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Contradictions of capitalism in the South African Kalahari: Indigenous Bushmen, their brand and *baasskap* in tourism

Stasja Patoelja Koot

Sociology of Development and Change Group, Wageningen University, Wageningen, The Netherlands

ABSTRACT

The question of who controls Indigenous tourism is of wide and growing relevance in post-colonial societies, especially in so-called transition economies, that are moving from state-led economies to mostly market-based economies. This paper explores such global–local dynamics for an Indigenous group in South Africa in relation to authenticity, development and power relations. Based on ethnographic fieldwork among the Indigenous South Kalahari Bushmen (≠Khomani) and their interactions with the tourism sector, especially up-market accommodation projects, it questions assumptions that economic and educational benefits will “trickle down” to the poor. It exposes two key contradictions in the capitalist tourist system. The first is that authenticity is opposed to becoming inauthentic; the Bushmen stay “authentic” for tourists who impose modernity as consumers, making the Bushmen merely an “Indigenous brand” that attracts tourists, creating revenue that trickles down into the area but hardly to those who *are* the brand. The second contradiction is that of poverty alleviation through a system that marginalises the Indigenous, and critically probes the concept of tourism “developing” (educating) Indigenous people. This assumed education is minimal: Bushmen and white managers are entangled in colonial paternalism (*baasskap*), with managers often lacking broader understanding of development, focusing mainly on economic growth.

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Introduction

The “≠Khomani may now be proprietors of the fancy !Xaus Lodge, transient residence for affluent visitors, but their own living conditions remain abject in the extreme”, wrote Jean and John Comaroff in 2009 (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009, p. 96).¹ In this paper, I explore two contradictions of capitalism that play a role in the perpetuation of this poverty, building on work by various scholars who have done extensive fieldwork on Indigenous tourism² and the South Kalahari Bushmen (or ≠Khomani San)³ in South Africa (see Dyll, 2009; Dyll-Myklebust, 2012; Dyll-Myklebust & Finlay, 2012; Finlay & Barnabas, 2012; Grant, 2011; Schenck, 2008; Tomaselli, 2012c). In general, the Bushmen (or San) of southern Africa are regarded as the first inhabitants of the area. They are divided into many language groups and they speak with various “clicks”, such as “//”, “/!”, “!” and “≠”. Bushmen groups include the Ju//hoansi, the Khwe, the Hai//om, the !Xun, the Tyua and the ≠Khomani. Until recently, they have lived a lifestyle of hunting and gathering, which is something that has always fascinated Western visitors to the area, including anthropologists, colonial settlers, historians and filmmakers. Today, this

fascination with the Bushmen's hunting and gathering lifestyle has also entered the world of tourism, in which these Indigenous people are often considered icons of the past.

This paper focuses specifically on the South Kalahari Bushmen and their engagement with the tourism industry. It contributes critical insights about the connection between Indigenous people in tourism and the fortifying role of the private tourism sector's involvement globally, revealing power relations in which the marginalised play a crucial role in essentially capitalist ventures and their development rhetoric. This happens not only in South Africa (see Brooks, Spierenburg, & Wels, 2012) but also, for example, in Kenya, where the dominating tourism industry has hardly played a role of significance in socio-economic development, despite the "comparative advantage" that many Indigenous groups have in global capitalism (Akama, 2002; Akama and Kieti, 2007). Outside Africa, for example in Peru, a comparative power shift from community-based initiatives to the private sector has taken place (Ypeij, 2012). The question of who actually controls Indigenous tourism is of wider and growing relevance in post-colonial societies (Brooks et al., 2012) and today, lots of tourism takes place in so-called transition economies, in which countries are moving from state-led economies to economies that are mostly market-based (Saarinen, 2008).

This paper analyses the local dynamics of that broader global trend, building on literature about the relation between neoliberal capitalism and ecotourism (e.g. Brockington, Duffy, & Igoe, 2008; Carrier & West, 2004; Duffy, 2008; Fletcher, 2011; Fletcher & Neves, 2012) and revealing power relations in public–private cooperation that are often ignored in the literature (Spierenburg, Wels, Van der Waal, & Robins, 2009). Thus, the paper builds on a tradition in this journal in which research about sustainable development and tourism is expanded from the ecological to global and social issues, such as unequal development and power relations at the local level and within the tourism industry (Bramwell & Lane, 2001). It aims to clarify such global–local dynamics for an Indigenous group in relation to authenticity, development and power relations.

The first contradiction addressed here is the need for Indigenous people in tourism to be (seen as) "authentic". As consuming tourists, outsiders impose modernity, creating a situation in which the Indigenous people become a product, something generally considered "inauthentic". I argue that the Bushmen, as a product, have now also become an "Indigenous brand" that plays an important role in attracting tourists, creating revenue that trickles down into the wider geographical area but limited only to those who *are* the brand. Building on this first contradiction, the second contradiction is the idea of poverty alleviation through Indigenous tourism, even though it was the capitalist system that created much of the poverty in the first place. This does not deny that there are also sources of poverty that cannot (directly) be attributed to capitalist mechanisms (a traditional type of hunter-gatherer lifestyle, for example, can in some ways be regarded as an existence of poverty according to contemporary standards), the focus in this paper is on mechanisms in sustainable tourism as a solution to poverty. It has now become important for proponents of this type of sustainable tourism (such as conservationists and private sector operators) to show that they "develop", educate and empower the Indigenous people. I argue that this assumed empowerment through education and economic growth hardly takes place. One important reason for this (amongst others), and often overlooked, are local power relationships. In the white-dominated tourism industry, Bushmen and white managers are entangled in a unique, southern African type of colonial paternalism named *baasskap*, which literally means "boss-ship", dominance and authority (Sylvain, 2001). Earlier examples of Bushmen's involvement in collaborations with the private sector, such as the Intu Afrika Lodge in Namibia in the mid-1990s, led workers to explain that labour conditions were just a duplication of those found on commercial farms (Garland & Gordon, 1999; Sylvain, 2002). This makes *baasskap* an essential feature to look into when analysing the private sector's involvement in tourism and development. Instead of providing empowerment, *baasskap* provides a platform for the top-down dispersion of capitalist discourse and values. Moreover, managers with skills and expertise in tourism are not necessarily qualified as development field workers.

This introduction continues the methodological background of the paper, explaining the current state of capitalism and tourism in South Africa, and then moving on to an historical introduction of

the South Kalahari Bushmen and their first endeavours in the capitalist system. It is followed by extensive analyses of both the contradictions of capitalism already briefly introduced. The paper concludes by arguing that cooperation of Indigenous Bushmen with the private tourism sector is an unconvincing strategy to achieve empowerment.

Methodology

This paper is mainly based on two months of ethnographic fieldwork in 2010, during which I completed 41 in-depth semi-structured interviews, most of them in Afrikaans, the *lingua franca* of the South African Northern Cape Province. In addition to the South Kalahari Bushmen, I also interviewed and observed many people working in the private tourism sector. My cooperation with a research group of the Centre for Communication, Media and Society (CCMS), University of KwaZulu Natal, for the first days in the Northern Cape, was a fruitful introduction in terms of knowledge transfer, intellectual stimulation and practicalities. I also participated in a large variety of tourism activities.

The fieldwork was part of broader PhD research into Bushmen perceptions about tourism developments and nature conservation. This South Kalahari Bushmen study was linked to my earlier work with three other cases in Namibia: the Ju/'hoansi of the Nyae Nyae Conservancy, the Khwe of Bwabwata National Park and the Hai//om around the Etosha National Park (Koot, 2013). My ideas have also been shaped by my longer engagement with Bushmen, in particular with the Indigenous Hai//om of Tsintsabis in northern Namibia, with whom I have been connected since 1999; first for my MA fieldwork in anthropology and later – between 2002 and 2007 – when working for the community-based ecotourism project Treesleeper Camp (see Hüncke and Koot, 2012; Koot, 2012). Here I developed my first ideas about Bushman imagery and southern African paternalism, in particular the relation between Bushmen and white farmers, since Tsintsabis (where I lived) is a Bushman resettlement farm surrounded by white-owned farms (Koot, 2015; *in press-a*).

I was unable to visit the luxurious !Xaus Lodge, an important case study in this paper, due to its remoteness and budgetary limitations. Despite this, I was able to interview most of the Lodge's Bushmen (ex-)staff and to talk to the manager who was in the process of leaving !Xaus during my fieldwork. I interviewed the new manager and in 2014, I had a long discussion with the co-founder and chief executive of Transfrontier Parks Destinations (TFPD, the umbrella company of !Xaus), about the main findings of my PhD dissertation. Despite our sometimes very different opinions, he has been very supportive in commenting on an earlier draft of this paper. Parts of my findings are also based on so-called "critical discourse analysis", which is a type of discourse analysis in which an analysis is made of "social power abuse, dominance, and inequality" and how these "are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 352). In this vein, and complementary to my ethnographic findings, I have analysed a range of websites.

On balance, not having stayed at !Xaus has also created advantages; CCMS scholars have explained that they struggled with the "Self-Other relationship with [the chief executive] and his company, in which "[t]he pull [...] —to take sides—was overwhelming from the start" (Tomaselli, 2012b, p. 6). I have never experienced such a "pull", simply because I was not introduced to the Bushmen by a private sector partner, which obviously could have created bias. !Xaus has been working extensively with the CCMS group to engage the Lodge in so-called "action research", which is regarded as democratic and participatory (Dyll-Myklebust and Finlay 2012). This has turned into a long-term relation between !Xaus/TFPD and the CCMS group (see Tomaselli, 2012c).

Neoliberal capitalism and tourism in South Africa

We live in a global capitalist system which is not a singular force but has its own dynamics, processes and histories in diverse places. In South Africa, the system changed dramatically in 1994, after the white minority handed over political power to the black majority through democratic elections. The country went from a state-led type of capitalism to its current neoliberal capitalist approach

in the post-apartheid era. The new African National Congress (ANC)-led government turned from a socialist democratic approach to a neoliberal capitalist political ideology, in which the focus changed to privatisation, trade liberalisation and deregulation (Peet, 2002). The global trend of post-World War II state-led capitalism was much more focused on welfare, but today's type of neoliberal capitalism concentrates power more than ever in the capitalist class, structurally creating impoverishment among the majority of people who fall outside this class (Kotz, 2003).

Despite a global increase in income-disparities, the rise of neoliberal capitalism is often presented as “a gospel of salvation [...] to transform the universe of the marginalized and disempowered” (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2001, p. 2). This is mainly based on the assumption that poverty will be eliminated through the “trickling down” of wealth through free markets and free trade, but in South Africa this has led to a situation in which the country moved from political to economic apartheid (Harvey, 2005). The ANC used this framework to achieve racial and social equality, but it also facilitates former apartheid structures that are often fused into various development programmes (Tangri & Southall, 2008). Such programmes are set up with Western economic terms (such as “efficiency” and “economic growth”) as the leading principles. Instigated by influential global institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, these terms are rarely justified but automatically assumed to be “economically correct” (Ferguson, 2006). The South African programme for “Black Economic Empowerment” has been larded with government rhetoric about equity and redistribution, but so far it mainly caused controversy because it is well-adapted to the interests of South Africa's corporate sector – dominated by the minority whites – and benefited mostly a minority of politically connected black individuals instead of the large disadvantaged majority. In the South African hospitality industry, for example, black ownership is still under 10% (Tangri & Southall, 2008).

Nevertheless, tourism in South Africa – which is mostly nature-based – is often promoted as one of the main strategies to decrease poverty. It is often one of the few available sources of income and the assumption is that it will automatically benefit the impoverished local population, moving them to market-based livelihoods (Brockington et al., 2008). Thus, the expansion of tourism and making it sustainable is compatible with the context in which it takes place; a political economy of expanding neoliberal capitalism (Bianchi, 2004). The accumulation of capital and material growth is regarded as *the* path to develop out of poverty and it is generally accepted that local people should participate in this process (Fletcher, 2009). Especially cultural and Indigenous tourism are areas where identities are (re-)negotiated in relation to the market, which has inspired to commodify and essentialise cultures. Such negotiations are embedded within rhetoric about its value as a pedagogic instrument for sustainable development (Lanfant, 1995), based on the assumption that this education will “trickle down”.

Early encounters with capitalism and tourism in the Kalahari

At the beginning of the twentieth century, various hunter-gatherer groups, including the so-called ≠Khomani, made up the South Kalahari Bushmen (Robins, Madzudzo, & Brenzinger, 2001). As time passed, white and coloured settlers moved into the southern parts of the Kalahari (White, 1995), leading to three crucial periods in the history of the Bushmen that started their integration into tourism and capitalism. First, in the years around 1930, the farmer and big game hunter Donald Bain gathered a group of Bushmen for scientists for an exposition in Johannesburg and for a protest march to Cape Town against hunting prohibitions. In these gatherings, they were presented as the primitive hunter-gatherers that needed to be saved from extinction, but they also learned that their “capital” was far more than their knowledge of the environment; some came to realise that their *visibility* was important, which they started to use to their advantage in the new market economy (Schenck, 2008).

The second period began when Bushmen from the “Kruiper family” started working in tourism in the late 1980s and 1990s, in particular at the Kagga Kamma Nature Reserve a few hours north of Cape Town (Robins et al., 2001; Schenck, 2008; White, 1995). In those days, the leader Dawid Kruiper explained that “[t]he only way our tradition and way of life can survive is to live in the memory of the

people who see us" (cited in White, 1995, p. 17). "Seeing", in this case, can be taken as mediated by the market because they lived at a simulated hunter-gatherer camp, were urged to dress traditionally for tourists and they sold crafts (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009). The owners at Kagga Kamma thought that these Bushmen should not engage with money and consumer goods if they truly wished to live traditionally (White, 1995). Although it would be easy to criticise this, "[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" (Tomaselli, 2012d, p. 26). Bushmen's new engagement with outsiders was reaching a climax when Dawid Kruiper addressed the United Nations in 1994 to speak about global rights for Indigenous peoples (<http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/dawid-kruiper>, cf. Kuper, 2003), which also showed their agency.

This agency was also exemplified during the third important period; the victory in a land claim in 1999 (and a second part in 2002). This gave the Bushmen access to eight farms south of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park (today they live on six of these) and it gave them commercial and cultural rights inside parts of the park.⁴ However, one of the main concessions for the Bushmen during the process of the claim was to allow other claimants into the process, which has made the "≠Khomani" a hybrid group, created in the process of the land claim. Most of the "≠Khomani" claimants were descendants in varying degrees of one of various Bushmen groups (such as the N//n≠e, Khattia, ≠Hanaseb, /Namani) that used to live in the southern Kalahari (Grant, 2011). In this process, those Bushmen who worked at Kagga Kamma before (mostly from the Kruiper family) now embraced a "traditionalist" Bushman image, which has been perpetuated after the claim, when tourism became one of the main strategies for development. This small section of the South Kalahari Bushmen who used their traditional dressings and rhetoric of a romanticised past to identify as Indigenous contrasted with the "westerners" who strive for a more Western-like lifestyle. By maintaining this traditional image, they take up an active place in a capitalist society (Koot, 2013).

Many Bushmen doubt the positive effects of money flowing into the community, because, as an elder explained, "then the drinking starts". Using their traditional image to gain money has also been called the "Kruiper currency" by Tomaselli (2012a, inspired by Dyll), after the traditional leader Dawid Kruiper and his family. It means that names become brands and since the Kruipers are the most famous of the South Kalahari Bushmen, they use this name to gain money, often in stories conflated with perceptions of themselves as victims (Tomaselli, 2012a). In this sense, they present themselves as victims of capitalism while simultaneously taking an active stand in it, thereby also showing agency by trying to capitalise on their own name and image. So tourism is not only a phenomenon that subjugates the Indigenous Bushmen; they can also use it for their own benefit (Koot, *in press-b; in press-c*).

Despite the land claim and many consequent development initiatives, results for most South Kalahari Bushmen have been disappointing (see Grant, 2011; Koot, 2013). And although tourism plays an important role in their development plans, there are various other projects and livelihood approaches, including domestic livestock, gardening and educational support. In what follows, I elaborate on the two contradictions of capitalism that are strongly visible in tourism.

The first contradiction: authenticity and branding

The first contradiction of capitalism in Indigenous tourism is its struggle with authenticity. Indigenous people are often portrayed as compatible with nature conservation, as if they are natural ecologists or Indigenous stewards of the natural environment. However, their economic development simultaneously makes them incompatible with these same ideologies of nature and sustainability (Fennell, 2008), implying that local people need to stay "authentic" first of all and not become "inauthentic", or spoiling consumers, as "we" have become in the West. A development field worker from Botswana explained that in Indigenous tourism "you want to sell this product, the beauty of it, while the capitalist world and culture and means that we bring in [...] has the potential of destroying what we try to

sell". Indeed, modernity and capitalism are generally associated with *inauthenticity* (cf. MacCannell, 1976) and authenticity can be regarded an existential question of modernity. In the case of the Bushmen, this means that a tourist image is created as a brand; a representation that fits modern marketing strategies drawing on simulacra and dubious cultural relics (Ellis, 2014). Dominant Western ideas of nature and its people are implemented through the free market, leading to the creation of products based on the needs of tourists. Therefore, tourists tend not to support "authentic" distinctive local cultural ideas and practices but "inauthentic" ideas that spread and strengthen capitalism and the market system (Carrier & West, 2004). A visitor to the !Xaus Lodge (see below) confirmed that when asked if she expected a "traditional" representation, she replied "because that is what I would be paying for" (cited in Finlay & Barnabas, 2012, p. 150). In the rhetoric of Indigenous tourism, exotic local communities are appreciated and supported, but in practice the socio-economic values of capitalism and individualism are encouraged (Carrier & West, 2004). Through these values, the Bushman image and symbolism have created exchange value and are therefore linked with public relations, marketing and branding.

This contradiction is solved in capitalism with a "psychological fix", which is a "promise to deliver an extraordinary experience of mystery and enchantment felt to be lacking in everyday life [...] as a response to problems of modern capitalist development" (Fletcher & Neves, 2012, p. 66). By believing in the authenticity of these exotic and mystified Indigenous people, tourists and mediators in tourism together keep this idea of authenticity alive; they help to "preserve" this magical culture. In this way, they are psychologically liberated from the imposition of modernity and its socio-economic values that they automatically imply on these Indigenous people. The psychological fix of capitalism then becomes a denial of that which cannot be accepted about oneself; one is in fact "inauthentic" and represents modernity in a capitalist system, while the myth of authenticity is kept alive even though these authentic Indigenous people are only treated as a product.

The ≠Khomani brand

To appeal to tourists' standards, Indigenous people are encouraged to perform a role and dress up (Brockington et al., 2008; Wels, 2004). For example at the !Xaus Lodge, tourists can visit a "Bushman Craft Village" where crafting and traditional games are demonstrated. Alternatively, tourists can take a guided walk with a Bushman tracker (<http://www.xauslodge.co.za/excursions-activities>). !Xaus is one out of four destinations in South Africa that are offered by TFPD, the company that aims to "manage and market community-owned tourism facilities in Southern Africa" (<http://www.tfpd.co.za/>). TFPD's chief executive is a white South African man who worked in banking, mining and television before moving to tourism. He has been motivated to initiate TFPD because he had seen "the despondency in the eyes of the community members who were owners of decaying tourism facilities" (<http://www.wtmlondon.com/en/Contributors/1288704/Glynn-OLeary>).

To date, the Bushmen were "just" the "traditional" Bushmen, which is logical because tourism at !Xaus is mainly based on the "≠Khomani" image. In fact, the !Xaus website and promotional materials are predominantly built on the "≠Khomani" as traditional hunting and gathering people (cf. Finlay & Barnabas, 2012), which has added to the personality of the !Xaus brand and product itself (Tomaselli, 2012b). Indeed, the !Xaus brand is largely built on the ≠Khomani brand of them as authentic Bushmen and for the psychological fix this needs to stay that way. The mystery of the Bushmen is what appeals to tourists and it is doubtful if they would ever book an expensive lodge deep in the Kalahari to see Bushmen working behind computers. The Bushmen themselves are well aware of this. For example, a member of the Kruiper family told me that "we are world famous. We do advertisements, we do movies, we do everything. But the development of tourism is weak on our side. There are projects but we do not benefit from them" and in relation to the lodge he explained that "we are the advertisements for !Xaus". In another interview, Dawid Kruiper explained that if "the Bushmen will not go there, then the lodge will not make money". This fuels the idea that a strong motivation for

joining such tourism activities as primordial hunter-gatherers is “to be seen” (cf. Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009, pp. 10–11; cf. White, 1995, p. 17). In the end, as an object of the “tourist gaze” (Urry, 2002), they are seen, in contrast to their other option which is to spend their days at the periphery of society. This is also exemplified by a group of Bushmen who make their living selling crafts to tourists along the roads to the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, where they appear in traditional clothes.

Nevertheless, it is exactly the Bushmen’s position as a not-yet-modern, un(der)developed group that argues for the commodification of the “≠Khomani culture” as an essential step in the process of development. Based on the idea of economic growth, everything that can be commodified is a helpful tool in development. This idea probably intensified after the African Safari Lodge Foundation (ASLF) joined activities of development through tourism. Despite the often-mentioned participatory approach, however, the role of the Bushmen was ignored when the ASLF wrote the influential *Tourism Development Plan for the ≠Khomani San Community* (Massyn, Humphrey, Grossman, Holden, & Dierkes, 2010), for which 26 people were consulted. These included lodge and campsite operators, government and wildlife officials, NGO workers, tour operators, professional hunting companies and potential developers/investors. *But only one* was a local Bushman (the late traditional leader Dawid Kruiper). Feelings of exclusion in relation to !Xaus or the ASLF were common, and articulated by various Bushmen during my interviews. For example, a young tour guide – who was rejected at !Xaus because of drinking – explained that Bushmen are not in control of their own development processes but that they are “still at the back of the *bakkie* [pick-up...] we can sit affront in the *bakkie*. But I also don’t want to sit left, because where do I drive? I want to sit right [behind the steering wheel]”. Later, I met him again at the roadside with some other young men, after !Xaus had just chosen a new person for the position of main guide. This new main guide was a young white man, an outsider, which created frustration and confusion amongst the group who all believed they were better guides. The new manager of !Xaus would later explain that this new guide is better with books and that they are better in the field, and that therefore they should help each other.

Moreover, based on the original agreements for the land claim, the ASLF advised for another cooperation lodge inside the park, this one without the Mier (who are co-owners of !Xaus). This plan was expected to create high financial and economic potential, based on the cultural heritage of the Bushmen as the main attraction (Massyn et al., 2010). In fact, the “≠Khomani Cultural Landscape” could even get included on the UNESCO World Heritage List as part of a wider Bushman “Heartland”, because they are considered the last Indigenous Bushmen community alive in South Africa and therefore an important aspect of the South African culture (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/1910/>). This listing is expected to increase tourism interest, and therefore ASLF believes it “has potential to support branding and marketing for the area” (Massyn et al., 2010, p. 90). In their *Tourism Development Plan*, they stress the importance of adapting the Bushmen’s “authenticity” to market demand several times (Massyn et al., 2010) and “[f]or the Khomani San to have a presence in the competitive world of travel and tourism in Southern Africa, it [sic] needs to have its own brand identity” (ASLF, 2011, p. 3). It seems as if this brand identity was already in place, since the company GRID Branding & Design had supported the community with a special ≠Khomani website as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility programme. They explained that they “have assisted the ≠Khomani San in the development of their new identity and beautiful logo” (<http://www.khomanisan.com/foks/>). Today, it seems, even identities can be developed by forces in marketing, implying a previous state of “identity-void” among these people before it was reinstalled as a brand, and gaining market value again.

Businesses such as !Xaus and the still-to-be built lodge by the ASLF are fully based on spreading and maintaining the “Bushman myth” (cf. Gordon & Douglas, 2000) and neoliberal capitalism simultaneously. Becoming a ≠Khomani brand means that the Bushmen are becoming part of the capitalist system *as a brand*, and obviously not as authentic hunter-gatherers, but many seem willing to succumb to that. Moreover, they hardly seem to be in control of the brand and its surrounding development process; without the ≠Khomani brand, they would probably be left invisible in the periphery of society as a result of an intensifying historical process:

As ethno-businesses open up, they are hunting for the brand, the unique aspect about a culture. In the case of the ≠Khomani it is not the search for the unique in their culture which determines their relationship to ethno-business, it is rather the survival of remnants of a culture as a result of what has been marketable over the past eighty years; it seems as if the process of branding has shaped the community's understanding of their culture over time. After nearly a century on the ethnic-market, are ≠Khomani still selling a product inspired by their culture or has the product become their culture? (Schenck, 2008, p. 102)

When tourism is used as a strategy for development in the sense of economic growth, this leaves scope for the expression of one Bushman identity, the one that is marketable in tourism, the primordial Bushman in need of development. This brings us to the second contradiction.

The second contradiction: development and *baasskap*

The second contradiction builds on the first one; under neoliberal capitalism, developing countries have hosted private sector, profit-driven, luxury resorts that market themselves as crucial in the development of sustainable tourism among local communities (Brockington et al., 2008; Duffy, 2008). This creates the contradiction in which the fight against poverty and social inequality takes place through tourism, obviously with capitalist mechanisms, while these same capitalist mechanisms have for a large part created this situation of poverty and social inequality (Fletcher & Neves, 2012). Capitalism in general has shown to be remarkably effective in turning around crises to which it has contributed into economic opportunities (Klein, 2007), not least in tourism. For example, the decline of nature biodiversity has increased its economic value and tourists now want to pay to see animal species whose populations are decreasing. Similarly, the contribution of capitalism to poverty and class struggles has created situations in which this poverty has been commodified (Fletcher, 2011), not least through marketing by the industry in which they show their Corporate Social Responsibility. Just as other fair trade products (such as coffee or chocolate), the fair trade image of a product in tourism creates an increased monetary value based on inequality and poverty, because higher prices can be asked. A promise to reduce inequality, fair trade, can thus become a valuable marketing asset (Cater, 2006; Fletcher & Neves, 2012).

For this contradiction there is a "social fix" of capitalism, which is an attempt to undo past injustices by delivering proper wages to producers (Fletcher & Neves, 2012). The promises of job creation and social upliftment programmes play crucial roles in the rhetoric of tourism operators (Brooks et al., 2012). This means that, through certifications, prices, marketing and rhetoric in various sites it becomes important for mediators to explain why and how they "do good"; they have now become "social". Moreover, tourists themselves have also become social by supporting such developments, which are often fully based on the Western ideology of economic growth, leading to communications, rhetoric and images about economic and educational trickle-down effects. As consumers, therefore, tourists can now feel good about themselves; they have supported the poor. In recent years, many upper-class tourism ventures have started to capitalise on the authentic Bushman image, using the rhetoric of economic development. As long as brochures, guidebooks and websites continue to emphasise the economic growth that tourism brings, this will stimulate tourists' perception of themselves as "helpful agents in this development process, recasting themselves not as exploitative consumers but as benevolent mentors and patrons to the bushmen they visit" (Garland & Gordon, 1999, p. 283).

The !Xaus approach

In so-called "cooperation lodges", a community collaborates with a private operator in a joint venture. The private operator brings in management and marketing expertise, which creates possible benefits for the community, such as cash, employment, infrastructure and skills. In such cases different ideologies – subsistence culture and neoliberal capitalism – work together as if symmetrical, but basic power differences in which capitalism dominates are overlooked (Haug, 2007). Still, such initiatives

between the private sector and Bushmen are currently heavily promoted by governments, NGOs, donors and consultants.

After the land claim, the South Kalahari Bushmen and their neighbouring Mier received a part of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. With a beginning characterised by many environmental and architectural errors by the government in the original construction of !Xaus, concessionaires from the private sector were invited to cooperate in a joint venture. The appointment of TFPD in 2006 was supposed to create a paradigm shift from a modernisation top-down to a participatory bottom-up approach (Dyll, 2009). The commercial TFPD describes itself as a “black-empowered Lodge Management Company” (<http://www.xauslodge.co.za/about-us>), consisting of “like-minded associates who are **business-oriented social entrepreneurs** [who] are well-qualified with in-depth experience in finance, marketing, safari activities and hospitality management” (<http://www.tfpd.co.za/about>). Despite its development aspirations, TFPD does not mention its own capacities or qualities to be able “to develop”, apart from entrepreneurial capacities. Nevertheless, TFPD started to manage and market !Xaus on behalf of the ≠Khomani and the Mier and in 2014 !Xaus paid about 30 salaries and 93% of the staff came from the neighbouring Mier and ≠Khomani (chief executive, personal communication, 2014).

Because !Xaus is a luxury lodge, it requires more skilled staff compared to other tourist ventures in the area (cf. Grant, 2011). This creates a complication: luxury tourism is introduced among the most marginalised where, due to this marginalisation, such staff is limited. Instead of closing the gap, a lodge such as !Xaus tends to magnify the contradictions, which raises crucial questions about its possibilities for empowerment. There is no reason to assume that having the skills to work in tourism also means one knows the ins and outs of local grassroots development dynamics, let alone how to handle these. We already saw that at Kagga Kamma in the 1990s, the owners could not be expected to act as development workers (Tomaselli, 2012d, see also Introduction). The point here is, however, that it is questionable if this can still be accepted today, when private operators show themselves as extreme do-gooders. In fact,

although !Xaus Lodge is not a development agency, as such, it does aim to train staff to benefit individuals long term, enabling them to secure future employment. As !Xaus Lodge is a business, appropriate skills training is decided by management, not through participatory methods, however, such skills development contribute to individual empowerment. (Grant, 2011)

It is striking that !Xaus’ supposed paradigm shift – from top-down to a more participatory communication (see Dyll, 2009) – leaves no space for “participatory methods” when it comes down to the crucial development issue of skills development. Skills, it seems, are reduced to the skills of business and tourism only, giving in fully to the capitalist system. Furthermore, on their website TFPD also takes a very double stance, explaining that *they* (not local people) “identify and support local social development projects”. In these, “[t]he needs of the local communities, and their development, are given priority”, but they also “maintain full financial control of development and operational funds”. Likely, what is considered “participatory” by TFPD is their “formal and informal [...] communication with the officials of the local community” (<http://www.tfpd.co.za/about>). The level of “participation” is, therefore, limited and in some cases there could be good reasons for that (e.g. a lack of education, tour guides who drink and so on) once a public–private partnership approach has been established. More generally, it is doubtful if marginalised people are in fact capable of participating in luxurious tourism at an equal level, in particular because the type of development that is aimed at is only based on economic growth and this requires expertise in some fields at a high level (marketing, finances, hospitality and so on); !Xaus was maybe “a development failure [that] was converted into *financial success*” (Dyll-Myklebust & Finlay, 2012, p. 119, my emphasis), but other signs of “success”, in the broader sense of “development”, are absent or very limited, as was also confirmed in my interviews in which most of the Bushmen explained that they had no say about the whereabouts of the !Xaus Lodge.

To some, it might be the “Fair Trade in Tourism Southern Africa” (FTTSA) certificate and the Imvelo Award (on its economic impact) that !Xaus won in 2011 show its good practice based on suggested

economic and educational trickle-down effects (<http://www.xauslodge.co.za/blog/category/awards-accreditations>). The economic value of the lodge then “lies in ethical business principles that generate a steady and growing income for the community owners [sic] and the area” (TFPD, 2010, cited in Dyll-Myklebust, 2012, p. 180). Some scholars recommend the usage of this social fix, since it will “boost their market appeal and attract ethical tourists through the added value of their responsible behaviour” (Dyll-Myklebust, 2012, p. 209). In this line of thinking, “ethical tourists”, as well as their mediators, embrace the capitalist systems that are for a large part responsible for the inequality in the area, leading to a social fix in which increased value is produced because one can charge higher prices for the promise to address inequality through fair trade.

An important element in !Xaus’ sustainable strategy is to spend most of their revenue in the area to create an “economic multiplier effect” on local crafts and curios, but most of it was spent on operational costs in the towns of Askham and Upington (Dyll-Myklebust & Finlay, 2012). Although it stays unclear what exactly is “multiplied” (a very debatable term), it is likely that they mean an economic trickle-down effect in which their spending flows into society, thereby assuming that this automatically brings development. This effect is especially evident in the wider Gordonia District, where !Xaus invests into the local economy. For example, they buy firewood from the local community and use small businesses such as a supermarket in Askham or a (fair trade) sewing cooperative in Upington (Mezias & Fakhreddin, 2013). Although these purchases indeed benefit various people, they do not automatically benefit the South Kalahari Bushmen financially or otherwise. Most Bushmen engage mainly in the informal economy with relatively little amounts of cash circulating, so they only tend to receive cash through selling some firewood or curios. For example, when the management of !Xaus buys supplies in the Kalahari Supermarket in Askham, this supports first of all the white owners of the store. There is no reason to assume that such purchases will reduce ethnic inequalities or alter power relations. Quite the contrary, supporting the well-established, relatively wealthy businesses is likely to only *increase* current inequalities. So ironically, the ≠Khomani brand plays an important role to attract tourists and thereby revenue to the area, but this hardly “trickles down” to those who *are* the brand. As Ellis (2014, pp. 495–496) explained, “[t]he simulacral subject, that is bushman [...] does not always deliver for those caricatured, parodied or simplified in simulacra”. This supports the growing recognition in South Africa that the benefits of economic growth do not automatically trickle down to the poor (Du Toit, 2008). Moreover, often benefits to local communities from luxury tourism make up only a fraction of the total profit of the company (Cater, 2006).

“Forever he will stay a boy”: baasskap in the way of development

Another important reason in southern Africa why “participation” is so hard to achieve (and therefore economic and educational trickle down effects), is because of *baasskap* and its underlying assumptions that go back to the start of Western colonisation. It is a very specific patron–client relationship that implies the natural role of whites as superiors (Koot, 2013; Plotkin, 2002) and has spread far beyond the borders of South Africa, mostly to farms (see Dieckmann, 2007; Guenther, 1996; Koot, 2015; Suzman, 2000; Sylvain, 2001). *Baasskap* contains edification, care and protection, thereby also providing many benefits to the “immature” workers, such as a place to live, medical assistance, basic education and transport, all in return for labour. Based on an ideology of the family, in which the patron is the father (and the *baas*) of his “immature” children – who are therefore considered to be in need of development – white farms became institutions of “domestic government”, meaning that they had only little state intervention (Gibbon, Daviron, & Barral, 2014; cf. Rutherford, 2001). Under this system, Bushmen became proletarianised for the first time; they entered a process in which their labour was transformed into labour power within the capitalist system, making them a working class (Sylvain, 2001). South African white agriculture developed into world capitalism in the first half of the 1900s and despite harsh and brutal treatment of farm workers at some white farms, there are also clear examples of farms where relations showed features of accommodation and some equality (Van Onselen, 1990). Patron–client dynamics are based on interdependence; to position oneself as a client

creates a patron who, in return for the support of his client, needs to take care of his client while not making him/her independent (Van Beek, 2011). In the rural areas, *baasskap* heavily influenced all aspects of social and cultural life and an understanding of South African culture would be incomplete without the inclusion of *baasskap* (Plotkin, 2002). However, consultants, governments, donors, the private tourism sector and NGOs hardly ever mention *baasskap* or paternalism, almost as if it does not exist anymore post-apartheid.

Sylvain (2001), drawing on examples from Namibia, identified two reasons why this class relationship between Bushmen and farmers resists democratisation and proletarianisation, despite the discontinuation of apartheid and the recent liberalisation of markets in southern Africa. The first is that confusion exists over such hybrid social relations on the periphery of global capitalism (based on semi-proletarianism and semi-serfdom of the Bushmen). Such relations are often automatically associated with slavery and serfdom, and therefore they are (unjustly) seen as pre-capitalist, or non-capitalist, modes of production. However, even slavery in the American South was largely a response to the global rise of capitalism; the idea that capitalism encourages democratic working relations does not hold and southern African farms have demonstrated that “unfree” labour is easily compatible with capitalism. In fact, white settlement in the area is largely a consequence of the industrialisation of the South African agricultural sector. The second reason is that the white farmers are connected to the global capitalist economy through commerce and trade and they can respond to this system on their own terms, based on their own values and ideas. Regional or national level political trends do not necessarily influence the farmers’ relationship with the Bushmen, because farmers consider “their” Bushmen to be children in need of protection and development (Sylvain, 2001). Both reasons cannot be seen apart from the institutionalised “domestic government” (Rutherford, 2001). Through coercion and persuasion the ruling class (whites) exercises power over the subordinate working class (Bushman), as in Gramscian hegemony, which is a relation of consent based on ideological and political leadership. A hegemonic class gains consent of the other class and of other social forces in society, in which political and ideological alliances are created and maintained. Many people perceive the world based on ideas from a variety of sources and from the past, which makes many accept oppression and inequality as natural and static (Roger, 1991). As mediators and often representatives between neoliberal capitalist values and discourse and the Bushmen, white farmers and tourism managers are a hegemonic class.

In Kalahari tourism for example, the white owner of the Molopo Lodge, which is situated adjacent to the farms where the South Kalahari Bushmen live, explained that the Bushmen live at a lower level when compared to “us” and that they need to “make money [because] money gives you self-confidence. But they need a custodian that can [...] lead them in the right way”.⁵ Not only does this man position himself far superior (as a father or a *baas*) in his relation with the Bushmen (his children), he also follows a discourse of a modernist view of development in which the Bushmen have to be led out of their ignorance and get introduced into capitalism. In fact, most Bushmen consider the Molopo Lodge and !Xaus Lodge places where *baasskap* continues, regardless of the intentions to support their development. One of the elders explained about !Xaus that “you are just under the boss, as in the old days. [...] Forever he will stay a boy”. And a young woman explained that “many work there [!Xaus] for a while and then they come back and they do not want to go there anymore”. In 2014 (personal communication), the chief executive of TFPD explained that although *baasskap* does exist, this can be overcome but that an outsider is a necessity to make up for the Bushmen’s lack of *commercial* skills.

In my interviews, many Bushmen complained about the (now departed) !Xaus manager’s racism, swearing and “bossiness”—something I have also observed at the Witdraai campsite when he visited there (see Koot, 2013, pp. 195–197) — but the Bushmen (ex-) employees explained that they see no other possibilities for work and that they are afraid to speak to the manager directly. A young and educated woman explained that she “could not work together with him. The manner, it’s the boss attitude and the power, all have to listen to him and that’s it”. Ironically, the young and educated Bushmen that could truly make a difference by being able to run the lodge at a certain point were

also the ones who explained that they preferred not to work at !Xaus for this very reason. In rural South Africa, there has been a period of over 170 years in which social identities and power relations have been shaped based on ownership and paternalism. Subjects often did not dare to disobey and the paternalist discourses have been ceaselessly re-invented according to changes in society (Du Toit, 1994). It then becomes unlikely that such social relations will simply evaporate in new rural tourism initiatives.

Dyll-Myklebust and Finlay (2012, p. 121) also acknowledge the need for “illuminating the dynamics of power”, but they ignore the particularities of *baasskap*. It was one of my most important findings that the Bushmen mentioned in their relations with the private sector. Based on research at !Xaus, Dyll-Myklebust (2012) developed the Public–Private–Community Partnership (PPCP) model, which is supposed to incorporate participatory development and Indigenous ontologies through dialogue between the different stakeholders. Despite its good intentions, the model is narrowly focused on a further commodification of the Indigenous people’s “traditional culture”, aiming to make the Indigenous into small entrepreneurs. Moreover, it treats the private partner, the public partner and the community almost as if they are each other’s equals (see Dyll-Myklebust, 2012; Dyll-Myklebust, 2014). Thus, it is doubtful if the PPCP model is substantially different when compared to “the dominant paradigm [which is] premised on a (capitalist) economic model” (Dyll-Myklebust, 2014, p. 526). Despite mentioning the importance of power differences, it specifically puts the role of changing these into the hands of the power-holder, for example by putting the role of “directive leadership” in the hands of the !Xaus Lodge, as a “communication champion”. This is not, as suggested, a bottom-up approach, but it seems as if the PPCP model is designed in such a way that it gives the traditional power holders *more* control (see Dyll-Myklebust, 2012). In fact, “[p]articipatory approaches are, in themselves, part of these power structures”, resulting in new forms of control that are difficult to challenge due to their liberal character and reduction of space for conflict (Cater, 2006, p. 31). Put simply, the model tries to change power relations by directing more power to traditional power holders, who should then be trusted to make changes for more economic growth of the subjects of development.

This raises some important questions. In southern Africa, do we not simply need to acknowledge that the colonial heritage is perpetuated in tourism? And if private operators market themselves as do-gooders, is it not also their responsibility to create the capacity to “do good”? Looking back, was it wise of TFPD to install a former overlander (low-budget travelling tourist trucks) tour guide as the manager of !Xaus, also responsible for “development”? Having experience in tourism is not the same as knowing about development, quite the contrary when looking at the exploitative character that southern African tourism has gone through in history, especially Indigenous tourism. Therefore, the strategy of TFPD is a top-down driver of neoliberal capitalist development and values, ignoring crucial power relations and fitting seamlessly against the background of black empowerment in the current South African and global neoliberal environment.

Conclusion

Indigenous tourism strategies in the South African Kalahari reflect global and South African neoliberal capitalist assumptions, values, promotion and practices of the upper-middle-class (mostly white) members of post-industrial societies (cf. Fletcher, 2009). This is a perpetuation of power relations, since “[e]ven explicit performances of bushman primitivity, staged to emphasize their authenticity as cultural objects, draw on power relations with long histories in southern Africa” (Garland & Gordon, 1999, p. 275). It is likely that there is no way beyond these power differences, at least not in the short term, because they are embedded in a long history and wider in society, but power differences exist and therefore should be acknowledged instead of covered up by unconvincing rhetoric about participatory approaches in which only financial achievements decide development “success”. This does not mean, however, that the Bushmen themselves have no agency, but it means that their agency is constrained to acting within a set of responses. In the end, they have been shown to be capable to

win a land claim, address the United Nations, and bend their image – as a brand – to their own purposes.

However, the South Kalahari Bushmen are still caught up in two contradictions of neoliberal capitalism that are expressed in Indigenous tourism. These contradictions relate to each other. Their authentic image has become an important tool of capitalism: a branded product, based on which development takes place because the Bushmen are seen as not-yet-modern. Today, joint ventures between the private sector and local Bushmen have become an important strategy, but it is a doubtful strategy for two reasons. First, the automatically assumed educational trickle-down effect is hardly taking place in such settings. This has various reasons, but the importance of *baasskap* is stressed, because this local social construction is often ignored. The *baas* is not necessarily a skilled development field worker; some local Bushmen are afraid of him and therefore younger ones tend to simply stay away. Of course, it is a construct that also provides various solutions and benefits to the Bushmen where they lack the capacity to solve their own problems, but these are provided in a hierarchy based on white superiority whereas development implies change. And although it is not my intention to suggest that Bushmen are not in need of more expertise in various ways, because in today's tourist environment they often seem to be, it is a dubious strategy in this context to leave this to the private sector. Moreover, there is another contradiction within this one: it is illogical for private operators that market themselves as "empowering", such as !Xaus, to educate Bushmen into modernity; this would mean that they lose their most important product that they sell, the authentic Bushman brand.

The second reason why this strategy is doubtful is that economic trickle-down effects exist, but only a very small part reaches those in the margins. The Bushmen hardly profit, apart from having a few jobs that require them to "stay traditional", keeping them enclosed in the image as people of nature, to stay the brand they have now become. This brand is essential to engage in Indigenous tourism *and* it provides for their image as un(der)developed, implying their need for development. Capitalism however, mainly through marketing, has "fixed" these inconsistencies psychologically and socially.

The local power dynamics shown in this paper are of a wider importance than the South African context. In a world where many countries' economies are "in transition" towards a more market-based approach, it is likely that similar power structures exist in other settings. Therefore, the local dynamics of Indigenous tourism, in which tourism is seen as a tool for development, should be treated with caution. In the end, tourism is an instrument fully based on market principles.

Notes

1. The nature of their proprietorship is, however, not a simple one: see endnote 4 and the text section on the !Xaus approach.
2. I am aware of the contentious character of the term "Indigenous", but that discussion is beyond the scope of this paper (see Bétéille, 1998; Koot, 2013; Kuper, 2003; Saugestad, 2001).
3. I use the name South Kalahari Bushmen as opposed to the more common term '≠Khomani San', because the latter is a label attached by outsiders and is a misnomer wrongly applied to Western N/u speakers in the 1930s (Schenk, 2008). The name "≠Khomani" was applied to the broad target group of South Kalahari Bushmen in the process of the land claim (Koot, 2013).
4. These rights are supposed to support two different communities. Another local group, the coloured Mier community, has also been claiming land in this area, sometimes overlapping with parts of the land claimed by the South Kalahari Bushmen. A result of these commercial and cultural rights inside the park is the !Xaus Lodge, an important case study in this paper, which is owned by the South Kalahari Bushmen and the Mier together. After the land claim, both groups offered a concession to private developers for a lodge in the park and together with SANParks (South African National Parks), they decided to establish a joint venture with a private sector partner. A Joint Management Board – consisting of South Kalahari Bushmen, Mier and SANParks representatives – became responsible for the management of the commercial and cultural rights and so they invited concessionaires to build a lodge and operate it, as an important strategy for the broader development of the Bushmen and the Mier communities in the area. This process in the end led to TFPD establishing the !Xaus Lodge in the name of the Bushmen and Mier communities (cf. Koot 2013).

- From my own notes, and therefore my interpretation, taken during a formal conversation between Tomaselli and the Molopo owner.

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Notes on contributor

Stasja Koot, PhD, is affiliated to the Wageningen University, the Netherlands, as an ecological anthropologist. Before, he lived with Bushmen hunter-gatherers in Namibia from 2002 until 2007, working on a community-based tourism project (Treesleeper Camp). Moreover, he has spent several periods of fieldwork among the Bushmen in southern Africa since 1999. His research is focused on Indigenous people, nature conservation, tourism, land conflicts, extraction and natural resource management.

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