Articulations of inferiority: From pre-colonial to post-colonial paternalism in tourism and development among the indigenous Bushmen of Southern Africa

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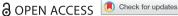
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ABSTRACT

In southern Africa, the indigenous Bushmen (San) have for long been positioned as an inferior group. First, in pre-colonial paternalist relationships that included slavery and several types of serfdom. Next, they had an inferior position under colonial paternalism ('*baasskap*') originating at white settler farms and last, they experience inferiority again in relation to the contemporary, mostly black, elites, including state officials. This paper addresses this historical pattern: through ethnographic results and examples from the literature it relates this process to contemporary post-colonial paternalist relations of various groups of Bushmen, particularly in tourism and development programmes. I argue that, despite dominant discourses about bottom-up approaches by the tourism industry, NGOs and the state, tourism and development also provide for a continuation of paternalist relations, in which articulations of inferiority come from 'above' and 'below', thereby often perpetuating Bushmen's inferiority. Moreover, I suggest that this perpetuation is not confined to tourism and development only; an important discourse that underscores inferiority to a degree is the hegemonic global articulation of 'indigeneity', which subtly emphasises indigenous peoples' inferiority.

KEYWORDS
Paternalism; Bushmen; inferiority; development; indigenous people

Introduction

In a recent edition of the national newspaper *The Namibian*, indigenous Bushmen (San)[1] living at resettlement farms in Namibia call out not to be classified anymore as 'marginalised', which they consider discriminatory. They believe it leads to a perpetuation of poverty, further humiliation and segregation (Xoagub 2019). A chief, Frederick Langman of the ≠Kao //Aesa Traditional Authority, explained that '[t]o be called marginalised is equal to killing the San community, and making us suffer even more' (cited in Xoagub 2019). Langman explained that the government's resettlement programme is

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similar 'to the apartheid practice that was characterised by the 'my *baas*' syndrome' (cited in Xoagub 2019). Subsequently, a community activist confirmed that 'the San communities were still being subjected to the worst kinds of discrimination and oppression by their fellow countrymen, similar to what they endured during pre-independence Namibia' (cited in Xoagub 2019). These remarks reflect a much broader feeling among many Bushmen groups, based on a long history of inferiority in a variety of paternalist relations. In case of the Bushmen it seems as if 'the intense stigmatization of the San from the earliest days of their contact with others has been internalized' (Armstrong and Bennett 2002, 197), which makes it important to look at these relations and how these have developed from these 'earliest days', to be able to understand why the Bushmen's contemporary situation is often still so desperate. Recently, for instance, a young and educated Hai//om man explained to me that he felt as if apartheid had never truly left the country, and that Bushmen are still inferior today in relation to other black groups and the post-colonial, mostly black, government (11 November 2019, personal communications). Thus, feelings of discrimination and oppression amongst the Bushmen are not new. Their status as marginalized, inferior or undeveloped is experienced just like indigenous people do globally in relation to various other groups, and this is an important element of their current identity (cf. Dieckmann 2020).

My aim in this paper is to analyse how contemporary paternalism has developed historically to better understand the perpetuation of the inferior position of Bushmen, and indigenous people more generally. Although today, tourism is often presented as a panacea for indigenous people 'to develop' (Butler and Hinch 2007; Carr, Ruhanen, and Whitford 2016; Garland and Gordon 1999; Jørgensen 2011), and paternalism is acknowledged in various social settings (Du Toit 1993; Gibbon, Daviron, and Barral 2014; Sylvain 2001; Van Onselen 1992), the concept is hardly taken into account in contemporary tourism and development projects. In fact, donors, NGOs, consultants, governments and the private tourism sector hardly address paternalism, as if it only existed in 'earlier times in an Afrikaner nationalist ethnic apartheid economy when this form of boss-labour behaviour did indeed occur' (Tomaselli 2017, 1189). However, as I show in this paper, paternalism still thrives today, in tourism, development and beyond. Historically, Bushmen have been involved in paternalist relationships already before colonialism, and under colonialism southern African paternalism got a unique character ('*baasskap*', see below). In recent history and in contemporary processes of development based upon tourism, Bushmen often continue to be involved in similar relations, with the tourism private sector, development fieldworkers, and the nation state. I argue that, despite dominant discourses about bottom-up approaches by all these parties, tourism and development also provide for a continuation of paternalist relations, in which articulations of inferiority come from 'above' and 'below', thereby often perpetuating this inferiority. This is underscored up to a degree in the global discourse for indigenous rights, where inferiority is re-emphasized through three out of four core characteristics of indigeneity (namely 'first come', 'cultural difference' and particularly 'non-dominance') (Barume 2014; Welch 2018; Saugestad 2001).

In the remainder of this introduction I conceptualize the core concept of paternalism, which is followed by an elaboration on the methodology. Next, I move on to provide historical context about the development of Bushmen's pre-colonial and colonial paternalist relations. After this, I further build up my argument by providing recent and contemporary empirical results from the period 1999–2019 and examples from the literature, about

Bushmen and their relation with the private tourism sector, with expatriate development workers and with the 'new' elite, including the nation state. Next, in the discussion, I position the results of the paper in a broader context, showing that Bushmen paternalism goes far beyond tourism and development and that the global discourse on indigenous rights very subtly emphasizes the idea of indigenous people as inferior. And last, in the conclusion, I iterate the argument that, despite dominant development discourses about bottom-up approaches, such initiatives also provide for a perpetuation of paternalism.

Conceptualizing paternalism

Paternalism is the overarching term here, and is defined as 'thinking or behaviour by people in authority that results in them making decisions for other people that, although they may be to those people's advantage, prevent them from taking responsibility for their own lives' (Cambridge Dictionary 2020), thereby covering a variety of social relations in which a superior-inferior relation is centralized. It can come in many forms and with subtle differences. Central elements that come back are that it contains a relationship, often based on the narrative of the family as a method to govern and to manage labour throughout colonial history (Gibbon, Daviron, and Barral 2014). However, already in pre-colonial Africa, various paternalist relations have been widespread for long, in which unequal partners show a dependency on each other (Van Beek 2011). The person in authority presents himself as the one who knows best how to govern his 'subjects', who are seen as in need of development, through a governance that includes protection, welfare, care, edification, disciplining, punishing and sometimes practices of coercion. In return for labour, several benefits are provided to the workers, including benevolent care-taking, basic education, transport, a place to live and medical assistance. In contrast to the superior 'governors', the 'subjects' are regarded as inferior: they are seen as incapable and too immature to make their own decisions (Gibbon, Daviron, and Barral 2014; Sylvain 2001).

Methodology

This paper is based on my longitudinal engagement with various Bushmen groups in southern Africa between 1999 and 2019. I have conducted ethnographic fieldwork amongst the ≠Khomani in the Northern Cape (South Africa), the Ju/'hoansi of the Nyae Nyae Conservancy (Namibia), the Hai//om and !Xun in northern Namibia, and the Khwe in Bwabwata National Park (Namibia). Moreover, over the years I conducted 201 semi-structured interviews in addition to a large variety of informal conversations and observations. The interviews have broadly focused on highly connected topics, most importantly resettlement, development, agriculture, changing livelihoods, nature conservation, tourism and land reform.

Importantly, I have also worked as a development fieldworker at the Tsintsabis resettlement farm in northern Namibia between 2002 and 2007, not doing research but supporting the community-based tourism project Treesleeper Camp (Koot 2012). During these years I familiarized myself with and developed initial ideas about socio-economic structures, power relations, cultural practices (all related to paternalism) and I learned

to speak Afrikaans to be able to communicate with the elderly inhabitants (Koot 2016). Moreover, during my periods of absence I maintained connections with various Bushmen via email and social media, and with a variety of 'outsiders' (e.g. student researchers, NGO representatives, donors, tourism operators, volunteers and government officials), leading to what O'Reilly (2012) calls longitudinal 'ethnographic returning', in which ethnographers return to their field site over time and keep a close connection, also during periods of physical absence.

Pre-colonial and colonial paternalism

Pre-colonial relations

Early research about the Bushmen cannot be seen apart from the 'Kalahari Debate', in which 'traditionalists' have been accused by 'revisionists' in presenting the Bushmen, more specifically the !Kung (today the Ju/'hoansi) of the Dobe area in Botswana, as isolated and 'antique'. This started with 'traditionalist' research in the mid-1960s, which was criticized by 'revisionists' since the late 1970s. The main point of critique was that, by presenting Bushmen as isolated people in the Kalahari, this left out important influences from outside stakeholders such as the state or global political and economic processes. In response, the 'traditionalists' would explain that they *had* described such relations with outsiders, but indeed de-emphasized them, considering them part of 'social change' (Barnard 1992, 2007; Hohmann 2003; Lee 1979; Saugestad 2001; White 1995; Wilmsen 1989). The debate was never fully resolved, and in 2003, Lee (a staunch traditionalist) argued that Ju/'hoansi's oral traditions emphasized 'a long history of autonomous hunting and gathering', in which 'neither blacks nor whites appeared … until the latter part of the nineteenth century' (Lee 2003, 88). However, to include Bushmen voices in their own history is difficult because '[h]istory … is concerned with success stories or with those who wield power or have the loudest voices. As a result Bushmen have been relegated to the shadowy underside of … history' (Gordon and Douglas 2000, 8). But even with this limited representation, much evidence suggests that Bushmen groups in southern Africa have engaged in paternalist relationships throughout history and already before colonialism, in which other groups have acted as 'superior' in relation to them, thus regarding the Bushmen as 'inferior'. In fact, they have often functioned as serfs or slaves in patron-client relationships with black pastoralists (Dieckmann 2007; Gordon and Douglas 2000; Koot and Hitchcock 2019; Morton 1994; Wilmsen 1989; Wilmsen and Vossen 1990).

Based on reconstructions from scientific publications, oral history and archival records, the Bushmen's history shows two major transitions. The first one started when Bantu cattle herders and farmers migrated and settled into the subcontinent in the first millennium A.D. This led to state-like political systems throughout the region, at times restricting Bushmen communities to move. However, they were also integrated into these state dynamics in different degrees, while most built up relationships through trade (of ivory, skin and copper amongst other items) and labour. Later, paternalism would show in various ways, and even enslavement of Bushmen started to occur in these pre-colonial Bantu state systems. This has been well documented in some cases, such as the Tswana kingdoms since the late nineteenth century (Barnard 1992; Gordon and Douglas 2000;

Hohmann 2003; Morton 1994; Russell 1976; Wolf 1982), the enslavement or patron-client relationship between the Khwe and the Mbukushu in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century (Boden 2003) or the Hai//om trading and labour relations in northern Namibia with Owambo people amongst others (Dieckmann 2007; Widlok 1999, 2003; Gordon and Douglas 2000; Koot and Hitchcock 2019). Bushmen clients would herd live-stock, do domestic work, work the fields, hunt for their masters or transport trade items, including ivory, skins, guns and horses (Boden 2011, 2012; Morton 1994; Wilmsen and Vossen 1990). Often these relationships would employ much violence and dehumanization, including brutal killings (Morton 1994). There has thus been a long history of influence by southern African pre-colonial states (e.g. Tawana, Ondangwa, Tswana Kingdoms) on the socio-economic organization of the Bushmen, and these have affected Bushmen until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but anthropologi-cal, archaeological and historical research about this has so far been limited (Hohmann 2003; Wilmsen 1989). Such relationships, in some cases,

> imposed a straightforward form of native colonialism upon the indigenous peoples of the region by expropriating the productive capacity of their land as well as their labor and by pur-suing a policy of relative underdevelopment of facilities for the subordinate majority. (Wilmsen 1989, 284)

The second major transition took place when the Bushmen encountered the first Eur-opeans after Dutch settlers founded the Cape of Good Hope in 1652. Although historical records about the earliest encounters are limited, it is known that some Bushmen were incorporated into the colonial economy as workers and/or slaves (Hohmann 2003). In fact, new white settlers developed relationships with the Bushmen that in practice often resembled those of the Bantu groups in southern Africa (Russell 1976). Moreover, due to new industrial activities such as mining, Bushmen would often take care of Bantu cattle when their Bantu masters would temporarily migrate to work in the mines (Wilmsen and Vossen 1990), and at least since the 1850s their children would sometimes be sold to white traders (Morton 1994). In the rural areas, it was not necessarily land but labour that was a scarce resource, which left white settlers to live together with Bushmen on the same land, sharing its resources sometimes until long into colonialism. However, under colonialism and after Namibian independence (1990) and the abolishment of apart-heid in South Africa (1994), land division had become the dominant political strategy (Widlok 2003). In the next section I elaborate on the Bushmen paternalist relationships that developed on white settler farms.

'Baasskap' at Southern African white farms

During the rise of global colonialism, whites were socially positioned as naturally superior to indigenous groups. This assumption dates back to the start of European colonization in Africa and globally from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. The superior status and abilities of Europeans made 'the indigenous people of Africa … at best second-class citi-zens' (Plotkin 2002, 5). Historically, black Africans have often been presented as (silly) chil-dren who were born with a variety of defects for which colonization could now be a way to support, raise and edifice so that the 'silliness' could be morally cured. Colonial masters were often not presented as greedy, but as custodians and protectors; due to black's assumed inferiority, they were naturally considered fit for slavery and it was assumed

that they could only become happy in the service of a good master (Mbembe 2017). In the rural areas of South Africa, this ideology led to a type of paternalism called *baasskap* (boss-ship), which strongly affected all aspects of social and cultural life, and where it developed hand-in-hand with apartheid (Plotkin 2002). *Baasskap* would spread far beyond South Africa to rural areas at white settler farms over southern Africa (see Dieckmann 2007; Guenther 1996; Suzman 2000; Sylvain 2001). These relationships included much more than only a labour relation based on employment and wages; it was also a social system in which the white boss could ultimately judge and make decisions about his workers' broader life (Du Toit 1993). Moreover, southern African paternalism is patriarchal in nature, based on male authority, and it is important that the boss is of considerable age, as a 'father' who is old enough to command the respect of his 'children' (Van Onselen 1992). In 'the family', Bushmen farmworkers would become the 'children' of the white, male 'fathers', the 'organic' bosses centrally positioned in power, making decisions and controlling all the resources (Du Toit 1993; Sylvain 2001). Suzman (2000) explained that Namibian farmers still consider Bushmen farm labourers a 'child race': they could not handle the responsibility of employment or money, would drink unreliably and thus needed disciplining. In contrast, Bushmen were much more worried about job insecurity, low wages and working under bad circumstances, regarding their relationship with the farmer as a class struggle (Sylvain 2005; cf. Sylvain 2001).

Of course, farm workers could negotiate within these relationships, but the ultimate power was in the hands of the farmer who was the main service provider and who controlled most of the resources, including transport, water, electricity and land. This resulted in a situation in which the farmer could operate as if he was a local state, but with little state intervention and without any constitution, as semi-autonomous political communities or a 'domestic government' (Rutherford 2008, 76; see also Du Toit 1994; Sylvain 2001). Until today, it seems as if these historical, economic, cultural and social circumstances have led to 'a self-replicating cycle of poverty' (Suzman 2020, 54), since most farm workers still live in marginalized and inferior socio-economic positions.

As labourers, Bushmen have thus continually been reconstructed as undeveloped, which makes them very 'suitable' for 'development' (see also Baptista 2017; Jørgensen 2011; Garland 1999) in line with their different patrons' values. Their underdevelopment forms the basis for further economic development, for instance through tourism (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2016). With the transmogrification of capitalism into a neoliberal form, in southern Africa taking place especially since the early 1990s, and the 'unique selling point' of the Bushmen as primordial hunter-gatherers (Koot 2018), the focus of 'development' has increasingly turned on tourism, which has in fact been critiqued as a development mechanism that perpetuates socio-economic inequalities to the furthest regions in the world (such as the remote places where most Bushmen live) (Duffy 2006; Fletcher 2011). Tourism and development are thus important processes through which Bushmen have been encapsulated rapidly within the global political economy, with market forces penetrating into their small-scale economies (Lee 2005). In fact, still today it seems as if '[e]thnicity … functions … in a constellation of markers identifying the fundamental class status of individuals' (Wilmsen and Vossen 1990, 7), as the following results and examples show.

Development, tourism and post-colonial paternalism

In this section, I provide empirical examples from my own fieldwork and my experiences as a practitioner, together with some examples from literature, from post-colonial (and post-apartheid) Namibia and South Africa. The reason why I combine results with examples from the literature is because this provides for comparisons over Namibia and South Africa and because it also allows to show post-colonial examples from before 1999, which is the year I first conducted fieldwork myself. I do this in three parts: first, I describe paternalism when the (mainly white) private tourism sector 'does development', second, I describe paternalism in situations where (mainly white) development workers 'do tourism', and third, I show paternalism between the 'new', mostly black, elite and Bushmen in tourism development projects.

The private tourism sector

There are various examples of Bushmen's collaborations with private sector actors already from the 1990s. For instance, in the mid-1990s the Namibian high end Intu Afrika Lodge was marketed as an important place for the development and empowerment of the Bushmen working there. However, Bushmen workers would explain that their working conditions were similar to those on a commercial farm, in which the lodge owners withheld wages, imposed unilateral salary deductions and contact between the Bushmen role-players and other community members was prohibited. At Intu Afrika, the owners had in fact lured away an anthropologist couple working as consultants at the South African Kagga Kamma Game Reserve (situated about 200 kilometres from Cape Town), due to its earlier successful engagement in Bushmen tourism (Garland and Gordon 1999; Guenther 2002; Sylvain 2002). In the early 1990s, Kagga Kamma became famous because a group of Bushmen was 'discovered' there, acting 'traditional' for tourists. The owners had a strong belief that these Bushmen should truly live their traditional way of life instead of engaging with consumer goods or money. And because payment from tourist visits and curio sales were very low, they were still dependent on the farmer, building up substantial debts for food purchases from the farm store. They were then offered strenuous manual low wage labour, which they took reluctantly to pay off their debts (Garland and Gordon 1999; White 1995). According to Guenther (2002, 59)

> [a]n identity of the kind presented at Kagga Kamma or Intu Afrika, as living curios, devoid of a history and disengaged from the world of power politics, without land and under the patronage of a White entrepreneur will not do.

In these days, private operators had often made the (part) change from farming to tourism, and therefore, according to Tomaselli (2012, 26), '[t]he Kagga Kamma owners were former sheep farmers, now businesspeople, not social or development workers; they could not … have been expected to understand the finer points of … ethics of tourism or development theory'. However, this raises the important question if this can still be accepted in the years after, when private tourism operators increasingly position themselves publicly (mostly through marketing) as responsible developing institutes.

One such example is the !Xaus Lodge in the South African Northern Cape Province, which forms a 'joint venture' between Mier (non-Bushmen) and ≠Khomani Bushmen groups on the one hand and the commercial operator Transfrontier Parks Destinations

(TFPD) on the other. Some of the ≠Khomani who are involved in this project have come from Kagga Kamma after a land claim (Ellis 2010; Koot and Büscher 2019; Robins 2000, 2001). As part of their development strategy, TFPD aims to train staff and create employment, but exactly which skills are needed for this was decided by management instead of using participatory methods (Grant 2011), in which the focus has predominantly been on tourism and business skills. Moreover, they 'maintain full financial control of development and operational funds' and they 'identify and support local social development projects' (TFPD 2019), revealing how the 'bosses' are in control of the project and decide what is best for local development, as edification. However, many ≠Khomani complained about the manager's paternalistic behaviour in 2010, including swearing, racism and a general attitude of 'bossiness'. Some (ex-)employees explained that they simply had no other possibilities for work and others said they were scared to speak out to the manager. Young and educated ≠Khomani, who would be the most logical to grow into higher ranked positions over time, decided not to work there because of 'the boss attitude and the power, all have to listen to him and that's it' (interview 8 July 2010).

At another tourist lodge in the Northern Cape called Molopo, situated at the farms where the ≠Khomani now live, the white owner explained that ≠Khomani simply live at a much lower level when compared to 'us', and in his opinion it is important that for their development they have to

> listen, and to listen, and to listen … To get to their level you must drop big time. You know we are living here [raises hands], they are living there [lowers hands]! … Otherwise they don't understand you, they don't think like you, they don't understand you … But they need a custodian that can drive them or lead them in the right way. (interview 30 June 2010).

Clearly, this owner feels far superior in comparison to the ≠Khomani. Most of the ≠Khomani, however, look at both tourist lodges (!Xaus and Molopo) as spaces for the continuation of paternalism, specifically *baasskap*, despite the well-intentioned support for the development of the ≠Khomani. As an elderly ≠Khomani leader explained, they are not 'in control, you are just under the boss, as in the old days … All these people who are educated in various projects, mostly tourism, they cannot reach that level of self-sufficiency. Forever he will stay a boy' (interview 14 July 2010).

In another example, at a farm in northern Namibia, the Ombili Foundation regularly receives tourists. The (white) manager explained 'that Bushmen do not have a thinking of the future and … lack the responsibility for their own lives' (cited in Hüncke 2010, 85). In this vein, when I discussed my experiences of revisiting the Treesleeper Camp project in Tsintsabis, northern Namibia, and how this community-based project had been run down (see below) with a white shop owner from the area, he immediately said that 'it all depends on who manages them, if they have a good manager, it will work, otherwise it will fail' (personal communication, 11 November 2019). In contrast, at a meeting in 2015 in Tsintsabis, a young and educated Hai//om man explained very straightforward that Bushmen would only be empowered once the older generation of farmworkers had died out, because the elders would only wait for whites to help them. And in Tsumkwe, the administrative centre of the Nyae Nyae Conservancy, northeast Namibia, two tour guides explained to me that they do not wish to work under a boss any more (which they have both done at tourist lodges), and that they now wish to be independent so that they can make their own decisions instead of always following the

rules and ideas of a boss (personal communication, 9 November 2019). Of course, these different case situations all have their own specific characteristics, but similarities with colonial *baasskap* are inevitable, as are attempts to resist it.

White expatriates

Paternalism between Bushmen and other groups in tourism and development is not limited to the private tourism sector now 'doing development'. In the Nyae Nyae Conservancy, for instance, shortly after Namibian independence, the active NGO in the area received millions of dollars for the development of Bushmen, likely due to the famous movies made in this area by John Marshall since the 1950s. Whereas initially development was focused on agriculture and cattle projects, and run by a variety of idealistic expatriates, the focus changed in the early 1990s onto community-based conservation (Van Rooyen 1995), with an important role for tourism. Against this background, Elizabeth Garland went to do a consultancy on tourism in 1994. The NGO (consisting of white expatriates in these days) considered the Ju/'hoansi not ready for modernity, based on Western perceptions of them as hunter-gatherers. They favoured a representative democracy (Western model) as the legitimate model of labour and for political organization (Garland 1999; cf. Biesele and Hitchcock 2011). Expatriate staff explained to Garland that individual entrepreneurs had to be prevented from starting their own undertakings if not working through the CBO (funded by the NGO) and the already existing tourism endeavours had to be incorporated in this centralized body to be able to control these projects and to distribute benefits equally to everybody in Nyae Nyae. Not seriously having any interest in tourism, many Ju/'hoansi felt no control over access to vehicles and revenue from these projects, while white expatriates would paternalistically mention the Ju/'hoansi's irresponsibility (Garland 1999). Until today, despite the fact that the NGO has no official decision-making power over the people, Ju/'hoansi complaints about the NGO's dominance continue, but the role of the expatriates has now mostly been taken over by (black) Namibians (Koot and van Beek 2017; Van der Burg 2013).

About 300 kilometres to the West, at the already mentioned community-based tourism project Treesleeper in Tsintsabis, I myself played a crucial role as a white, male patron. For example, in 1999, as a MSc student (anthropology), I influenced the local development committee's wish to start a tourist lodge into a plan to start a community campsite because I deemed this more suitable (Koot 2016). This would later, between 2002 and 2007, become Treesleeper Camp (Koot 2012), in which I would, together with another expatriate colleague, become the local authority for Treesleeper, based on my education and contacts with donors and NGOs. It seemed as if we were initially locally regarded similar as white Namibians:

> They [parents and grandparents] were afraid that the white people were going to claim their land, like white people did during colonisation and the apartheid regime … After several meetings with Stasja … they started to understand that the camp site was meant to help develop them. (Troost 2007, 66)

It turned out that many elders associated our presence with apartheid, colonialism and land theft. An ex-employee would explain about me in 2006, about half a year before I

was to leave the project, that this is not 'a community project, but it is Stasja's … He takes most of the decisions and he can lay his opinion on the members of the [local] trust and the personnel of Treesleeper' (Troost 2007, 58). And during the years of starting Treesleeper, it became very common for local Hai//om and !Xun to approach me for support for their personal projects through my relations with donors and/or to help them manage these projects. The belief in 'white superiority', but also in their own inferiority, thus also seemed to come 'from below' (see also Sylvain 2001); in fact, some people would literally explain to me that they could never start their own project without the support of a white man, and many elders told me that 'the old days' (meaning pre-independence, colonial times) were in fact much better and stable: they had a job, food, basic health care and felt secure. And on 11 November 2019, an employee told me that 'we need people with blonde hair again to uplift the project', while others also asked me a variety of supporting requests (see also Castelijns 2019).

This raises important ethical questions about certain types of development: in addition to well-meant initiatives, and undoubtedly often good results, development can also provide for the perpetuation of colonial structures, thereby iterating problematic racial and socio-economic inequalities. This can be seen as the opposite of empowerment, and thus an important contradiction that needs to be taken into account when 'doing' development more generally.

The 'new' elite

In addition to colonially-shaped white-Bushmen relationships, black-Bushmen paternalism seems on the way back since independence, but now imbued with elements of *baasskap*. For example, a black farmer from around Tsintsabis explained that 'Bushmen … are my kids … I bring them up' (interview 15 May, 1999). And in 2006, another black farmer came to visit Treesleeper and asked me if I could send some of 'my boys' to his farm, to build a campsite for him too. Furthermore, a young Hai//om man explained that many of the elderly Bushmen in Tsintsabis today believe that the Owambo ethnic group now knows how to take care of themselves and that it would be good to mimic their behaviour and livelihood strategies (personal communication, 11 November 2019), while the Owambo often consider the Bushmen as 'less capable' (Castelijns 2019, 9–10). Many ethnically different in-migrants in Tsintsabis take over large tracts of land and have started so-called *shebeens*, outlets selling cheap alcohol, which has increased alcohol-related problems at the farm: some addicted Hai//om today go to fetch water for the *shebeen* owners in return for alcohol, creating a situation in which '[s]ome Hai//om feel like they are slaves to the in-migrants' and 'people say they still feel colonised, or like slaves' (Castelijns 2019, 25–6). Similarly, further to the East in the N≠a Jaqna Conservancy, a Bushman elder explained that 'if you allow a non-San person to come and settle in the village with you then after two or three months it seems that he is the boss' (quoted in Welch 2018, 221–2), showing the broader regional character of this phenomenon that in many ways resembles pre-colonial and colonial paternalism.

Such paternalism is also visible in the relation with the state. Around 2011, when the Treesleeper manager had achieved a large grant from the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) to upgrade the project, this would instead lead to a decline in tourist numbers until today, because the new buildings were only completed half, making the

place look unattractive for tourists. An important reason for this is that the MET kept control over the process and finances, while the Ministry of Works and Transport (MWT) would have the mandate over the construction process and thus appoint the technical experts. There was hardly any consultation with the local Hai//om and !Xun and despite requests by the Hai//om and !Xun to raise their own funds to finalize the buildings, they have been told by the MET that the buildings are government property (until handed over to Treesleeper) and it is important to wait for an assessment by the MWT, as explained by an MET official the Hai//om and !Xun now 'will just have to follow our channels, we [government] will have to guide the process' (interview 21 April 2016; cited in Koot, Ingram, and Bijsterbosch 2019). This shows the current government's attempts to control the people of Tsintsabis, regarding themselves as superior in relation to them. As a result, community benefits have not been generated anymore (e.g. donations, jobs) and tensions and allegations have worsened between various community members. MET, after its own big role in depreciating the project (according to many for a large part based on nepotism), kept holding on to a paternalistic stance to the Bushmen. Today, MET blames the situation on a national 'difficult economic down turn', and therefore 'a decision was taken that alternative funding such as joint venture partnership be sourced' (letter MET to Treesleeper Camp, 16 October 2019). Altogether, it has taken the MET approximately 6,5 years to make this decision and send the letter. By suggesting a joint venture to mask its own negligence in this matter, the MET now deems an outside operator necessary to further develop the project. However, this automatically positions the Bushmen again as if they are in need of development from outsiders, and thus as inferior, while before the MET grant the project thrived, also in the years when run without outsiders.

Discussion

For over 200 years, power relations and social identities in rural southern Africa have been highly affected by paternalist discourses that have constantly been adapted to changing circumstances in society (Du Toit 1994; Rutherford 2008). These historical social constructions perpetuate in post-colonialism (Du Toit 2004): *baasskap*, for instance, according to Plotkin (2002, 5, italics added) 'was, and *remains* in many parts of the world, a social construction', as we saw in contemporary development and tourism projects. In fact, *baasskap* played an important role in depriving non-whites any rudimentary education or jobs except for the menial positions, leaving many ill-equipped for modernization, and thus again appearing inferior due to incompetency and poverty. This image, of incompetency and poverty, can in turn reinforce the belief in white superiority and thus in apartheid structures and related paternalism (Plotkin 2002). Historically, relationships between various groups have arisen from violence, war and subjugation and later power structures have continued through a further classification based on an ideology of racial hierarchies. Such differentiation has been most radical in southern Africa during a long period starting in the eighteenth century and culminating in the twentieth century into apartheid (Mbembe 2017). And Bushmen have generally been considered the 'lowest' in this hierarchy (Gordon 1997), already since before colonialism.

The indigenous Bushmen of southern Africa have thus experienced paternalism with a variety of superior 'governors' for centuries, the character of which differs with changing

actors. Whereas private sector actors can show behaviour that at times still resembles colonial *baasskap* structures, in which mutual labour dependency and white supremacy still play an important role, contemporary government officials have shown a much more distanced relationship. This might be because the latter do not have an interest in developing the Bushmen: in some cases that could even affect some of their personal interests. Another group that does not have a direct interest are (expatriate) development workers, but they start off based on idealism. Most important however are, arguably, the striking similarities between these different actors: whether we talk about the private sector, the government or development workers, all seem to act from a superior position in relation to the Bushmen, thereby also legitimizing their own role in the development of these 'inferior' people. This does not deny any of their good intentions, but it is an important dynamic to acknowledge because as shown in this paper, such different types of paternalism can perpetuate (the belief in) unequal relationships, since many Bushmen (especially the elderly) also articulate their own inferiority in such relations.

The contemporary continuation of paternalism can then become a serious barrier to development and empowerment; top-down strategies and decisions thrive, implemented by a range of actors, despite much rhetoric about 'participation', 'community-based' and 'bottom up' (cf. Hohmann 2003). The empirical findings presented in this paper, supported by historical and anthropological literature, show the opposite: external parties show new forms of governing the Bushmen through modern development programmes. Development interventions create a situation in which the dominant institutions (and the people representing them) process and produce legitimate (superior) knowledge, while a continuation of presenting certain people as inferior legitimizes specific development ideologies and activities. 'Development' then plays an important part in producing governable subjects (Taylor 2003) and supports the creation of a vicious circle in which historical ideas about who is inferior are continually re-emphazised from 'above' and 'below'. In fact, today it seems as if for the Bushmen 'underdevelopment has replaced dispossession and colonization as their primary problem' (Garland 1999, 79; cf. Baptista 2017). This does not mean that local Bushmen groups do not welcome these new development projects; they often do. And of course it is important to acknowledge the differences within the communities, where especially young and educated people today attempt to move away from paternalist relations, if at all possible. It is then reasonable to assume that the projects are embraced (at least partly) due to a lack of other options, by the young, elderly, educated and less (formally) educated, in turn providing for the vicious circle to continue. Moreover, in tourism development projects it is predominantly young men who receive the best positions. But clearly, there have also been changes: just like Chief Langman, quoted at the start of this paper, some youngsters showed a strong awareness of these social constructs, and acted upon it too, at times resisting them. They did so, for example, by not taking a job at a lodge where they expected to feel subjugated or by publicly pronouncing that the elders' belief in their own inferiority, and white or other black groups' superiority, withholds them from true empowerment.

Importantly, strong signs of paternalism are visible in contemporary relations with 'new' black elites and nation-states, which was most clearly shown in the case of Treesleeper Camp in Namibia. Such 'state paternalism' (cf. Koot, Ingram, and Bijsterbosch 2019), which is rather similar to what Saugestad (2001, 235) called 'paternalistic democracy' in

Botswana and Hodgson (2011, 65) called 'paternal politics' in Tanzania, should be seen within a post-colonial context, in which rapidly growing black economic and political elites show elements from both pre-colonial and colonial paternalism (cf. Dieckmann 2011; cf. Bond 2014). Again, Bushmen are regarded as incapable and inferior, which might explain why many Bushmen groups do not clearly differentiate between colonial and current state authorities; many regard their contemporary governments also as dominating authorities (Barnard 2002).

Tourism and development paternalism in broader perspective

Although the empirical material of this paper has a focus on recent and contemporary tourism and development programmes, this does not mean that these are the only fields where the Bushmen's 'inferiority' is visible. Widlok (2003, 107), for example, mentions that in an important discussion about illegal fencing with ethnic Owambo's, a group of Hai//om men was 'bilingual and therefore theoretically able to participate in the discussion but for most of the time they were not really included in the debate'. Such inferior and superior behaviour was also shown in Caprivi, northern Namibia, where a Khwe Bushman explained:

> The SFF [Special Field Force, an army unit] is also looking on us like slaves. You can beat your slave. You will not talk to a slave. You only talk to a human being. As the Boers treated the Ovambos, they are treating us now. I never saw them acting towards Mbukushu [another Bantu group] in the same way. (cited in Boden 2003, 196)

And as White (1995, 31) explained, such relations took place with a wide variety of people: since the 1930s the ≠Khomani 'have been clients of an intermittent stream of 'white' patrons. These include academics, state officials, nature conservationists, journalists, film-makers, and commercial entrepreneurs'. Paternalism is thus a flexible social construct that not only takes place in a variety of geographical spaces, it is also an important historical construct that seems to continually adapt to new circumstances, including relations with academics (cf. Koot 2016). Moreover, it is not my intention to suggest that paternalism only happened among Bushmen and does not happen between other people. As Baptista (2017) showed, for instance, paternalism in tourism development can also happen between 'non-indigenous' and Western development fieldworkers. Or Steinberg's (2008) intriguing journalistic endeavour about white–black paternalism at farms and communal lands in relation to poverty, race, land and violence in KwaZulu Natal, reveals important historically built-up tensions in contemporary South Africa. It matters, however, that indigenous Bushmen have always been 'more inferior' than most others. And of course, the Bushmen are only one amongst various groups of indigenous peoples worldwide, but other groups also show their 'inferiority' in relation to others when they engage in tourism/development (see, e.g. the Maasai in Kenya in Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2005).

The inferior indigenous and global articulations

Throughout history, indigeneity has been a contentious and complex issue (see endnote 1 for references to anthropological debates on this), especially in (southern) Africa where most governments regard all their inhabitants as indigenous (Barnard 2019; Sapignoli

and Hitchcock 2013; Welch 2018), because all black groups can claim a long historical-genealogical connection to the land (Barume 2014; Lee 2003). Therefore, several African governments consider all Africans indigenous. In southern Africa, former apartheid has made contemporary governments very wary of any policies that could be used to isolate, centralise or disadvantage particular groups (Hays and Biesele 2011), and as a result Namibia and South Africa do not officially recognize global indigenous rights (Sapignoli and Hitchcock 2013). This disregards pre-colonial 'native colonialism' in southern Africa (Welch 2018; Wilmsen and Vossen 1990).

When positioning Bushmen's contemporary status as indigenous in relation to the global indigeneity discourse, it is striking that

> [s]ome NGOs have recently produced definitions of indigenous that have deemphasized the importance of the relationship to the land or genetic makeup. Rather, they argue that the relationship to the nation-state and to colonial and postcolonial processes that have resulted in the domination of indigenous groups by non-indigenous groups are the most important to consider in identifying indigenous peoples. (Welch 2018, 49)

Such shifts, however, have been received by some African and Asian countries as controversial as long as a clear definition of 'indigeneity' lacks (Welch 2018). Despite a lack of agreement on such a universal definition, the four main characteristics of indigeneity as used by the UN and some scholars reveal a very subtle support to keep regarding indigenous people as inferior and marginalized. The first characteristic is 'genealogical ancestry' (or descent/'first come', as in 'those who were there first') (Barume 2014; Saugestad 2001; UNDRIP 2008), but this basically comes down to categorizing indigenous people as those who lived on the land when colonists arrived (Barume 2014; Ingold 2000; Koot and Büscher 2019; Sylvain 2002). Without denying the injustices that indigenous people have experienced, and that they often continue to experience, the focus on genealogical ancestry means that again the indigenous are subjugated to another group. Second, 'self-ascription' or 'self-determination' is based on the universal human right of all people to be equal in their opportunities to control their own destinies. Most indigenous groups interpret this characteristic as an important way to increase control over their own lives. This does not necessarily imply inferiority, in contrast to the third characteristic, which contains the idea that indigenous people are regarded 'culturally different' or 'culturally distinct'. This refers to different livelihoods such as hunting and gathering or pastoralism, that are by many others considered inferior. Apart from the essentialising element of emphasizing this cultural distinction, it also shows how indigeneity is a social construct based on hierarchical relations, because it raises the question: culturally different to whom? In this regard, it is interesting how this global discourse can also be found 'locally': Ninkova (2020) showed that emphasizing cultural differences is already done by teachers of a different background in Namibia (many of whom are involved in paternalistic relationships with Bushmen) among Bushmen children in school, predominantly based on superficial and essentialising cultural characteristics (as if they are still 'wild', wear skins, know the bush well, and so on), thereby often derogatory perpetuating their marginalization.

In addition to the first and third characteristics, the fourth is clearest on its emphasis on indigenous people as inferior. This characteristic contains the idea that indigenous people are regarded as 'non-dominant'; they experience exclusion, discrimination, subjugation

and dispossession, consequently leading to further marginalization. Due to their small numbers and different livelihoods, they are often dominated by political and economic elites who consider indigenous peoples as 'primitive' or 'backward' while they themselves focus on 'modern' development, settled agriculture and industrial farming (Barume 2014; Daes 1996; Saugestad 2001; UNDRIP 2008). Hegemonic signifiers of indigeneity can sell short the acknowledgement of indigeneity's continuous temporal character, as 'a process; a series of encounters; a structure of power; a set of relationships; a matter of becoming, in short, and not a fixed state of being' (De la Cadena and Starn 2007, 11). Altogether, such often subtle global articulations of indigeneity re-emphasize inferiority at least up to a degree, notwithstanding their positive and at times successful attempts to fight past and present injustices through political empowerment (Kenrick 2011). However, more research is needed to better understand the consequences, for good and ill, of such global articulations, including their effect on local and national development programmes.

Conclusion

Altogether, I argue that, despite dominant discourses about bottom-up approaches by a large variety of stakeholders, tourism and development also provide for a continuation of paternalist relations, in which articulations of inferiority come from 'above' and 'below', thereby often perpetuating this inferiority. This perpetuation is not confined to tourism and development only, and also takes place in other social settings. In fact, even in the hegemonic global discourse on 'indigeneity', in which 'descent/first come', 'cultural difference' and 'non-dominance' are important characteristics, subtly positions those labelled indigenous as inferior. Thus, indigenous articulations are continuously influenced by 'development' interventions, capitalist explorations, the colonial inheritance and modernist influences representing 'indigenous people' in contemporary fields of power with transnational advocacy networks, nation states, the UN and international NGOs (Hodgson 2011). Lee (2005) once suggested that the concept of 'indigenous peoples', despite the many drawbacks of the term, provides an important tool to create more autonomy: 'After centuries of negative stereotyping, images of denigration that still persist in pockets, being recognized as indigenous has become an avenue for entitlement, enfranchisement and empowerment' (Lee 2005, 28). Without denying that this has indeed also happened, the contradiction is that, as an important part of their 'positioning' (cf. Murray Li 2000, 151) in contemporary society, indigenous people need to articulate and show themselves as 'inferior' to be indigenous in the first place. As Suzman (2000) explained, the marginalized class of Bushmen develops its identity mostly in relation to more dominant others (instead of their past as hunter-gatherers). As we have seen, these dominant others consist of a variety of people today, and crucially the idea of Bushmen as 'inferior' is part and parcel of these relations, most of which are essentially paternalistic.

Notes

1. Both the terms 'indigenous' and 'Bushmen' are contentious. The latter term is based on a colonial past of racism and has a derogatory and patronizing character. The more politically

correct term 'San', however, also has its derogatory and patronizing elements (cf. Gordon and Douglas 2000), and most people who have in this paper been mentioned prefer 'Bushmen'. I favour using their own language group names when possible. The term 'indigenous' has been subject to a long debate in anthropology, which goes beyond the scope of this paper, but see especially Kuper (2003) and special issues in, amongst others, *Anthropology Today* 2000: 16(4) and 2004: 20(2), *Social Anthropology* 2006: 14(1) and *Current Anthropology* 2004: 45(2) and 2006: 47(1). Barnard (2019) provides an overview of the debate.

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