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THE PRESENT CONDITION OF BUSHMAN GROUPS

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Abstract

The Bushmen of southern Africa are among the world's last remaining hunter-gatherers. Although most Bushmen today practise some herding or work as wage labourers, their unique cultures survive. Nevertheless the Bushmen are threatened by subjugation and dependency upon other groups, changes in their environment forced upon them by such groups and by governments, and by militarization. This paper examines Bushman society with special reference to recent changes in their social and economic circumstances.

In the first section an overview of Bushman society is presented; this is followed by an outline of the major ethnic and linguistic divisions, and then by a more detailed exposition on each of the groups and their current plight. The groups examined include notably the !Kung, Nharo, Central Kalahari Bushmen, Khoe-speaking Bushmen of eastern Botswana, and !Xôa.

The paper concludes with a discussion of the prospects for future economic development and its relation to the preservation of the Bushmen and their cultural identity. In particular, the author examines prospects for plant cultivation, livestock rearing, formal education for Bushman children, and access to political power. He argues that, in spite of recent and severe problems caused by drought and by the domination of Bushman groups by outside forces, Bushman culture remains viable as long as Bushmen are able to retain the opportunity for self-determination.
Introduction

What follows is a very brief account of the ethnography and present condition of the Bushmen of southern Africa, especially with regard to settlement patterns and economic activities. It is necessarily selective, since Bushman groups are numerous and vary considerably in their adaptations to the natural environment and their adaptations to the encroachment of other groups upon their territories. To a large extent, the latter adaptations are dependent on the degree and type of contact they have with neighbouring groups, these ranging from longstanding, symbiotic relationships with subsistence pastoralists and European ranchers, to forcible settlement and subjugation of Bushman groups by military forces in Namibia and Angola.

It is important to realise that the Bushmen are not a unified ethnic group. They are spread over a vast area of southern Africa; they speak many languages, which are only distantly, if at all, related to each other; and, for the most part, they lack any common identity except in their dealings with outsiders. The generic terms used for them in both scientific and popular literature, such as ‘Bushmen’ (English), ‘San’ (Nama) and ‘Basarwa’ (Tswana), are all foreign terms. There are no indigenous terms which include all groups. In addition, although there are many cultural similarities between Bushman groups, their physical and linguistic diversity suggests a long history of independent settlement.

Today nearly all Bushmen live in remote areas, but this was not always the case. At one time their ancestors inhabited nearly all of southern Africa and probably parts of East Africa as well. It has been suggested that a few thousand years ago Bushmen may have outnumbered the inhabitants of Europe at that time (Washburn, 1976: xvi; Tobias, 1978a: 19-20). The precise origins of the Bushmen are obscure, but it is universally agreed that they are the aboriginal inhabitants of the sub-continent. Together with the Khoe, Khoe-Khoe or 'Hottentots', Bushmen are classified as the 'Khoisan peoples' (Schapera, 1930). All Khoisan groups are known for their
common physical characteristics, such as 'peppercorn' hair, and for the fact that their languages, almost unique in the world, possess 'click' consonants. The cattle-keeping Khoekhoe have lived in southern Africa for some two or three thousand years, and emerged either as Bushmen who acquired cattle and goats from neighbouring tribes to the north, or as migrants from East Africa who intermarried with Bushmen centuries ago (Elphick, 1977: 3-22).

The Khoekhoe eventually dominated the coastal areas and later took Bushmen as servants. By the fourth century A.D., Negroid, Bantu-speaking tribes had entered South Africa from the north. The Khoekhoe and the Bantu-speakers forced some Bushman groups into the mountainous regions of the interior. These 'Mountain Bushmen' have now almost all died out, although their legacy of rock art can still be seen in the caves of South Africa, Lesotho and Namibia. Today, most Bushmen live in the Kalahari desert, a sandy but grassy plain about the same size as France or Kenya. Yet, contrary to popular belief, the Bushman inhabitants of the Kalahari are not refugees from the south. They are the original inhabitants of the Kalahari itself (Silberbauer, 1981: 3). Outside the Kalahari proper, surviving Bushman groups are found in southern Angola, in the Okavango swamps of northern Botswana, and in eastern and southern Botswana. These groups too are probably longstanding inhabitants of their territories.

Much of the Kalahari is abundant in vegetation; only the southernmost part is completely barren. In the central and northern areas, there are thorn trees and many species of edible roots, berries and nuts, as well as grass which supports large herds of grazing animals. Several species of antelope are particularly numerous. The temperature of the Kalahari varies considerably. During the summer (December to March) it is hot both day and night; Daytime temperatures sometimes reach $46^\circ$ C. During the winter (June to September) it is hot during the day but below freezing at night. There is very little surface water and it rains only at the hottest time of the year, usually beginning in November and ending by March or April. Rain is sporadic and it generally rains for only an hour
or two at a time, usually in a heavy downpour.

All the Kalahari Bushmen traditionally have subsisted entirely by hunting and gathering, although today many keep livestock or work as wage labourers, and a few grow crops. Hunting has always been the preoccupation of the men, while food-gathering is the work of the women and girls. Women also collect firewood. Like hunter-gatherers in other parts of the world, Bushmen lack a formal political organization; decision-making is by consensus (Silberbauer, 1982). For the most part, Bushmen have never lived in permanent villages, but rather, in nomadic bands. Each of these bands consists of a few families, about twenty-five to thirty-five people (though this varies between ethnic groups). Band territories are sometimes as large as 1000 square kilometres. During part of the year a band will camp together, usually near a waterhole. For the rest of the year the band is dispersed, each domestic unit moving off to a different area of the band territory. Different Bushman groups practise different settlement patterns according to local environment and custom, and these patterns are adapted to suit fluctuations in the availability of natural resources and changing social conditions (Barnard, 1979).

From an ethnological point of view, Bushmen are noted for their system of universal kin categorization, in which even entire societies are classed and treated as kinmen. Through rules of namesake-equivalence, individuals classify each other as members of particular relationship categories, such as 'grandparent', 'parent' or 'cross-cousin', and these classifications determine marriageability and other rules of social behaviour (Barnard, 1980a). Bushmen are also renowned for their detailed botanical and zoological knowledge (e.g., Lee 1979: 87–115, 158–249), for their rich folklore (e.g., Biesele, 1976), and for their curing rituals (e.g., Katz, 1982). The most important of these rituals, the 'medicine dance', is a community healing ceremony in which an entire band, or even several bands together, may participate. The women and children provide musical accompaniment by singing and clapping, while the men dance and cure suspected illnesses by trance and
spirtual healing techniques. Like the system of universal kin categorization, such rituals, which are increasing in response to outside pressures (Guenther, 1975), provide a mechanism for the exercise of community spirit and social order.

**Linguistic and ethnic divisions of the Khoisan peoples**

In order to assess the present condition of Bushman groups, it is essential to understand something of their diversity and of the relationships between such groups. There is little archaeological or archival evidence on the subject; therefore, the linguistic relationships between groups are of particular relevance. Khoisan language groups include Khoe (also known as Khwe-Kovab or Hottentot), !Kung (Ju), Ta' a (including !xô), and !Wi. In addition, the language which is misleadingly called ‘Eastern Hoë’ may constitute a distant link between the !Kung and Ta’a families (see Traill, 1973; Westphal, 1974). In terms of the traditional classification of Khoisan languages, Khoe includes ‘Hottentot’ and ‘Central Bushman’, !Kung is ‘Northern Bushman’, and the others are collectively the ‘Southern Bushman’ group (see Köhler, 1981: 457-82).

The !Kung-speakers include the !Kung of Angola, the ‘Ju/’hôasi (Central !Kung) of northern Botswana and Namibia, and the ‘Au/’eisi of western Botswana. The ‘Ju/’hôasi are the group generally referred to as ‘!Kung’.

The Ta’a-speakers are a small cluster of groups who live in the south-central Kalahari, far south of the !Kung and immediately south of the Khoe-speaking hunter-gatherers. Their land is poor and their social and territorial organization reflects the strong social solidarity of their individual bands (see Heinz, 1966; 1972). Although linguistically unrelated or very distant, these people and some groups of Khoe-speaking hunters of the central Kalahari are biologically closer than some Khoe groups are from each other (Nurse and Jenkins, 1977: 102).
The !Wi-speakers are a heterogeneous and geographically-scattered cluster of Bushman peoples. They include the /'Auni-/Khomani of Kalahari Gemsbok National Park, in the northern Cape Province (Dart, 1937), the //xegwi or Batwa of Lake Chrissie in the eastern Transvaal (Potgieter, 1955), and remnants of other 'Mountain Bushman' groups in Lesotho. The /Xam, arguably either a branch of the !Wi group or possibly a separate group (the 'Southwestern' or 'Cape' group) have now entirely died out as a cultural entity. They lived in the northern Cape Province and were the people made famous by the language and folklore studies of the Bleek family (e.g., Bleek and Lloyd, 1911).

The Khoe-speaking peoples are both the most numerous and the most culturally diverse. They inhabit the central Kalahari desert and Okavango swamps of Botswana and much of Namibia. Formerly there were also Khoe-speaking groups in parts of South Africa. Generally speaking, the Botswana peoples are hunter-gatherers (Bushmen) and the Namibian and South African peoples are pastoralists (non-Bushmen). The Khoe-speaking peoples include the Khoekhoe or 'Hottentots', the Damara, the Bushmen of the central Kalahari and Okavango, the Hai-///om Bushmen of Etosha pan, in Namibia, and quite possibly other, smaller groups in Angola. The Khoekhoe nations, who include the Nama, the Korana (Iora) and others, traditionally herded cattle and sheep. Unlike the Bushmen, they have traditionally lived in circular encampments which were made up mainly of patrilineally-related kinsfolk. Until the German colonization of Namibia in 1885 and subsequent warfare and subjugation, their tribes, clans and lineages were hierarchically-ranked and each tribe had its own independent, and often powerful, chief. The Damara, who had been servants and blacksmiths for the Nama, also herded livestock, although many Damara groups in the late nineteenth century lived entirely by hunting and gathering. They now live independently in northwestern Namibia. The Khoe-speaking Bushmen (or Khoe Bushmen), inhabit the vast central region of the Kalahari desert, areas east of the Kalahari, and the Okavango swamps to the north. Of these groups, the desert-dwellers have lived by hunting and gathering, and the swamp-dwellers, by hunting, gathering and
REFERENCES CITED


184, 190-92) mapped the locations of some 35 of these groves and noted that there is at least one grove within ten kilometres of each major waterhole in the area he studied. Mongongos can be exploited throughout the year and become especially important in the winter dry months, April to September. There are permanent waterholes, and during the winter dry season each band camps at one of these. Often several bands, numbering on average some 25 people or more, will share the same permanent waterhole and therefore the same winter location. A waterhole may be shared by Herero and Tswana pastoralists who live in a symbiotic relationship with the Žu/'hôasi. Some Žu/'hôasi do remain at their permanent waterholes all year round, but in general, bands move away during the summer wet season in order to exploit seasonally-available water and plant resources within overlapping band territories (termed niore [sg.]). At this time of year the Žu/'hôasi can get their water from pans and treetrunks where it collects as a result of rainfall. Areas of plentiful plant resources can be utilized by more than one band, while areas of poor resources are not exploited at all. There is also considerable movement of individuals from camp to camp at all times of year, and this movement is intensified during the wet season period of dispersal.

There are two main levels of social organization -- the band and the nuclear or extended family -- though families do not exploit separate, owned territories. Although band membership is flexible, bands generally include closely-related people, each descended from or related by marriage to a core group of brothers and sisters. In any band, there will be one individual who is considered the hereditary owner of both the water resources and the vegetable resources found in the territory. But in practice, of course, the band as a whole will control the resources.

Recently though, there have been some changes both among the Žu/'hôasi and in anthropological thinking about the Žu/'hôasi. In both Botswana and Namibia, Žu/'hôasi land rights have been called into question. Unfortunately, anthropological descriptions of the Žu/'hôasi as 'nomadic', with 'flexible band
membership' and 'a lack of territoriality', have been used to justify claims that the !Kung and other Bushmen have no traditional land tenure and therefore no land rights. Yet recent fieldwork has suggested a more territorial model of the traditional settlement pattern which is consistent with Ḟu/'hōasi attempts to remain longer at their dry-season camps. Wilmsen's (1982: 102; 1986) historical re-evaluation of Ḟu/'hōasi social structure suggests a continuity of residence, by core band members and their descendants, of well over a hundred years. This model is supported by Wiessner's (1977: 265-347; 1980) detailed evidence that changes in band membership, when seen over a long period of time, tend to be only temporary, e.g. for the purpose of long-term visiting or bride-service; it is also supported, at least implicitly, by Gordon's (1984) archival research on Ḟu/'hōasi interaction with other ethnic groups.

Yet since the mid-1960s Ḟu/'hōasi territorial organization has greatly changed. In Botswana, bands tend to spend much longer at their dry-season waterholes than in the past. In the early 1960s they were spending about three quarters of the year dispersed in the wet season camps and one quarter of the year aggregated. Later in the decade the ratio was reversed. Many Botswana !Kung groups were spending nearly three quarters of the year aggregated at the waterholes (Lee, 1979: 368; cf. 1972). In fact this is the opposite of what one would expect if the amount of rainfall were the determining factor; the rainfall was considerably greater in the latter period (see, e.g. Lee, 1976: 80-82). Social factors which are independent of the natural environment, including greater dependence on Herero and Tswana who share !Kung waterholes, have come into play.

In Namibia, there have been reports of a drastic deterioration in Ḟu/'hōasi social, and particularly family life, brought about by an excessive dependence on the cash economy. In 1970 a Bushman 'homeland', Bushmanland, was established by the South African government. This reserve includes only part of the land traditionally inhabited by Namibian Ḟu/'hōasi along the Botswana border, and much of the more westerly area
designated for the reserve is uninhabitable. The establishment of the reserve quickly led to a large influx of administrators and to the construction of a school and an administrative camp at Tsumkwe (Tsumi'kwí). The South African Defence Force (SADF) added a military camp in 1978 and began recruiting ŋu/ŋòasi for military service, to fight against the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), which is recognized as the legitimate government of the country by the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (Lee and Hurlich, 1982). The money paid to the new soldiers is all too often used to purchase alcoholic drink, since there is little else to spend it on at Tsumkwe. Many individuals have given up hunting and gathering in order to live from the earnings of the camp, and the population there is now too large to engage traditional subsistence techniques since there is no longer enough natural food or firewood to support them. John Marshall, whose mother Lorna Marshall conducted the first modern ethnographic research among this people in the 1950s, has, together with Claire Ritchie, spent the past few years trying to encourage the development of cattle husbandry in Bushmanland in order to help the ŋu/ŋòasi to regain control over their economy (Marshall and Ritchie, 1984: 123-57). Their efforts have been at least partly successful, although they have met with opposition from the government, and in particular, from wildlife officials and the SADF, who want to restrict subsistence to traditional hunting techniques only, in order to develop a game reserve, with no livestock and only traditional Bushman settlement, as a buffer between SWAPO and southern Namibia (Gordon, 1985).

The present situation in Angola is largely unknown to the outside world. Angolan !Kung, also known locally as Kwankala and Sekele (Almeida 1965: 1-11), have lived in close association with Ambo (Ovambo) and other Bantu-speaking cultivators and pastoralists for centuries. Estermann (1976 [1957]: 4) reported that in the 1950s some Angolan !Kung were still following a foraging way of life, but that from March to May, when wild food is scarce, !Kung women and girls would assist neighbouring Bantu cultivators in their winter harvests in exchange for handfuls of grain and flour. More recently, however, their
country has been made the battleground between government troops of the Movimento Popular de Libertacão de Angola (MPLA) and guerrillas of the União Nacional de Independência Total de Angola (UNITA), supported by South Africa. The extent of damage to the !Kung way of life is not possible to assess, given the lack of evidence and the fact that no ethnographer has worked with them since the start of the Angolan civil war in the 1970s.

At the other end of !Kung country, south of the ǃxóõasi, live the ǂAu//eisi. This is the group called 'Auen' (a corruption of ǂAu//ein', the Nharo term for the ǂAu//eisi) by early German writers and known locally as 'Makaukau' (a Bantu corruption of the same term). They occupy land adjacent to an overlapping that of the Nharo, in the Ghanzi ranching area of Botswana. Some also live across the border in Namibia. Many individuals move freely between the Dobe area (where they are virtually indistinguishable from the ǃxóõasi) and the Ghanzi ranches, and most now live as workers and squatters within the northern part of the ranching territory. This trend is not new; in the nineteenth century, ǂAu//eisi bands aggregated in huge numbers, sometimes at the sites of elephant kills by white hunters (Schapera 1930: 80-81), and have apparently been able to move between a ranch and foraging lifestyles through the last ninety years. Today, they are impoverished due to low wages, and for most, a lack of any employment prospects. Although they still hunt and gather for much of their subsistence, relative overpopulation, by both humans and livestock, prevents them from being able to follow a lifestyle based more on their traditional pursuits (Childers, 1976: 19-20, 53-58).

The Nharo

The Nharo or Naro (the former spelling is more common, but the latter is more phonetically correct) live along Ghanzi ridge between the ǃxóõ and the !Kung. Their population is at least 6000, while the closely-related Ts’aokhoe and ǂHaba, to the northeast, number about 3500. In most Nharo areas there are
a great variety of seasonal plant foods. Natural waterholes were plentiful in the late nineteenth century, and were probably more numerous than in any other part of the Kalahari. Today these have largely been replaced by farm and government boreholes, though traditional settlement patterns still exist in many areas. In the last century, the Nharo used to spend the dry season camped at large permanent waterholes and the wet season scattered among the seasonally-filled pans. Thus their seasonal cycle more closely resembled that of the !Kung rather than that of the Central Kalahari Bushmen (Barnard, 1980c: 137-38; Guenther, 1986). However, as with the !Au///eisi, this pattern has changed as a result of the influx of ranchers over the past ninety years; Nharo settlements now are relatively permanent, although individuals move freely from settlement to settlement within recognised territories which overlap the boundaries of the ranches.

The Nharo are divided into bands (tsou-ba [masc. sg.]) and band clusters (nju-sa [fem. sg.], literally 'territory'), each of which is named and consists of a recognized membership. In the case of bands, this membership is highly flexible; individuals change band membership many times in the course of their lives. In earlier writings, ethnographers have remarked that band cluster boundaries did not seem to be clearly-defined, and had seemingly broken down due to the incursion of non-Bushman groups into their territories. Yet today at the Botswana governement settlement scheme of Hanahai, there are remarkably strict social, if not geographical boundaries, between members of different Nharo band clusters. Residing at this settlement are representatives of two Nharo band clusters -- the N//ua-//xe people and the !Ean people -- as well as smaller numbers of members of other Bushman and non-Bushman groups. In 1982 the two groups had been at Hanahai for about three years and numbered just under a hundred individuals each; in general they included individuals who had left the Ghanzi ranches (to the north) in search of a more independent life, but who maintained close ties with members of their own band clusters within the ranches. Each such group was living separately, had little social contact with each other, and individuals from the different groups
would buy and sell (rather than share) the meat they acquired by hunting or herding. This situation reflects the difficulties inherent in almost all attempts to provide facilities for more than one social group at the same settlement. The people of Hanahai have successfully adapted to the situation, but in so doing, they have retained their traditional social boundaries.

To the northeast, the Nharo settlement pattern has undergone gradual but considerable changes in recent years. The first permanent white settlers arrived in that area in 1898 (Gillett, 1970:54-55), but the most drastic changes seem to have occurred since the early 1960s, just after the system of land tenure was changed from leasehold to freehold, a period when the farms were in a state of expansion. During this period farms were fenced, a better quality of livestock was brought in, engine-pump boreholes were introduced, and for the first time, farm workers were paid in cash. The newer farmers also increased the density of livestock, brought in high-velocity rifles (and killed off much of the game), and hired Kgalagari and Tswana herdsmen in preference to the indigenous Nharo. The results of these changes can be summarized very simply: first, the Nharo who had by this time become part-time herdsmen were put out of work in favour of the Kgalagari and Tswana; and secondly, those Nharo who wished to continue their traditional economic pursuits could no longer find adequate vegetable resources or game animals in the area (Silberbauer, 1974). The abundance of boreholes, in turn, led to the formation of smaller and smaller bands -- sometimes only a single nuclear family at each borehole -- and to increased migration of individuals and families within the northeastern farming area (Barnard, 1980c).

In contrast, certain more traditional areas to the west still possess permanent natural waterholes which today, as in the past, support large aggregations all year round.
The Central Kalahari Bushmen

The G/wi and G//ana, or Central Kalahari Bushmen, live in Botswana's Central Kalahari Game Reserve and number 3000 or more. The Central Kalahari Game Reserve extends over more than 50,000 square kilometres and includes three diverse environmental zones: in the north, a zone of sand dunes with many species of trees and shrubs and large herds of migratory game; in the central area, a zone of flat bushveld; and in the south, a more heavily wooded zone. Only the southern and central zones contain enough edible plants to support permanent occupation.

In the early 1960s G/wi band territory sizes were about the same as !Kung ones, ranging in size from some 450 to 1000 square kilometres; but their population size was somewhat larger, with an average of 57 people per band (Silberbaurer, 1972: 295). Yet the two factors which are of most interest about G/wi settlement are that the settlement cycle as a whole is in a sense the reverse of that of the !Kung, and that their aggregating and dispersing units are of a smaller order. The !Kung aggregate, several bands together, in the dry season and disperse as band-sized units in the wet season; whereas the G/wi disperse into family units in the dry season and aggregate as band-sized units in the wet season. During the dry season each G/wi family unit moves to a different part of its band territory and its members obtain water from plants or from the bodies of animals hunted. This is necessary since in G/wi country there is no surface water at this time of year. A !Kung-style aggregation would indeed be impossible for the G/wi in the absence of a permanent water supply. During the wet season each band aggregates and migrates around its territory in order to exploit seasonal food and water supplies, including patches of water-bearing tsama melons which usually persist for some time after all surface water has dried up (see maps in Silberbaurer, 1972: 296-97; 1981: 246). The differences between !Kung and G/wi settlement are not merely the result of ideology, nor the result of environmental determinants alone. They are the result of a complex interplay between ideology and micro-environmental factors.
As studies by Tanaka (1980) and others have shown, many changes have taken place in the Reserve since the early 1960s, the time Silberbauer describes in his major publications (Silberbauer, 1965; 1972; 1981). With the migration into the Reserve of several G//ana bands in the late 1960s, the settlement pattern apparently became more flexible. Then with the drought of the late 1970s and early 1980s, many Central Kalahari Bushman bands have migrated, at least seasonally, to areas outside the Reserve. Large numbers of these people have moved out to take advantage of borehole water and food distributed through Botswana’s drought relief programme. Until a few years ago there was only one functioning borehole in the Reserve, at Xade (xade), and it had long become overcrowded with members of several bands who have no traditional history of living in that area, though through alliance networks other bands may have had rights to use Xade country in the past. According to Silberbauer (1972: 302-04), such alliances with other bands were formed on the basis of ties of intermarriage and reciprocal rights to exploit each other’s territorial resources. These changes may be regarded by some observers as irreversible, but such a conclusion could be premature. The G/wi and G//ana have long taken temporary residence at farm boreholes and Tswana cattle posts, and band alliances do allow for the temporary changes in the residence of even entire bands, should this be necessary or desirable (cf. Silberbauer, 1972: 296-97; 1981: 178-80).

Today there is a school and a clinic at Xade, and through these the Botswana government and the Ghanzi District Council are trying to provide these people with the same facilities for education and health as are enjoyed by other citizens of Botswana. However, livestock are forbidden. Large numbers of donkeys and goats kept illegally in the Reserve by Bushmen and by Kgalagari, and the human and animal population in the Xade area is placing considerable pressure on water and other environmental resources there.
The Khoe-speaking Bushmen of Eastern Botswana

East of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve is a large population of mainly sedentary Bushmen who, like the Central Kalahari Bushmen, speak Khoe languages, but unlike the Central Kalahari Bushmen, are heavily integrated into the economy of the Tswana and Kalanga (Hitchcock, 1978; Cashdan, 1979). The Bushman groups there include the Shua, Dete and others, who have lived in the area for centuries, and some G/!ana who have migrated into the area in recent years. Estimates of Bushmen in this area vary from 8000 to over 30,000, depending on, among other factors, whether individuals of Bushman descent who have lost either their original language or their hunting and gathering lifestyle are included.

The vast majority of Bushmen in the east are located on cattle posts belonging to members of the Ngwato tribe, historically a powerful subdivision of the Tswana nation. These Bushmen herd cattle for their Tswana masters, who divide their time between the villages and the cattle posts. In return, the Bushmen receive payment of staple food crops and small amounts of cash. Under the traditional Tswana practice of mafisa, some also receive calves born from cattle under their charge. However, with moves towards commercialization of ranching in parts of eastern Botswana, the close relationship between Tswana and Bushman is threatened. In particular, the government, through its Tribal Grazing Land Policy (TGLP) of the late 1970s, has sought to promote freehold land tenure which would have the effect of depriving poorer individuals, including especially Bushmen, of the right to hunt, gather, and herd on what was previously communal land (Hitchcock, 1980; Wily, 1980).

In addition to their material difficulties, the Bushmen of eastern Botswana also face ideological ones. The cultural definition of Bushmen by Tswana society generally is that of low-status, poor and marginal people. Bushmen own very few cattle, the most important prestige commodity in Tswana culture. Therefore, Bushman males in particular lack economic independence and their status tends to be defined accordingly.
They are associated with the cattle post and the bush, and thus deprived of any significant role in village life (Motzafi, 1986). The situation in the Kweneng District, immediately south of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, is similar, although patron-client relationships are more recent in that region. There Khoe-speaking Bushmen live in close association with Eastern !Hoà and with Kgalagari, a Bantu-speaking people mainly from western Botswana whose wealth and social status is often only slightly higher than that of Bushmen. Intermarriage between groups is common and mixed settlements are the norm. Most residents maintain hunting and gathering traditions, both by necessity and by choice, while practising herding as well (Vierich, 1977).

The Bukakhoe, Kxoe and other groups of 'River Bushmen' in the Okavango, who together number some 3000 to 5000 individuals, are probably less affected, and certainly less subordinated, by contact with other peoples. Due to the presence of tsetse flies, much of the Okavango is unsuitable for cattle, and the sparse population of the area has allowed these nomadic peoples to develop both more independently and, where contact does occur, more symbiotically with their agricultural neighbours (Heinz, mss).

The !xõ

The !xõ live in a poorer environment than either the !Kung or the Central Kalahari Bushmen. They are the inhabitants of the west-central Kalahari, west of the Reserve and south of Ghanzi ridge and are scattered throughout vast areas of this region. The population is exceptionally sparse, and the !xõ number only about 3000. H.J. Heinz (1966; 1972; 1979) has described them as being highly 'territorial', and in contrast particularly to the !Kung, as having clearly-defined band cluster territories, with strips of 'no-man's-land' between them. These strips separate each band cluster from its neighbouring ones and prevent incursions into alien hunting grounds.
According to Heinz's accounts, all three levels of !xõ social organization -- the family, the band, and the band cluster ('nexus') -- would seem to be territorially-based. Although by right all band territory may be used by any family of the band, in practice each family exploits its own area within the band territory. Similarly, although each band collectively owns the resources of its territory, with permission members of different bands of the same band cluster may hunt within each other's band territories.

Since the 1960s, there have been attempts to establish settlements for permanent residence of !xõ near the Lobatse to Ghanzi road. The first was at Bere, a traditional !xõ band area established as a permanent camp by Heinz himself, in an attempt to teach the !xõ to herd individually-owned goats and cattle and learn skills that might be of use in the wider society (Heinz, 1973). In the late 1970s another settlement was established at Kagcaie (Kag/ae), where two German volunteers were sent to set up a school. As a supplement to a small handicraft industry which the !xõ were already were already engaged in, the teachers introduced bee-keeping for the purpose of producing honey for consumption and for sale. These experiments had many failings, but the tiny schools which were set up have been ever-popular with the !xõ children, and in fact, the difficulties of and maintaining Kagcaie as an exclusive Bushman settlement (thereby discriminating against local Kgalaqari children who wanted to attend school there) have been described in a recent popular book by van der Post and Taylor (1985: 106-07). The medium of instruction in these schools is Tswana and subjects taught include reading, writing, arithmetic and English, among other subjects. By all accounts, the !xõ have adapted more readily to schooling than to livestock-rearing, although the reasons for this are not entirely clear.
Plant cultivation and livestock rearing: Prospects for the future?

As one Ḫu/'hɔasi man told Richard Lee (1979: v): 'Why should we plant, when there are so many mongongos in the world?' Bushmen are not cultivators by inclination; their lands are rich in wild plant foods but, without irrigation, are poor for cultivation. Bushmen in fact frequently make a distinction between foods which have been introduced from outside their society, such as maize and sorghum, and foods which are traditionally the product of foraging in the desert. Their perception is that only the former are properly suitable for cultivation.

In spite of failures at Bere and elsewhere, livestock rearing will probably be a more successful pursuit. Bushmen have long herded other people's cattle, and within the last two decades have had success in animal husbandry in both Namibia and Botswana. The difficulty in Namibia at the present time is the rejection of livestock rearing by the government as being illegal in land set aside as a 'game reserve', a reserve in which Bushmen are allowed to hunt and gather by traditional means, but not to raise cattle. The difficulty in Botswana is a lack of money to establish a viable herd size, and further, a lack of resources such as boreholes available to Bushmen for this purpose. It is unlikely that many Bushmen will be able to acquire cattle and support them in the near future, but goat herding for subsistence, which requires much less capital than cattle herding and is less intensive in labour, may prove more successful. Already, many Bushmen in central and northwestern Botswana are successfully herding their own goats.

Ironically, far from marking the end of Bushman culture, the adaptation to new forms of economic activity could help some groups of Bushmen to compete against the pressures placed on them by drought, population expansion and the encroachment of other groups. It is difficult to escape the reality that Bushmen will not always be pure hunter-gatherers. The survival of their cultures has, for thousands of years, depended on their ability to adapt, and the current trends
towards livestock rearing are perhaps best seen in this light (cf. Wily, 1982; Guenther, 1986). The tragedy is that the current pressures on Bushman groups are much more serious than ever before, and these groups may need our help, as never before, in order to overcome such pressures.

Education and access to political power

In Botswana, the government is trying to set up schools for Bushmen. Official policy is not to offer separate schooling, but to give Bushmen the same opportunities afforded to other people in the country. In practice though, isolation tends to mean that Bushmen do have either separate schools or, much more commonly, no schools at all. Even settled groups have great difficulty when settlements are as small as thirty or forty people, far too few to sustain a school for their children, and school fees and clothing are beyond the means of most Bushman families (Lee, 1984: 141-42). There are also problems in finding qualified teachers willing to give up town life and move to what in Botswana is regarded as a very poor situation. Whereas European expatriates often find the Kalahari a romantic and idyllic place to live, sophisticated people from southern Botswana seem to regard even the town of Ghanzi as the end of the earth. There are also language problems: instruction in Botswana schools is in Tswana and English, with primary school being taught entirely in Tswana in most areas. Yet many Bushmen do speak good Tswana, even in the most remote areas, so the problem is not overwhelming. It does mean, however, that Bushman children do not have the opportunity for education in their native language, which puts them at a disadvantage in comparison with other children whose native language is Tswana. It could also mean that unless teachers and local education authorities are careful, the distinct identity and customs of Bushman groups will be under threat, particularly if in order to send their children to school, Bushman parents have to move to the permanent settlements where schools are located.
In Namibia, the situation is more critical. There is a school at Tsumkwe, established originally as part of a mission station but purchased by the government in 1967 (Marshall and Ritchie, 1984: 98). Although the school itself has been successful, the deteriorating condition of the inhabitants of the surrounding settlement is symptomatic of the plight of Bushmen overtaken by externally-determined economic and social change. Tsumkwe is proof that money alone is of no benefit to a population deprived of land, economic self-determination (whether to hunt and gather, to herd, or to work for wages), and political control over their community. The tragedy of Tsumkwe is that change has come so quickly and in a form which has left the people with so little opportunity to control their own future.

Yet it would be premature, and indeed invidious, to suggest that Bushman culture is at an end. Alien influences have long left their mark in the ethnographic record (Wilmsen, 1982; 1986; Gordon, 1984). The Eastern Khoe Bushmen, greatly influenced by the Tswana among whom they live, have been the subject of recent studies of acculturation and ethnic relations (e.g., Hitchcock, 1978). Similarly, the Nharo, who share their lands with white ranchers, have been described within a framework emphasizing ethnicity and pluralism (Guenther, 1979). Between the years 1973 to 1977, at least 201 reports on 'RADS' (Remote Area Dwellers, a government euphemism comprising mainly Bushmen) were submitted to the Ministry of Local Government and Lands of Botswana (MLGL, 1978: 146-157); most of them deal with the assessment of existing development projects and plans for future ones. Although these studies are valuable in their own right, unfortunately the best-intentioned authors sometimes give the impression that Bushmen today are not only economically dependent, but lacking in traditions and values of their own. The wealth of scholarly literature written in the last twenty years bears witness to the fact that Bushman cultures are still viable, in spite of the critical condition of Bushman community life at Tsumkwe and elsewhere. Bushmen can and must be allowed to pursue their traditions, while at the same time taking their place as free people in a changing southern Africa.
NOTES

1 My own research among the Bushmen, in 1974–75, 1979 and 1982, was sponsored by the Swan Fund of the Pitt Rivers Museum, the University of Edinburgh, and the National Science Foundation (BNS-8023941). I gratefully acknowledge their support, together with that of the Office of the President of Botswana, who granted permission for me to conduct fieldwork with the Nharo and other groups. I would also like to thank my colleague Chris Allen for his helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

2 Many anthropologists writing in English prefer the term 'San', supposedly because 'Bushmen' may be seen as derogatory. In fact though, as was pointed out over a century ago (Hahn, 1881: 3), the Nama word san means not only 'hunter-gatherers', but by implication also 'vagabonds', 'rascals', etc. Any term which collectively refers to lower status individuals can acquire unfortunate connotations, but certainly none is intended by my preference for the term 'Bushmen'.

3 Clicks are consonants produced by what has been described technically as 'an ingressive velaric airstream mechanism' (Ladefoged, 1975: 119). There are five clicks, written as follows: (bilabial), / (dental or alveolar fricative), # (alveolar stop), // (lateral fricative), ! (palatal stop). The bilabial click is found only in !x6, Eastern ‡Ho6 and other 'Southern Bushman' languages. Each of the clicks may be released in combination with a variety of other consonants, a feature which makes Bushman languages among the most phonologically complex in the world (see, e.g., Snyman, 1970: Traill, 1985). In the spellings of Bushman words and ethnic group names, a 'g' before the click symbol indicates voicing and an 'n' indicates voicing and nasalization. Non-click orthography is pronounced more-or-less as in French or Italian, except that 'x' represents a voiceless velar fricative and 'a' a glottal stop. Nasalized vowels are indicated with a tilde (e.g., !x6).

4 ‡Ho6 is a word meaning 'person' both in Eastern ‡Ho6 and in !x6 (Western ‡Ho6), two languages which have little else in common. It was only in the early 1970s that linguists came to realise that Eastern ‡Ho is not a dialect of !x6 (Traill, 1973).

5 Many Bushman groups are known by more than one name and such names
are frequently spelled in several ways; in general, there are no official spellings. The ethnic group names used in this article are those preferred by the Bushmen themselves, and the spellings are those which are most commonly used in recent scientific literature. Place names, however, are given according to official orthography, with alternative spellings (notably those employed by anthropologists to represent Bushman pronounciations) in parentheses.


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Carte 1: Domaines des Bushmen
Carte 2: Botswana