial encroachment on grazing lands (Beach 1980:291).²³ Herding communities in northern Scandinavia have also been provided with electricity following the construction of hydroelectric-generating dams on their land. Similarly, roads - although frequently responsible for the destruction of grazing lands and the death of reindeer in traffic accidents - may, in some instances, actually facilitate herding. However, more often than not, native peoples do not benefit from the exploitation of resources on their ancestral lands; they are simply removed and relocated without any compensation whatsoever (Burger 1987: 48).

Clearly, it is unacceptable for the welfare and rights of indigenous peoples to be discarded in the pursuit of national development. To do so would be to condone past governmental policies of encroachment, dispossession and even genocide. The natural resources contained within the lands now inhabited by indigenous communities will only provide long term benefits if their utilisation and development are carefully managed and controlled. Cooperation, rather than competition between indigenous peoples and the majority culture, is pivotal in this process.

²² However, one should not forget the close ties that are often forged between governments and large multinational companies, and the personal interests which government ministers may hold in such companies. Indeed, Botswana's President, Festus Mogae, recently described the relationship between his government and DeBeers, who together control the country's diamond industry in a joint 50-50 venture, as being analogous to that of '*siamese twins*' (The Ecologist 2003: 37-38).

²³ The Saami, only too well aware of this paradox, have repeatedly campaigned the state to separate herding compensation payments from state programmes supporting Saami culture (Beach 1980: 291).

Besides national development, arguably one of the greatest threats facing indigenous cultures today is the attempt by various state governments to 'develop' them (Burger 1987:2). Due to past government policies fostering discrimination and neglect,²⁴ the development measures currently directed at these communities are often both necessary and justified and, moreover, reflect conscientious efforts by the authorities to improve the quality of life of the indigenous populace. Nor are they wholly undesired by the indigenous peoples themselves. Many Saami herders had long campaigned for the educational reforms, recently introduced in Sweden and Norway, which allow their children equal educational opportunities and do not overtly attempt to assimilate them into wider Scandinavian society. Elsewhere however, 'development' appears to be little more than a word used to disguise the self-interests and economic motives of the state. The 'progress' that has been forced upon the former residents of the CKGR has served little purpose other than to remove these peoples from states of self-sufficiency and into increasing dependence upon the central authorities.

Even when state-sponsored developmental policies do reflect humanitarian concerns, they are still deemed destructive by the very people that they seek to help. It is an unfortunate fact that the measures aimed at raising the living standards of indigenous communities (by providing them with access to health, education, etc), with the further objective of protecting them and their way of life, frequently conflict with the cultural traditions of those communities. Perhaps the best example of this is provided by the rationalisation and modernisation policies introduced by the Swedish and Norwegian governments in the 1970s. Admittedly, few Saami herders today would wish to return to the poverty that characterised their society even as late as the 1960s (see Haraldson 1962, cited in Beach 1981: 296), yet many feel that the material and

²⁴ It should not be forgotten that the current state of underdevelopment and poverty experienced by many indigenous communities is itself a legacy of earlier government policies. Only a few decades ago, discriminatory laws were in place in Sweden that prevented the Saami reindeer herders from building modern comfortable dwellings lest they became 'soft' and unwilling to maintain the hardships that the state demanded (Beach 1981: 297-298).

social comforts that they now enjoy have come at too high a cost to their culture. Another difficulty is that governments often have a poor understanding of the problems that they are trying to resolve, as clearly demonstrated by their attempts to sustain the natural resources exploited by indigenous populations. In Scandinavia, the reindeer-herding pastures have become increasingly overcrowded as they diminished in size over the years while, in southern Africa, populations of game animals have also steadily decreased. Yet once again, these circumstances are largely a consequence of previous government policies that favoured encroachment on, and the dispossession of, indigenous peoples' lands. The tendency of the authorities frequently to overlook these facts, and their consequent inability to acknowledge the various strategies commonly employed by indigenous communities to protect the resources they utilise from overexploitation, often renders state intervention a failure. The irony is that, as political states strive towards sustainability and conservation of natural resources, they often adversely disable those communities that have traditionally been the most efficient in utilising the natural resources at their disposal. As a consequence, those resources that had historically been well maintained are left vulnerable to overexploitation. Clearly, if any policy aimed at conservation and sustainability is to be a success, indigenous populations must be afforded a prominent role in both their design and implementation. In the development of their lands and lives, they must be active partners, not victims.

Should the welfare of indigenous communities be allowed to stand in the way of the well-being of the population at large? Should indigenous communities be accorded special rights on the basis of their indigenesness at all? If so, would this constitute a form of positive discrimination tantamount to the practice of apartheid as De Beers recently claimed? Political authorities the world over have reached different answers to this last question. In South Africa, the government is currently following a policy of readdressing the past injustices faced by various ethnic communities through due compensation, arguing that not to do so would itself constitute racial discrimination. Similarly, in Namibia, a few San communities have been awarded rights to land and resources in order to allow them to continue practising their traditional economies

(and self determination). In Botswana too, the authorities publicly claim to be following a policy of equality, yet the San are treated in a manner that frequently infringes not only upon their civil rights but also on their basic human rights. Proposals that would afford the San more autonomy or land are dismissed on the grounds that they are promoting ethnic favouritism (see Lee 2003:171). Meanwhile, in Norway, the Saami Rights Commission just recently issued a report (prior to the Finnmark Act) in which it recommended that, with regards to land and resource utilisation, the Saami should not be afforded any special ethnic rights, merely equal rights to those enjoyed by Scandinavians (Norwegian Parliament website). Whereas the Swedish and Norwegian governments have, over the course of the last decade, made commendable efforts concerning the preservation of a number of Saami cultural institutions, both have paid little more than lip service to the question of Saami title to land. It has been quite clearly demonstrated that their support and recognition of Saami rights extends only to those elements that do not conflict with other, non-Saami interests (see Beach 2000: 244). Yet, of all the rights demanded by indigenous communities today, land is for many the most important, for their lands contain both their history and identity and will ensure their future economic viability as an independent people (Burger 1987: 14). It must be remembered that indigenous peoples are not just simply racial or national minorities. Rather, they constitute distinct social, cultural and political entities, many of which have, to an extent, been self-governing within recent history (Burger 1987: 9).

Anthropology has played an invaluable role in promoting awareness of the threats faced by indigenous peoples from the state governments to whose authority they are subject and, in doing so, has often assisted native communities to attain legal recognition of their rights. However, anthropological data are subject to misinterpretation and manipulation. Thus, whilst '*social science cannot be neutral, detached or apolitical*' (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, cited in Suzman 2000: 162) anthropologists working with indigenous groups must become more aware of the adverse impact that their discipline may have on the lives of the people under study.

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