

The Impact of Nature Conservation on the San: A Case Study of Etosha National Park

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“In conflict between good and evil the solution is simple – seek the triumph of good over evil. But in the conflict between good and good the balancing of conflicting moral imperatives is painful and trying, and without clear implications for a correct course of action. The resident peoples issue is clearly in this latter category.” (West 1991:xix).

Introduction

In Southern Africa, sizeable portions of land have been declared national parks or game reserves during the last century (Table 1, see Introduction, this volume). The national park concept includes the idea that people do not live within the protected area, nor consume its resources (Brechtin et al. 1991:7-10). Under the illusion of being natural systems apart from, and not at all influenced by the political, social or cultural developments around them, national parks have become important tourist attractions. But appearances are deceptive: those areas have become off-limits to local people who have been living on that land for centuries.

In Southern Africa, areas of far more than 100,000 km² are now restricted for use by local people. During the colonial era, national parks were often established in arid areas not suitable for farming. For a long time, those areas served as refuges or niches for (former) hunter and gatherer groups before nature reserves were established and people were resettled. Thus, San belong to the people most affected in Southern Africa by the establishment of those parks or by nature conservation legislation in general (Taylor 2000, Hitchcock 2001, Ikeya 2001).

In Namibia, about 13.6% of the total land area is designated as national parks and game reserves (Blackie and Tarr 1999:13). One can only estimate how many people have been affected by the establishment of these parks, either by relocation or by grave restrictions on the use of natural resources

within the reserves. The fact that exact data about the consequences for the resident people are missing for most of the reserve areas can be viewed as a sign of the lack of relevance taken for the local people in the planning and realisation of these parks. Compensation for lost land or lost resources has never been paid to the people who were forced to abandon their areas for the sake of national parks or game reserves.

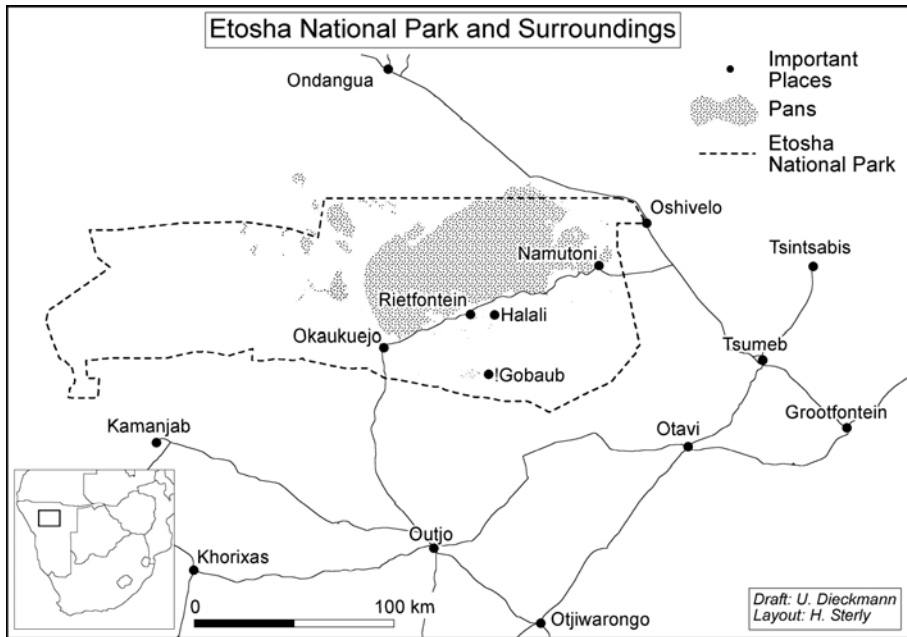
This article outlines the development of Etosha National Park as one example of the impact nature conservation has had on local people. Whereas other articles in this volume deal with more recent approaches of nature conservation (Hohmann, and Taylor, this volume), which are thought to combine the protection of natural resources with community development, and therefore begin to include local people in the planning and realisation of conservancy areas, this chapter will – with its focus on Etosha – explore the more ‘traditional’ approach. It has pretended that nature conservation is a goal in itself (which it in fact never was) and mostly disregarded the people affected by the establishment of national parks, game reserves and conservation areas.

I compare the ‘history’¹ that can be reconstructed from archival material with perspectives from within, from the people themselves who were affected. It will become clear that the combined analysis of different source material – oral history and archival documents – offers another understanding of the past than the examination of just one of these.

This article is based on archival work done in the Namibian National Archives² in 1999 and on interviews conducted during my adjacent fieldwork in Outjo and Etosha between 1999 and 2001. The knowledge that I gained in the archives influenced my approach in the field, but the ‘history’ presented by the local people held a different interpretation than I had expected.

¹ The quotation marks for ‘history’ are meant to emphasise that history always includes interpretation. Therefore, there is no single ‘history’, but many different ‘histories’ about the past. However, we can only approach the past through the different histories about it.

² The ‘history’ constructed from archival material may be found in Dieckmann, in press.



Map1: Etosha National Park and surrounding

The Area and People

Etosha National Park (22,270 km²) is one of the world’s largest national parks and the premier tourist attraction in Namibia (Mendelsohn et al. 2000:34). The popularity of this park is based on the abundance of wildlife: most of Namibia’s lions, elephants, rhinos and other large animals live within the boundaries of the park. In 1997, about 98,100 tourists visited Etosha; two-thirds of all foreign tourists to Namibia include Etosha in their itinerary. Etosha is obviously the best opportunity in Namibia to see African wildlife, a major motivation for western tourists to visit Africa (Mendelsohn et al. 2000:30, 34). Today, when tourists travel on the comfortable roads of the park they think of themselves as travelling in a virgin natural environment. But the area south of Etosha Pan, where most of the tourist roads run, has long been the home of a hunter-gatherer community. It belonged to people who were generally categorised as one of the “Bushman”

or San groups of Namibia,³ and who came to be known as the Hai④om during the 19th century. During that time and into the beginning of the 20th century, the Hai④om lived in the region stretching from Ovamboland, Etosha, Grootfontein, Tsumeb, Otavi and Outjo to Otjiwarongo in the south (some authors claim that the southern limits extended to Rehoboth, e.g., Bleek 1927, Schapera 1930), and were enmeshed in trade networks and sociopolitical relations with surrounding groups. The park was created in the early 20th century, but initially and for a long time afterward, the Hai④om were accepted as residents within the game reserve,⁴ while the surrounding area was increasingly occupied by white settlers. Today, the Hai④om are left without legal title to any land in Namibia (Widlok 1999:32).

The Beginning: Precolonial Times and the German Period (1850-1915)

In the 19th century, the region around Etosha Pan was visited by travellers (e.g., Anderson 1863, Galton 1889, Schinz 1891) and missionaries (e.g., Hahn and Rath 1859), who mentioned Bushmen living there. These travellers often employed Bushmen for odd jobs during their journeys (e.g., Schinz 1891:339) and reported about their contacts with Oshivambo-speaking people in the north and their copper mines near Otavi (Hahn 1867:286, Schinz 1891:340, see also Widlok, this volume). Galton (1889) observed that the Bushmen regarded the ‘Ghou Damup’ (now known as Damara) as inferior and had taught them their language (Galton 1889:154)⁵.

Germany took control of the territory in 1884, but only some fourteen years later, the colonial administration was in a position to prepare plans to exert control over the Hai④om. In 1898, a treaty was signed with Aribib,

³ The label “Bushman” is no longer popular in the official discourse in Namibia, and the term “San” is used instead. But in informal conversations, people, especially farmers, still talk of “Bushman.” I use the term “Bushman” in the context of historical sources, since the attitudes and actions of the Administration and of white society at large was motivated by their ideas about ‘Bushman.’ Even academics disagree about the politically and/or scientifically correct term; for a discussion see Gordon (1992:4f., 17f.) and Widlok (1999:6f.).

⁴ Most of the earlier writers did not distinguish between the different San groups. Thus, even when specific cases are mentioned, it is not easy to determine which group a given author means. But since the area of Etosha was always ‘Hai④om-country,’ one may assume that references to Bushmen living there indicate the Hai④om.

⁵ The ideology about the Bushmen, which, grounded in evolutionary assumptions, was to become popular later, was not expressed as openly in 19th-century travel accounts as it was in 20th-century accounts.

one of the Haiǀom ‘leaders,’ in order to incorporate the Haiǀom into the colonial system. Aribib ceded to the Germans a large piece of land between Outjo and Grootfontein for the annual payment of 500 Marks, protection and the permanent right to forage in the area (Gordon 1992:50). Köhler comments: “The purpose of the treaty was to get the Hei-ǀum Bushmen of the Etosha Pan under German control and create some order between the Bushmen and the colonists” (Köhler 1959:19).

The idea of creating a game reserve in northern Namibia came into discussion at the very beginning of the 20th century. In 1902, the district administrator (*Bezirksamtmann*) of Outjo – a town situated approximately 100 km south of Etosha – suggested declaring the Etosha area a game reserve, mainly to close the area to traffic in order to keep hunters out (SWAA Nature Conservation and Tourism:iv)⁶. Control posts south of Etosha Pan at Namutoni, Rietfontein and Okaukeujo had already been erected in 1896-1897 in order to prevent stock movement as a consequence of the outbreak of rinderpest during those years (de la Bat 1982:12).

In 1907, Governor von Lindequist proclaimed the Etosha region one of three game reserves⁷. According to this ordinance (Ordinance 88 of 1907), the hunting of kudu cows, eland, zebra, buffalo and giraffe was prohibited in game reserves, and vehicular traffic required written permission of the government (SWAA Nature Conservation and Tourism:iv). Lieutenant Adolff Fischer, commander of Fort Namutoni at that time, became the first warden of the game reserve. Fischer was transferred in 1910, and two years later Fort Namutoni was abandoned by the Germans. Private farm ownership was still allowed within the boundaries of the game reserve, but this lapsed in 1935 (Berry 1980:53).

⁶ Hunting had become an economic enterprise in the northern parts of Namibia, including the Etosha area, during the second half of the 19th century. Game, especially lions, rhinos and elephants, had become scarce. The last herd of elephants was killed at Klein Namutoni in 1881. By 1886, no white rhino were left, and black rhinos had found refuge only in the most inaccessible spots. By the turn of the century, lions had been completely exterminated in the Namutoni area (Germishuys and Staal 1979:110-111).

⁷ “[...] Als Wildreservate werden bestimmt: [...] 2.) Das Gebiet südlich, westlich und nordwestlich der Etoscha-Pfanne in den Bezirken Grootfontein und Outjo, welches durch folgende Linien begrenzt wird: Im Osten und Süden die Westgrenze des Ovambolandes vom Kunene bis Oshama. Von dort nach Koantsab und über Ondowa, Chudop, Obado [?], Aigab, Vib, Chorub nach Gub. Von Gub über Otjokaware (Kowares) bis Oachab. Von Oachab das Hoarusib-Rivier bis zum Meere. Im Westen vom Meere. Im Norden vom Kunene bis zur Grenze des Ovambolandes [...]” (Ordinance 88 of 1907, ZBU MII E.1).

The explicit reason for the establishment of game reserves was to protect game in specific areas, since game had become scarce in the territory over the preceding century⁸. However, economic motivations are clearly articulated in the explanatory paper for establishing the game reserves:

[...] The high economic value of game in the country is known to everybody. In some kitchens you can find game as fresh meat. The practical value of the skin as straps and whips, etc., is known. No statistics are available, but if you calculate its value by taking the average price of meat as a basis, you would get a sum of more than 200,000 M. If you took this sum as annual pension, the capital that we have in the game population in the country would exceed several million. We all get this pension for free [...] Thus, each inhabitant should try to protect game because it is in the interest of every individual [...] The use of game reserves for the country might be the following: Centres could be established where game could multiply without disturbance. This increase may mean that game would have to spread out to other grazing areas and eventually reach the farms, where it could be shot and processed [...] I must add the following remarks to the different paragraphs of the proclamation. To §1: The defined reserves comprise areas that, because of their nature, are not fit for farms either now or in the near future [...]”⁹

Therefore, the conservation of nature served specific purposes, and the settlers and colonial administration were to benefit in a direct and material way: Game meat was pinpointed as a crucial resource for the colony. For this reason, it was essential that the game reserve was not fenced. No hints could be found that any need of administrative control over the Haiǀom living in that area was taken into consideration in the decision to declare the Etosha area a game reserve.

The proclaimed Game Reserve No. 2 included today’s Etosha National Park, as well as Kaokoland from the Kunene River to the Hoarusib River, an area of 93,240 km² (de la Bat 1982:12). Since its proclamation, Game Reserve No. 2 has undergone many minor and several major boundary

⁸ The Germans had proclaimed the first game laws in South West Africa some years before the establishment of game reserves (Germishuis and Staal 1979:110f.).

⁹ ZBU MII E.1, translation, mine

alterations under the South African Administration (Berry 1980:53, de la Bat 1982: 14, 19f.)¹⁰.

During the German period, the HaiⓄom were permitted to stay in the reserve. The goals of nature conservation and the policy towards ‘natives’ were contradictory and not strongly related to each other. The prohibition of hunting in this area applied only to hunting with guns, but not to bow and arrow. Archival documents do not give detailed insight into the policy in regard to people within the park. In 1908, it was suggested that more Bushmen from the area outside the game reserve should be settled near Namutoni¹¹; this idea cropped up again during the South African period (see below). In 1910, the District Chief (*Distriktchef*) Zawada asked for more police patrols to round up HaiⓄom at the different waterholes and bring them to Namutoni, where they should work and be fed with maize, in order to protect the game living in the reserve¹². But the administration did not follow up on this plan. Lieutenant Fischer summarised the attitude of the German colonial government towards the HaiⓄom in a comment in his report on an expedition to the Omuramba, Ovambo and Okavango in 1908: “With the advancement of settlement, the Heigum will soon face the choice of becoming farm labourers or moving to areas where they will eventually disappear under more unfavourable living conditions. The tribe of the Heigum is not essential for the development of the colony.”¹³ Whereas game was worth protecting for the sake of the colonial economy, the extinction of Bushmen was not considered to be a loss for colonial development.

Although there was various discourse during the German and South African colonial periods (e.g., by farmers, missionaries and the administration) concerning the treatment of Bushmen that were by no means consistent, they all shared some underlying assumptions grounded in the racist and pseudo-Darwinist ideology of the time, which viewed Bushmen on the lowest rung of human evolution, in an order just above that of animals. It was supposed to be merely a matter of time before Bushmen disappeared

¹⁰ The reasons for and discussions about those changes would themselves be worth a detailed analysis.

¹¹ ZBU W II B.2, Kaiserlicher Bezirksamt Grootfontein an das Kaiserliche Gouvernement, 15-8-1908.

¹² ZBU WII O.4, Distriktamt Namutoni, Bericht, 10-3-1910. If the the above quotation is taken to its logical extreme, one could conclude that the HaiⓄom should be fed with maize in order to keep the meat for the white settlers.

¹³ ZBU F XIII B.4, 15-1-1909, translation, mine.

completely from the face of the earth¹⁴. The Hai@om, or Bushmen in general, were rarely regarded as subjects, but rather objects that had to be subjugated as much as possible in order to serve the colonial powers, a fact clearly reflected in the language used. The control over and necessary assimilation of the people would eventually lead to their inevitable extinction.

Views from Within

The majority of people still alive today did not personally experience the German colonial period. Therefore, it is difficult to draw a picture based on the few statements concerning those times,¹⁵ nevertheless, some aspects may be noted.

The Hai@om lived in family groups near the various waterholes inside the park. According to informants, every group occupied a specific area that often included a number of waterholes, specific bushfood areas or hunting grounds, comparable to the social organisation of some other San groups (Barnard 1986). Headmen (very rarely headwomen) were responsible for peace and order; they were called to settle disputes and to mediate between individuals. They had to be asked permission by people from other areas for hunting or gathering rights. Usually people moved within their area according to season, and extended family networks guaranteed access to natural resources in other areas. But their detailed knowledge was often limited to their specific area, and they didn't know specifics about the headmen of other areas, seasonal mobility within that area, etc.

Contact with other groups also existed: The Hai@om exchanged meat, salt or ostrich eggs for *mahangu* or tobacco with Ovambo. This contact intensified when Oshivambo-speaking men were recruited as contract labourers for the farms further south. On their way back home they crossed the area inside the game reserve. These contacts were not always peaceful: attacks and robberies from the Hai@om occurred occasionally. The elder people in Etosha whom I talked to could not remember Damara staying there

¹⁴ The idea of the "vanishing race," or the extinction of indigenous people, was not only restricted to the San in southern Africa. The same idea was long held the paradigm of research among the indigenous people of North America (see Heinz 1993:44).

¹⁵ In addition, most, if not all, of the elder people are illiterate and not really concerned about dates. It is often difficult to reconstruct any kind of chronological order.

during their lifetime, but they were told by their grandparents that Damara were used by the Hai⁴om to carry meat for them.

In the memory of the Hai⁴om, Aribib is not such a unique man. Some did not know him at all, others claim that it was not Aribib, but in fact [☞]Arixab, who signed the treaty with the Germans. Later on he ran into difficulties with the German colonial administration and fled to Ovamboland. A photograph of Aribib/[☞]Arixab (stored in the National Archives in Namibia) circulated in the 1990s among some of the Hai⁴om communities, perhaps influencing their knowledge about him and his significance as well.

I came across an interesting point of view that was mentioned by an elder man, a proud Xomkhoeb (a Hai⁴om from Etosha Pan¹⁶), concerning the Hai⁴om's relationship with the Germans and the settlement of white farmers south of Etosha:

K: [...] Some people did not have leaders. They just moved around.

Q: But were there problems when they came into the area of another leader?

K: Yes, there were problems. They were coming to steal also, they went away again. Not all the people were good people.

Q: Did they not know the law?

K: They were certainly wild people [laughing]. There were also wild bushmen [laughing]. They were wild people, it is true! Yeah. I have seen it myself. Also at the farm, when I was young ... That side ... [south of Etosha], they had those habits. [In] the German time, they made the Germans angry. My grandfather has told me that. The Germans had come with the cattle. Now, they [the 'wild' Hai⁴om] did not want to struggle hunting, the cattle are tame.... So they started to slaughter the cattle. Germans became angry because of that! [...] When they started to shoot, it was not the mistake of the Germans. All the old people, they know that actually the wild bushmen, the wild Hai⁴om, it was they, who made the people angry. So the Germans decided, all right, we have to fight back now.

¹⁶ Several geographic subgroups of the Hai⁴om (e.g., Xomkhoen, [☞]Xhomakhoen, Kokarakhoen, Sêkhoen) existed, obviously with a high identificational value.

(K.K., 21.04.01, translation, mine¹⁷)

For this man, the Germans were not guilty of taking the land south of Etosha that had already been settled by Hai@om people. He considered the Hai@om in that area to be the ones causing conflict with the Germans. It is important for the interpretation of this perspective to remember that this man lived in Etosha nearly all of his life and that Etosha was a kind of protected area during that time, and nobody had considered settling there to farm¹⁸. The Hai@om themselves were not a united group, and relationships to the colonial administration varied significantly, certainly dependent upon which way the people were affected by the colonial state geographically (either by staying in the game reserve, by being exposed to the advancing settlement south and east of it, or to the Oshivambo-speaking people in the north) or individually.

They [the people south of the game reserve] made problems. When they made them [the settlers] angry on that side, they ran away up to Etosha, here to Xoms [Etosha Pan]. Oh!! That time, my grandfather, he was a policeman of the Germans, they just caught them [the escaping people], they tied them/fastened them. Called the police, the police came... they did not want to have trouble here, they heard, the men had stolen, they had run away to here. So they just looked for them slowly, and they caught them and tied them. Later, somebody called the police.

(K.K. 21.04.01, translation, mine)

Working for the police could ensure a good and secure relationship with the Germans, which they didn't want to threaten by hiding other people's offences. Is it necessary to stress that the Hai@om who lived in the area initially settled certainly had another perspective?

Change: South African Period (1915-1940s)

During World War I, South African troops invaded the Etosha area and occupied Fort Namutoni. Prohibitions concerning the hunting of specific game were lifted for the duration of the war since the military required food

¹⁷ I worked with a translator (Hai@om-English) at the beginning of my field research. Later on, I conducted most of the interviews in Afrikaans and these translations are my own (the translator is indicated below each quotation).

¹⁸ Ruins from German houses can be found at some waterholes. But according to informants, the houses were abandoned after the battle between the Ovambo and Germans at Namutoni in 1904.

and Game Reserve No. 2 offered a vast supply of fresh meat¹⁹ (Germishuis and Staal 1979:112f.). Later on, the German Proclamation was repealed by Ordinance No. 1 of 1916 and amended to suit the new situation. Among other things, the ordinance made provision for hunting licenses and introduced penalties for offences. Specific game (e.g., elephant, rhino, buffalo, giraffe, zebra) were declared 'royal' and could be hunted only for scientific reasons.

The South African Military Administration reconfirmed the borders of Game Reserve No. 2 (SWAA Nature Conservation and Tourism:iv). Permanently manned police posts were established at Namutoni and Okaukuejo. The sergeants of these stations were also responsible for tourism, which was slowly starting to develop (de la Bat 1982:12). They had to write regular reports about their areas concerning the game, stock in the game reserve, Bushmen living within their areas, native employment, visitors, etc.²⁰ In the beginning, Captain Nelson assumed the post of game ranger for Game Reserve No. 2. In 1928, the post was abolished and the native commissioner of Ovamboland, Major Hahn,²¹ took over and acted as part-time game warden.²² It involved a remarkable combination of duties: He was responsible for both game and 'natives.' The abolition of the post of game ranger may document the lack of significance of nature conservation (for whatever purpose) for the South West African Administration during that period.

It is impossible to find exact figures on the number of Hai@om living in the game reserve during those days. The monthly and annual reports were written by people responsible for different areas (e.g., Namutoni or Okaukuejo), which also included land outside the game reserve. Additionally, the accounts given are based only on estimates, since the officers did not have any detailed knowledge about the Hai@om living in their areas, a fact which they often mentioned in their reports:

In Ovamboland proper there are few real Bushmen [...] It is impossible to give accurate figures [...] of the Bushmen

¹⁹ Again, it becomes clear that nature conservation or game protection is neither a goal in itself nor a moral issue, but serves specific purposes that can change over time and depend on the various interest groups involved.

²⁰ E.g., NAO 33/1. These reports resulted in a huge number of archival documents that help to reconstruct the development of the park and the relationship between the Hai@om and the representatives of the South African Administration.

²¹ Up until the 1940s, Major Hahn occupied this post (Gordon 1992:248).

²² SWAA A511/1, Administrator to the Commandant, S.W.A. Police, 24-8-28.

inhabiting the country which falls under the control of this office – including the game reserves – [...] It must be remarked [...] that Bushmen come and go according to season. This is particularly the case with the wild Bushmen inhabiting Eastern Ovamboland who roam from place to place in that vast area following the water and game [...]²³

Analogous to typologies of animals, the administration distinguished between ‘wild’ and ‘tame’ or ‘domesticated’ Bushmen, sometimes adding to these the category of ‘semi-wild.’ Originally, this typology was meant to be spatial and economic: the ‘wild’ Bushmen were those not permanently incorporated into the administrative system, and generally living beyond the Police Zone, while ‘semi-wild’ Bushmen came from beyond the Police Zone to work temporarily on farms. Finally, the ‘tame’ Bushmen were those who were permanently employed on settler farms (Gordon 1992:90). However, the officials used this categorisation quite arbitrarily. Some officers used ‘blood’ as a criterion for the distinction, implying crude racial concepts. Others were of the opinion that stock thieves were automatically ‘wild,’ and sometimes the border of the Police Zone was simply used as the marker between ‘wild’ and ‘tame.’ Thus, it is difficult to grasp whom the officials exactly meant when talking about ‘wild’, ‘semi-wild’ or ‘tame’ Bushmen.

But regardless of these problems, it can be concluded that a few hundred to one thousand Hai@om lived in the park, mainly inhabiting the southern part of Etosha Pan. Lebzelter (1934:83) even estimated that 1500 Hai@om lived around Etosha Pan in the 1920s. The number varied with economic and environmental circumstances, such as the need for labour on surrounding farms or the seasonal availability of wild foods, but no clear trends can be identified, and had there been one, the officials, anxious to document everything, would most probably have described them.

Within the reserve, the Hai@om lived mostly off hunting and gathering. In the 1920s,²⁴ the game ranger received instructions from the government regarding various subjects, one of which fell under the heading Bushmen:

The Ranger should take every opportunity on his patrols, of getting in touch with Bushmen and of endeavouring to persuade them either to hire themselves out to employment with farmers or others to take up their residence away from the vicinity of occupied farms, in the [Game] Reserve. It should be noted that

²³ NAO 11/1, Annual Report 1937.

²⁴ Without exact date.

wild Bushmen should not be prosecuted for offences committed beyond the Police Zone, except if of a most serious nature. Breaches of the Game Law, for example, should pass unnoticed unless firearms are used.²⁵

In regard to Bushmen in the area, the policy offered two possibilities: either employment on farms, which meant a direct integration into the colonial system, or living within the boundaries of the park. It was the lesser evil to have Hai④om staying there than to have them on the farms 'roaming around' and disturbing farmers and the development of the colony. It becomes evident that the park was seen as kind of refuge for Bushmen in the colonial system.

Some Hai④om kept dogs within the boundaries of the game reserve. Hunting with dogs was not allowed and could only be controlled by a complete ban on dogs, which was introduced in 1930²⁶. But generally, hunting by the Hai④om was not seen as a problem in the 1920s and 1930s, as the following comments indicate: "The amount of game shot by Bushmen is by no means decreasing the game" (1926)²⁷ or, ten years later, "The game of the pan was on the increase, even after making liberal allowance to the Bushmen there."²⁸ There were undoubtedly certain limitations (no firearms, no dogs, no shooting of giraffe, kudu, eland, impala and loeffelhund),²⁹ but even the violation of these prohibitions was not generally punished. On one hand, some officials were of the opinion that it was better to have Bushmen live within the game reserve and kill game for their own consumption than to have them move out and commit stock thefts at the occupied farms. In 1926, the game warden wrote to the native commissioner "I encourage the Bushmen to leave the vicinity of occupied farms and to reside in the Game Reserve, where their activities can be controlled to a certain extent, this does not apply to 'tame Bushmen.'"³⁰ On the other hand, station commanders at Namutoni or Okaukuejo were sometimes concerned about strange Bushmen moving in and killing game: "I have the honour to report that it would appear from investigations that quite a lot of Bushmen have made their

²⁵ NAO 33/1: Instructions for the Guidance of Game Ranger. The border of the Police Zone passed through Etosha (see Hartmann et al. 1998: map viii).

²⁶ NAO 33/1, Secretary for S.W.A. to the N.C., Ovamboland, 24-10-1930.

²⁷ SWAA A50/26, Game Warden to the N.C., Ovamboland, 20-8-1926.

²⁸ NAO 33/1, Magistrate Grootfontein to the Secretary, 24-8-1936.

²⁹ NAO 33/1, Officer in Charge, N.A., Ovamboland to the Post Commander, S.W.A. Police, Namutoni 17-9-1928.

³⁰ E.g., SWAA A50/26, 20-8-1926.

appearance in the Reserve within the last two months [...] The continuance of Game being destroyed is a daily routine [...]”³¹ The Secretary for SWA pointed out in October 1930 that the Bushmen’s ‘privilege’ of being able to shoot game for their own consumption did not extend to Bushmen not resident in the reserve “who merely come in following game [...]”³² The possibility of using the park as a refuge for Bushmen was obviously limited. But at that time, the problem did solve itself for a while: Only one month later it was reported that Bushmen were gradually leaving for farms to the south of Etosha.³³

In addition to hunting and gathering, a lot of families had livestock: especially goats, but also a few cattle and donkeys. In the 1920s, there was uncertainty among the officials about the number of stock that should be allowed³⁴. It was decided then that the Bushmen should not keep more than ten head of large and fifty head of small stock per person within the borders of the reserve³⁵. But the issue of livestock was to be raised again later. During the 1930s, there were fair numbers of livestock at some waterholes; for example, at Okevi in 1939 there were twenty-eight cattle, two donkeys and sixty-nine goats belonging to different owners³⁶. The station commander at Namutoni again suggested a reduction in numbers, and the Monthly Report two months later states that all Bushmen stockowners had reduced their herds considerably³⁷.

Besides foraging and raising stock, there were several opportunities for seasonal or regular employment, either inside or outside the game reserve. In the 1920s, a number of Hai@om were employed in the Bobas mine near Tsumeb³⁸. They could also seek work on farms around the park, a possibility that several men chose temporarily and seasonally throughout the first half

³¹ NAO 33/1, Post Commander, Namutoni to the N.C., Ovamboland, 17-10-1930.

³² NAO 33/1, Secretary to the N.C., Ovamboland 24-10-1930.

³³ NAO 33/1 Monthly Return, November 1930.

³⁴ E.g., NAO 33/1 correspondence of N.C., Ovamboland and Post Commander, S.W.A. Police, Namutoni, July-August 1929.

³⁵ NAO 33/1, Officer in Charge, N.A., Ovamboland to the Post Commander, Namutoni, 17-10-1929.

³⁶ SWAA A511/1, Station Commander, S.W.A. Police, Namutoni to the N.C., Ovamboland, 11-10-1939.

³⁷ SWAA A511/1, Station Commander, S.A. Police, Namutoni to the N.C. Ovamboland, 1-12-1939.

³⁸ ADM 5503/1, Game Warden Namutoni to the Secretary for S.W.A., 5-10-1922, 1-6-1924, SWAA A50/26, Game Warden to the N.C., Ovamboland, 20-8-1926.

of the 20th century³⁹. Furthermore, there was a lot of employment available within the game reserve. HaiⓄom were employed in road construction gangs, constructing and repairing roads in order to ensure more comfortable trips for administrative officers, hunters and tourists⁴⁰. Between 1938 and 1940, for instance, approximately fifty HaiⓄom were permanently engaged in repairing or constructing roads⁴¹.

Some of the men⁴² were employed to keep waterholes clean⁴³ or by the police at Namutoni and Okaukuejo⁴⁴. Their names appear again and again in the Monthly or Annual Reports⁴⁵. Payment for work varied substantially. Sometimes the only payment was the permission to stay in the park, sometimes they were given rations such as *maize meal*, sugar and tobacco, and sometimes they received additional wages. At least within the game reserve, a trend could be observed over the years ranging from simply being allowed to remain in the reserve (albeit under the threat of being expelled), to being paid with rations of *maize meal*, sugar, tobacco, to 'proper' wages and supplements of meat to the food rations, a development that certainly did not pertain to the farms outside the reserve. Nevertheless, the wages earned by the HaiⓄom were always considerably lower than those paid to Ovambo labourers⁴⁶.

Views from Within

The past remembered by the HaiⓄom is a time when they were no longer living exclusively from hunting and gathering. There were new opportunities

³⁹ E.g., ADM 5530/1, Game Warden Namutoni to the Secretary for S.W.A, 30-1-1924.

⁴⁰ E.g., SWAA A511/1 Monthly Return April 1929, NAO 33/1, N.C., Ovamboland to the Secretary, 22-10-1932, Station Commander, S.W.A. Police Namutoni to the N.C., Ovamboland, 8-8-1938.

⁴¹ SWAA A50/26, N.C. Ovamboland to the Chief Native Commissioner Windhoek, 5-9-1940.

⁴² HaiⓄom women are rarely mentioned in these reports.

⁴³ E.g., NAO 33/1, Note for the Post Commander, S.W.A. Police Namutoni, 25-5-1932.

⁴⁴ SWAA A511/10 Station Commander, Okaukuejo to the N.C., Ovamboland 15-7-1948.

⁴⁵ Of course their European names (e.g., Fritz, Izak, Joshua) were mostly meant, and not their HaiⓄom names or surnames, which were too difficult to pronounce and nearly impossible to write.

⁴⁶ LGR 2/20/2 Annual Report Native Affairs 1937.

besides the accustomed strategies to make a living. Some men temporarily went to farms to work, and besides foraging they kept some livestock.

D: [...] they could keep the animals at their waterholes: goats, donkeys, and dogs, which they had bought from the Oshivambo-speaking people. So if they [the Oshivambo-speaking people] had come, they bought these donkeys and everything from these people, and they had all these kinds of animals on their own.

(D.K. 26.01.00, translation by V.G.)

The police stations were already established, and when in need of a labour force, the police came to specific waterholes, such as Rietfontein (more or less half-way between Namutoni-Okaukuejo, see map 1) in order to find men for temporary jobs such as road construction or work at the police stations. I suppose the different sergeants knew people at the waterholes near the former road between Namutoni and Okaukuejo quite well, and they knew which men were available to work.

K: Rietfontein [a waterhole and permanent settlement] was previously a station where the police could meet together and the Hai⁴om people have signed contracts there. That was the time while they were still staying here in the Game Park that they have been free as they were moving. But they have signed contracts with the employers to work in the road construction. And then about the cattle, I heard that the Hai⁴om people previously were having the cows, but after I have been born there were only goats, but [...] the families were far from each other, that is why I could maybe not see a cow of another family, but I heard about it, that the people were having the cows.

Q: And did every family have goats as well?

K: Each and every family had a kraal for the goats, and as a child has been born, then I have been given a small goat so as I grew up I knew this one is mine. It was happening like that when I got a gentleman, when I had my own family, I had my own goats.

Q: And what did you do with the goats?

K: In times that it was very hard, that they have suffered from hunger, then they were getting meat from the goats. If they have

maybe hunted and have not got something, then they have to take one of the goats. And they were also milking the goats [...] the first milk, after the goat has given birth, now, that was also milked. And when the baby is born it could also drink from the goat's milk.

(K.K. 6.03.00, translated by V.G.)

From the informant's point of view, the relationship with the police was usually good, and the work was done voluntarily.

Q: Why did they do the work?

K: They were getting this information from the Police because at Okaukuejo and Namutoni, there were already Police Stations, so it was a must.

Q: Were they been forced to work in the road construction?

K: They were not forced, but if you want then you have to work. And the lazy people, they stayed behind. But there was some remuneration to get from the employers.

Q: What do you mean with remuneration?

K: You are getting salary.

Q: What did you get?

K: They got 10 cents and 5 cents.

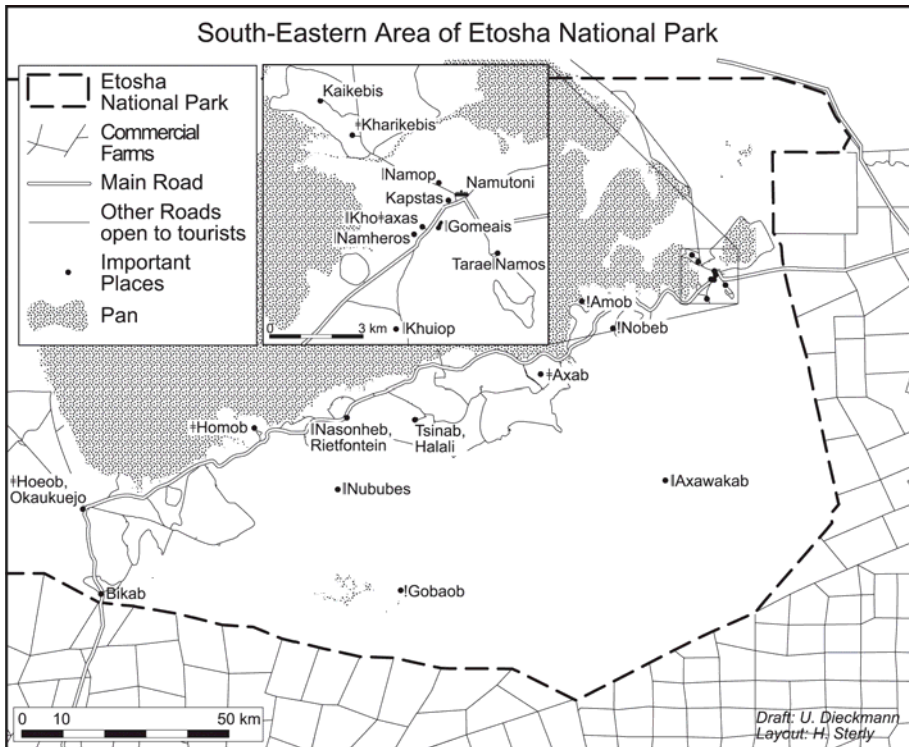
Q: And did they get some meat during that time?

K: The meat was shot, like zebras for them.

(K.K. 6.03.00, translation by V.G.)

Life in Etosha was not isolated 'from the outside': new opportunities and limitations arose from the creation and administration of the game reserve. From the perspective of the Hai⁴om, the changes were not seen as a threat to their way of life, rather, they represented the broadening of options. The (changing) way of life in the 1920s, 1930s and the beginning of 1940s was integrated in the wider sociopolitical and economical system, and involved various economic strategies that could be employed simultaneously. The money earned was used to buy blankets and other commercial goods at specific farms that kept small shops. Stock keeping was a strategy to cope with risk (besides symbolising the owner's wealth). In using these different

strategies, the Haiᄋom of Etosha were no different from other Haiᄋom or other San groups (e.g., Guenther 1986, Suzman 2000, Widlok 1999).



map 2: southeastern area of Etosha National Park

The Development Leading to Eviction: 1940s - 1954

Life within the park changed over the years, new laws were made, and new opportunities arose. Legislation was tightened, particularly in the 1940s. In 1948, after a period of twenty years without amendments to the laws concerning hunting by Bushmen, a limitation was imposed regarding the species that were allowed to be killed. The Haiᄋom were only allowed to hunt wildebeest and zebra, and it was specified that “[...] action, under the Game Law, will be taken against them if they continue to shoot other species of Game [...]”⁴⁷ This new limitation was probably connected to the

⁴⁷ SWAA A511/1, correspondence of the Secretary and the N.C., Ovamboland, 23-2-1948, 24-3-1948.

appointment of the first full-time game warden, A. A. Pienaar, in 1947⁴⁸. The question of enforcing these laws remained, especially in remote areas within the reserve. Additionally, instructions were issued in 1948 that stockowners were no longer allowed to possess more than five head of large stock and ten head of small stock each⁴⁹ in order to control foot-and-mouth disease⁵⁰.

However, these developments cannot be attributed to a single cause; several factors were involved. The necessity of controlling foot-and-mouth disease was one such factor; but the increasing interest in tourism⁵¹ – and the potential of nature conservation in this context – was undoubtedly another major factor that influenced, for instance, the appointment of a full-time game warden. Kruger National Park in South Africa, established in 1926 (Carruthers 1995:64), was held out as the shining example to be followed, and as late as 1954, Schoeman wrote: “Concerning the tourist facilities, Etosha Game Reserve is still in its infancy compared to Kruger Game Reserve.”⁵²

The people living inside the game reserve never played an important role in the perceptions of visitors. In the earlier accounts, one rarely finds more than stray references to the people in the park. Obviously, at that time concepts of nature and the enthusiasm for wilderness excluded people⁵³.

⁴⁸ SWAA A511/1: Jaarsverslag 1953/54 van die Afdeling wildbewaring van SWA van P.J. Schoemann. In the same year, the Kaokoland portion of Game Reserve No. 2 was set aside “for the sole use and occupation by natives.” During the same year, 3406 km² were cut off from Etosha and partitioned into farms (de la Bat 1982:14).

⁴⁹ Based on the numbers of stock reported by the Station Commanders over the years, one cannot notice a tendency towards stock accumulation between 1929 and 1945, and even in 1947, the Station Commander of Okaukuejo reported that there was enough grazing for game and livestock in his area (SWAA A511/1, 1947).

⁵⁰ SWAA A511/1, correspondence of the N.C., Ovamboland and the Secretary for S.W.A., 5-2-1948, 13-4-1948.

⁵¹ SWAA A511/10.

⁵² SWAA A511/1, Jaarsverslag van die Afdeling Wildbewaring van S.W.A, April 1953-Maart 1954.

⁵³ “Footprints of Bushmen” (Heck 1956:85) are referred to, or a mention is made of “another exciting experience [that] was a hunt and ‘kill’ by a party of Bushmen who then had their werft at Rietfontien” (Davis 1977:142, writing about 1936). The idea of wilderness or ‘pure nature’ does not inevitably exclude native people. For the concept of wilderness including the Indians in North America in the first half of the 19th century see Spence (1999:11ff.).

Bushmen Policy in General and the Haiǀom Discussion

To understand the developments that finally led to the expulsion of the Haiǀom from Etosha, we have to turn to the overall policy of the South African Administration of Namibia regarding Bushmen over the years. In the very beginning of the South African Mandate period, official attitudes towards Bushmen were remarkably tolerant. As Gordon notes, “Initially, the South African Occupation Forces were concerned to show the world how much better they were than their German predecessors and consequently were more tolerant toward Bushmen.” But he also adds, “Below the level of magisterial rhetoric aimed at superiors, a different world existed” (Gordon 1992:89). In 1921, the Native Reserves Commission (the body responsible for the development of segregation as policy) was of the opinion “that ‘the Bushmen problem [...] must be left to solve itself’ (supposedly with the extinction of the group), and that ‘any Bushmen found within the area occupied by Europeans should be amenable to all the laws’” (South West Africa 1922, quoted in Gordon 1992:91). But the ‘problem’ did not solve itself. In the early 1920s, the magistrate Van Rynefeld was murdered by Bushmen (Gordon 1992: 92f.). Ovambo labourers were occasionally attacked and robbed on their way back to Ovamboland, and this obviously endangered the system of migrant labour that was indispensable for the economy of South West Africa. In addition, farmers complained regularly about the Bushmen, whom they held responsible for stock thefts, grass fires and attacks⁵⁴. They pressured the administration to solve the problem. For instance, E. Schwarz, a farmer, wrote to the magistrate of Grootfontein in 1926, painting the Bushmen in the darkest colours:

[...] The above said proves that the Bushmen put themselves outside the law, they are a danger for life and property of all human beings. Therefore, the State has not only the right but the duty, in the interest of its citizens, to make very severe and drastic laws for and against the Bushmen.⁵⁵

The administration took action, and laws were amended: the Vagrancy Proclamation was passed in 1927,⁵⁶ the Arms and Ammunition Proclamation passed in 1928, and Bushmen bows and arrows were included under the

⁵⁴ SWAA A50/26.

⁵⁵ SWAA A50/67, 2-7-1926.

⁵⁶ SWAA A50/27, 1927, Proclamation No. 32.

definition of 'firearms' (Gordon 1992:130). Thereafter, a slight improvement was reported in the situation⁵⁷.

Another discussion about the 'Bushmen problem' occurred simultaneously to these developments; namely, the suggestion to create a Bushmen reserve, a suggestion that had already made during the German Colonial Period (e.g., von Zastrow 1914, ZBU 1911⁵⁸), but put aside at the time as impracticable. In 1936, the issue was raised once again, shortly after the Empire Exhibition in Johannesburg, where a number of Bushmen families were exhibited for public curiosity. The question now arose whether Bushmen, with their "fascinating" habits and customs, were not worthy "of being preserved for all time in South Africa."⁵⁹ This question was also addressed to the administration of South West Africa in regard to the Bushmen there⁶⁰. The administration itself was sceptical about the idea of a Bushmen Reserve,⁶¹ but demonstrating good will, it agreed to undertake an ethnological enquiry funded by the Carnegie Corporation⁶². Isaac Schapera, a social anthropologist, was entrusted with ethnological investigations. He drew up a questionnaire that the district administrative officers were supposed to complete. The officers' replies were by no means enthusiastic,

⁵⁷ E.g., LGR 17/15/6, Annual Report 1930.

⁵⁸ Kaiserliches Bezirksamt Outjo an das Kaiserliche Gouvernement: Betr.: Erhaltung der Buschleute: „[...] Meines Erachtens muß es das Bestreben der Verwaltung sein, aus dem vagabundierenden Buschmann einen sesshaften und nützlichen Arbeiter zu machen. Sollten diese Versuche mißlingen, so bleibt nichts übrig als den Buschleuten den Aufenthalt im besiedelten Lande derartig zu verleiden, daß sie sich in Gebiete zurückziehen, wo sie dem Weißen nicht gefährlich werden können (etwa in der Namib oder im Betschuanaland). Reservate für sie zu schaffen wäre mit der Schaffung eines Sammelplatzes für Viehdiebe und Straßenräuber gleichbedeutend. Das wissenschaftliche Interesse muß gegen das Interesse der Sicherheit der weißen Ansiedler und der farbigen Arbeiter insbesondere der arbeitssuchenden Ovambos zurücktreten.“ (ZBU W II O.2, Kaiserliches Bezirksamt Outjo an das Kaiserliche Gouvernement, 12-11-1911), see also Gordon 1992:60ff. for the discussions during that time.

⁵⁹ SWAA A50/67, 24-9-1936, article in *The Star*.

⁶⁰ The scientific community, especially anthropologists, with their own specific interests, took an active part in these discussions about Bushmen reserves (Gordon 1992:147f.).

⁶¹ SWAA A198/26, Smit, Secretary for Native Affairs, to Courtney Clarke, Secretary for S.W.A., 26-8-1937.

⁶² SWAA A198/26, Courtney Clarke to Smit, 2-9-1937.

and the information collected was not very useful⁶³. With the outbreak of World War II, the matter was dropped once again⁶⁴.

The Haiǀom played only a minor part in this discussion, since their status as ‘pure Bushmen’ was questioned by both academics and administrative officers⁶⁵. But the need to deal with them existed, especially with those living outside the game reserve. Opinions about how to go about this were by no means consistent. In 1921, the deputy commissioner of police in Outjo reported that the “district is infested with Bushmen who undoubtedly do a great deal of harm to the stock of farmers [...] and who are more like jackals than human beings.”⁶⁶ In 1936, an inquiry was made concerning the possibility of prosecution even inside the game reserve. The police considered the game reserve as a possible haven for “Bushmen criminals” and wanted to send patrols into the reserve, but they were denied permission⁶⁷. In 1938, there was a contradictory suggestion: Move all the Haiǀom of the region into the game reserve⁶⁸. In 1940, the native commissioner of Ovamboland suggested that Bushmen families should either be moved inside the game reserve or to Ovamboland. In reference to a former letter to the Secretary of SWA he wrote:

[...] I do not consider the Bushmen population of the Game Reserve excessive; in fact I thought that room could be found for more wild families and that these could be settled at places other than the main springs and game watering places, where

⁶³ SWAA A198/26, e.g., Assistant Native Commissioner Runtu, 14-8-1939.

⁶⁴ SWAA A198/26, Courtney Clarke to the Chief Native Commissioner, Windhoek, 23-5-1946.

⁶⁵ According to common typologies for which racial, geographic, as well as linguistic parameters, were used by academics, the Haiǀom could not be identified as ‘prototypical Bushmen.’ Their language is more closely related to Nama/Damara than to other Bushmen languages, they lived for a long time in an multi-ethnic environment, and their appearance was not really ‘Bushman-like.’ It was often supposed that they were a ‘racial mixture’ or ‘hybrids’ (e.g., von Zastrow 1914:2-3, Fourie 1959 [1931]:211f., Bruwer 1965:58, Gusinde 1954:56).

⁶⁶ ADM 3360, Deputy Commissioner, S.W.A. Police to the Secretary for S.W.A., 6-9-1921.

⁶⁷ SWAA A50/67, Station Commander, S.W.A. Police, Outjo to the District Commandant Omaruru 30-9-1939, Commissioner S.W.A. Police Windhoek to the Secretary for S.W.A. 14-10-1936, N.C., Ovamboland to the Secretary for S.W.A. 14-11-1936.

⁶⁸ SWAA A50/67, District Commandant, Omaruru to the Commissioner, S.W.A. Police, Windhoek 15-10-1938.

big concentrations of various species of game even proved so attractive to visitors. I pointed out too that the Bushmen in the Reserve form part and parcel of it and that they have always been a great attraction to tourists.⁶⁹

His comments are exceptional, insofar as in the same letter he suggested involving both Hai@om and Ovambo in the discussions.

After World War II, the issue of how to deal with the Bushmen regained prominence, partly due to a strong white farmers' lobby, which continued to approach the officers to solve the Bushmen problem. The first step taken was the formulation of a general policy in regard to the future treatment and control of "wild Bushmen": "befriend" them rather than "scare them off." This included food donation schemes, as well as a peaceful and confidence-seeking attitude by the police towards the Bushmen. The police were issued small supplies of tobacco, salt and maize meal to hand out when necessary in making contact with Bushmen. Supplies of the same items were also available for old and sick Bushmen, or in cases of severe drought. The main purpose was to prevent further stock thefts⁷⁰. In subsequent years, the station commanders from Okaukuejo and Namutoni, amongst others, submitted regular requisitions for supplies of maize meal, salt and tobacco⁷¹.

Under this new policy, the Commission for the Preservation of Bushmen⁷² was appointed in 1949, and P. A. Schoeman and Dr. L. Fourie were among its members. Schoeman was known as a famous writer and anthropologist actively involved in developing a cohesive doctrine of Grand Apartheid. Fourie was a 'Bushmen expert' and the medical officer of the Mandate granted by the League of Nations to the Union of South Africa to administer South West Africa (Gordon 1992:144, 160f.). The commission undertook official tours to investigate the 'Bushmen question' and wrote several reports with different suggestions. Although, in its preliminary report, the commission suggested a Hai@om reserve be created near the game reserve, this suggestion was dropped in the final report, without giving any convincing explanation for the change⁷³. All Hai@om (except twelve

⁶⁹ SWAA A50/26, 5-9-1940.

⁷⁰ SWAA A50/67, Deputy Commissioner, Windhoek to the District Commandants, S.W.A. Police, 3-4-1947.

⁷¹ SWAA A50/67.

⁷² Note the terminology: 'Bushmen' should be 'preserved' as nature should, but at separate places.

⁷³ The explanation given was: "The Commission for the Preservation of Bushmen has found that, since presenting its preliminary report, developments have taken

families still employed within the park) were to leave the game reserve and move either to Ovamboland or to farms south of Windhoek, where they were expected to look for work⁷⁴. The reasons for the decision to expel the Hai@om without any compensation were not clearly expressed anywhere. This harsh recommendation might seem surprising, because until then there had been no consistent complaints about game being targeted by the Hai@om living there. Indeed, the Hai@om in the game reserve were sometimes considered ‘part and parcel’ of it, or, at least, as not disturbing the game population. An article about Etosha Pan Game Reserve, prepared by an officer of the South West African Administration for a publisher in Johannesburg in 1949, stated: “Perhaps one should also mention the Bushmen, although nowadays they are no longer classed as ‘game’! They certainly fit into the picture and help to give to the Etosha Pan something of the atmosphere of the old wild Africa that is fast disappearing everywhere [...]”⁷⁵

The proposals were undoubtedly influenced by the fact that one of its members, the anthropologist P. A. Schoeman, had been responsible for Etosha as full-time game warden since 1951. He recognised Etosha’s tourist potential and had already started to develop tourist infrastructure in the game reserve by constructing bungalows for tourists, improving roads, and drilling new bore-holes (de la Bat 1982:15). The general opinion that the Hai@om were not ‘real Bushmen’ was certainly yet another factor, for the final report of the commission mentioned that

Nowhere did your [the Administrator’s] commissioners receive the impression that it would be worthwhile to preserve either the Heikum or the Barrakwengwe [Kxoe, another group labelled “Bushmen”] as Bushmen. In both cases the process of assimilation has proceeded too far and these Bushmen are already abandoning their nomadic habits and are settling down amongst the neighbouring tribes to agriculture and stock breeding [...]⁷⁶

place in the Etosha Pan Game Reserve which make its previous recommendation – that a Reserve for the Bushmen should be established along the border of the Game Reserve – impracticable [...]” (SWAA A627/11/1, n.d.).

⁷⁴ SWAA A50/67, Secretary to the Administrator-in-Executive Committee, 20-8-1953.

⁷⁵ SWAA A511/1, 9-5-1949.

⁷⁶ SWAA A627/11/1, 1956.

We are faced here with a monumental ignorance of historical facts: The necessity to integrate the Hai@om into the economic system, which did not stop at the borders of Etosha, almost inevitably led to their assimilation. This implied, without doubt, the alienation from an exclusively foraging way of life, and this in turn finally produced the opinion that the Hai@om were not worth ‘preserving.’⁷⁷

The attitudes of white farmers also played a role in the recommendations, even if the protection of game was the officially expressed reason for the decision. The farmers needed labour, and perhaps this explains why the Hai@om were ultimately not forced to shift to an area south of Windhoek. Instead, it was accepted that they be moved to farms neighbouring the game reserve. The game warden Schoeman himself was afraid of informing the Hai@om in the reserve about the government decision, and the Native Commissioner of Ovamboland was appointed for this task: “[...] because he considers that their removal from the Game Reserve is bound to [lead to] antagonism amongst these Bushmen, Dr. Schoeman feels that he should not present the matter personally as such antagonism may hamper his work in the Game Reserve. There is, therefore, no alternative but to ask [the Native Commissioner of Ovamboland] to take the necessary steps for their removal [...]”⁷⁸ And he did so; later he reported to the Chief Native Commissioner that:

I addressed 24 men, 33 women and 35 children [...] on the 30th January 1954 at Namutoni and 14 men, 15 women and 21 children [...] on the 31st January at Okaukueyo, in the following terms:

‘I have come here to tell you that it is the order of the Administration that you move out of Game Reserve No. 2. The reason for this order is that you are destroying the game. You may go into the Police Zone and seek work on farms South of Windhoek, or elsewhere. You must take your women and children with you, also your stock. There are many farmers who will take you into their employ and I am sure allow you to have your stock with you. Those of you who do not wish to go and work on farms must move into Ovamboland, but without your stock of any description, i.e., cattle, horses, goats, donkeys,

⁷⁷ Preservation of ‘pure’ peoples had now become desirable. The disastrous consequences of this racist ideology are well known.

⁷⁸ SWAA A50/67, Chief Native Commissioner to the N.C., Ovamboland, 28-12-1953.

fowls, dogs etc. You will have to be out of the Game Reserve the 1st May, 1954. If you are still in the Game Reserve on that day you will be arrested and will be put into gaol. You will be regarded as trespassers [...] None of you will be allowed to return to Game Reserve No. 2 from Ovamboland. Those of you who go to farms will not be allowed to return to the Game Reserve unless you are in possession of a permit issued by a Magistrate [...] I hope you understand this message. If you have something to say I will listen but I wish to tell you that there is no appeal against this order. The only Bushmen who will be allowed to continue to live in the Game Reserve are those in the employ of the Game Wardens. Convey what you have heard today to your absent friends and relatives.'

Replies made by some of the Bushmen at Namutoni do not deserve any comment. Those of Okaukueyo made no representations [...] I should have held these meetings with the Bushmen in November but was asked to postpone them by your telegram [...] In the meantime 80% of the Bushmen have already left the Game Reserve and have taken up employment in farms in the Outjo, Tsumeb and Grootfontein districts. Although I told those remaining at Namutoni and Okaukueyo that they should seek work on farms South of Windhoek, I added, or elsewhere, as the whole object is to get them to leave the Game Reserve. It would be impracticable and certainly undesirable to try and compel them to take up employment on farms in a particular portion of South West Africa. I understand that since November, 1953, certain farmers were given permits by Magistrates to enter the Game Reserve for the purpose of recruiting Bushmen labour. [...] ⁷⁹

Through analysis of the archival documents, one comes to realise that the problem of taking control over the Bushmen, followed by the idea of creating a Bushmen reserve, existed from the beginning of the colonial period, sometimes higher on the agenda than in other years. The Hai⁴om, by being Bushmen, had also to be taken into consideration in the general Bushmen discussion, but they were surely not regarded as the most difficult part of it. The game reserve had been a protected area both for animals as well as for Bushmen for more than 40 years, but things changed. With Schoeman's appointment to the Commission for the Preservation of

⁷⁹ SWAA A50/67b, 1-2-1954.

Bushmen as well as to full-time game warden for Etosha, ideas about nature conservation and tourism became part of the general discussion about Bushmen⁸⁰. The preservation of nature and the 'preservation' of people now had to take place as separate issues in separate places. A solution had to be found for the Hai@om still living in Etosha, as well as for other Bushmen groups. The criterion of 'pureness' in the discussion about Bushmen reserves led to the belief that the Hai@om were not worth 'preservation' because they were already 'too assimilated.' Thus, they had to leave Etosha for the exclusive sake of nature conservation and were subsequently left without any land.

The search for other documents (e.g., articles, books about Etosha) that mention the eviction met no success. The former Chief Game Warden of South West Africa, Bernabé de la Bat (1982), who was appointed biologist in the park and stationed there until 1963, did not mention these events in his article about the history of Etosha. He only writes that "In 1955 the Administration decided to establish a permanent section to deal with game and game reserves [...]. Our total staff establishment in Etosha consisted of three whites, 12 Wambo and 16 Heikum Bushmen [...]" (1982:15). Reminiscing about "those days" he writes, "The small number of Heikum Bushmen still living in the park were induced by the Bantu Commissioner, Harold Eedes, to settle at the rest camps where proper housing, medical care and work opportunities were available. They became our trackers, builders, camp workers and later our road grader and bulldozer operators." (1982:16). Dieter Aschenborn, the famous Namibian painter, who was game warden in Okaukuejo between 1952 and 1954, did not mention the Hai@om in his highly readable and amusing memoirs about those two years in Etosha (Aschenborn 1957).

Views from Within

I will summarise what I got to know in the various interviews concerning the eviction. Some events cannot be traced exactly according to chronological order.

In the beginning, there were just police stations at Namutoni and Okaukuejo. Tourists visited the park from time to time, but the park was closed for the rainy season every year. Police went out with the tourists to go

⁸⁰ This combination of duties reminds us of the combination of the tasks which Major Hahn (as native commissioner and part-time game warden) had to fulfil in the 1920s.

to waterholes where Hai[Ⓞ]om still lived. At these occasions, the people often gathered at specific places such as trees to wait for the tourists, who gave them sweets or fruits and took some pictures. The Hai[Ⓞ]om appreciated the remuneration they got from the tourists for being ‘looked at’. No informant remembered anything annoying about the tourists.

Later on, representatives of nature conservation appeared, and they made the decision to remove the Hai[Ⓞ]om. The Administration started to hand out rations (meat or tobacco) to the people. This rationing is always mentioned in the context of the removal, apparently the people interpret the rations as one step in the bigger plan of expulsion.


Schoeman and de la Bat are well known by many people.

It is a long story, but I will try it. When it was the free life, I was still young. But I was very awake, I always listened [to the words of the older people]. This place was first [...] only a police station [...] But the tourists were coming all the time [...] And later in time, slowly, the Nature Conservation came in [...] Schoeman came first, then Aschenborn, those men came. They just worked. They went out, when the tourists went out, they went with the people [...] There is now another story. Now the people got a ration, food and meat, that time [...]

(K.K. 7.11.00, translation, mine)

Whereas the police sergeants are often described in a positive way, Schoeman in particular was obviously not very popular. He is thought to be responsible for the decision for removal. As it seems, his attempts to avoid antagonism amongst the Bushmen by not informing them of the removal himself failed.

Due to the vast area and the lack of roads to each and every settlement, people could not just be rounded up and brought out. Several informants mentioned that they were firstly ‘tamed’ (an obvious adoption of the colonial discourse about the Bushmen) before they could be removed. They got used to the rations, they were not allowed to hunt anymore, and they were gathered at a couple of waterholes that were easily accessible from the police stations.

J: [...] And later, they said, nee, all the people have to move away from the waterholes to Namutoni, that you will stay there at Namutoni, the people will give you food, you will get tobacco there, so all the people moved from the waterholes to [Ⓞ]Khoe Axas [a waterhole near Namutoni] to stay there... so

we stayed there, we thought that we would stay, stay, stay, and then we saw that the people were moved out from there.

Q: So first the whites told you to move to ④Khoe & Axas...

J: Yea, to move to Namutoni, so that the people stayed near the closest water there and then perhaps meat would be shot there, and you would get some porridge, the people said so, I have just heard from the old people, the old people told me that, so the people said, ok. The people all moved away from the waterholes, there from !Gobaub [far in the south] to ④Nasoneb [Rietfontein], some people, and some people [Namutoni, ④Khoen & Axas]. And the people from Tsinab [near Halali, which did not yet exist], they moved to ④Nasoneb. And we who have been close to here, we moved to Namutoni. From there, we just have seen the cars which have come and they took the people and they brought the people to Outjo, some went to the side of Tsumeb. I was together with grandmother, so we went to the farm Onguma where we stayed until I became big.

(J.T., 22.04.01, translation, mine)

Some waterholes were more than 50 kilometres away from the police stations or the main road, thus, it took a while to contact the Hai④om and convince them to move. In the Hai④om's perception today, the development leading to the eviction was a slow process, and it took some years for the representatives advocating nature conservation to perform the requirements necessary for eviction.

I cannot remember the year, when the Game Park has been taken over, but what I can remember was that when the tourists were visiting, the people, the people of the Nature Conservation said that dogs are making noise, now, they must be prohibited from being in the Game Park, and so, little, little, they decided, no, these cattle must also be out and then, this bow and arrow must also be stopped, and no one has to hunt. And people were in a big number around Rietfontein. And they decided, the Nature Conservators, that they will shoot for them every month, and then give them meat each and every time, and so, things have been stopped.

(D.K. 26.01.00, translation by V.G.)

But eventually, the necessary requirements were fulfilled, and all that was needed was a meeting to inform the people about the decision. I came across one elder man who remembered the meeting at Namutoni when the people were told to move out quite well:

H: [...] 1951, February month, they just have called all the Boers and there was one ... [?], he stayed there at Vamboland, he was an Englishman. He called them there, and they then had a meeting there, and we came also.

Q: Where was it?

H: It was at Namutoni.

Q: So the Englishman of Ovamboland was also there?

H: Yes. His name was Eedes, that was a white man. He was Englishman.

Q: What was his name?

H: Ietz/Eedes, but I don't know his surname.

Q: And it was 1951?

H: 1951. 2nd or 5th of February. And that year, it rained, it rained a lot, the pan was full with water.

Q: The Englishman came to Namutoni?

H: Yes, he came.

Q: And all the Hai@om...

H: ... had to come together. And they have held a meeting. So they said, ok, this is now our place. That is not your place anymore. You now have to go, there are now donkeycarts and horsescarts and motorcars, everything is there. And the Boers said, thank you, thank you, that we can get people. And they had listened [?], some people, who did not..., with the wives and the children, they were loaded [onto the transport], for the farms, to the farms. There were just a few old men, who..., Ou Isaak...

Q: And you said, it was 1951, I thought it was 1954.

H: Yes, no, no, 1951, I was a big man, I know very well. But now, one old man, Ou Isaak...

Q: But I thought that during that time you have been working at Vergenoeg [farm]?

H: Yes, yes. They wrote a letter, the Police brought the letter with the bicycle there, that there would be the meeting. So the wife of the Baas, she loaded some men, the Sergeant had said, bring H., because H. has a keen mind, so that H. can translate, that is why those Boers brought me there so that I could translate.

Q: Then the Boers loaded the people onto the cars...

H: Onto the cars and they brought them to the farms. And the few people who stayed behind, were Ou August and Ou Isaak, Ou Isaak had cattle, now he asked there, what shall I do with the cattle? So they said, you just have to take your cattle and go. Any Baas who will rule you, you just can stay there with your cattle. Ok, from there he also moved with his cattle to Vergenoeg.

Q: Isaak?

H: Yes.

Q: With his cattle. And August?

H: August, he did not have cattle, but he just went there. And Ou Karl. Ou Karl went to Onguma [farm].

Q: And August went to Vergenoeg?

H: Yes. Yes. August went to Vergenoeg. My Oom, the oldest brother of my mother, Ou Fritz, he stayed at Okevis [waterhole near Namutoni], he stayed there with his wife and children, he also went to Vergenoeg. So now, there are just the people who worked there who could stay there.

Q: You did go back to Vergenoeg?

H: Yes. I have just translated and I went back again. And later on, I worked for road construction...

(H.H. 27.3.01, translation, mine)

Can we assume that this man is talking about the same meeting that the Native Commissioner of Ovamboland described in detail (see above)? On one hand, there are many facts that let us believe it is the same meeting: The name of the native commissioner of Ovamboland *was* Eedes. The meeting

took place at Namutoni. The farmers' need for labourers was mentioned as well.

On the other hand, I have no explanation for the discrepancy between the dates: 1951 (his version) and 1954 (official version). The informant quoted above is one of the few people who remembers dates quite well: he knows the dates of birth of his children, he knows the years when he moved from one farm to another, etc. Both versions at least agree on the fact that it was a very rainy year (this can be read in the monthly reports of 1954). It becomes obvious how difficult, or impossible, it is sometimes to form a consistent story from different source material.

Another issue is touched on again in this man's description: The integration of the Hai@om in the colonial system was not en-groupe. Individuals were integrated differently. This man was called a translator, others also had active roles in connection with the removal, for example, as drivers. People at waterholes close to the police stations were well known by the sergeants and were called for specific jobs. However, families who stayed at distant waterholes did not have as much contact with the police or tourists, and were not called for jobs, but moved easily to farms in the vicinity to take up employment. Thus, even the removal of the Hai@om affected individuals quite differently.

Let us return to the quotation by the Native Commissioner of Ovamboland about the meeting and removal. He mentioned that 80% of the Hai@om had already left the park. This is a fact that some informants mentioned as well. Most of the people went voluntarily during that period; the final consequences had not yet been anticipated (see following section).

One woman complements the official report of the speech given by Mr. Eedes' (assuming that both were describing the same event), who merely mentioned that "replies made by some of the Bushmen at Namutoni do not deserve any comment":

Q: Can she remember the time when the whites came, this Englishman of Ovamboland who told the people that now is the time you have to move out?

K/F: She is not sure about the year, but she remembers that man.

Q: What does she still know, what did that man tell the people?

K/F: The man has come, he said, here this land, you have to move out now. So he came and he said, the people they have to

go out.... But the old man, Isaak, he worked for the police, he talked, he said, the animals, we people, we don't kill the animals, we don't chase the animals away, but the rifle, that chases the animals away. Our bow and arrow, it cannot chase the animals away. He came out and talked like that. But when they explained, he was alone, he talked alone to the Englishman, now, he has lost. The other men did not support him, they stayed silent, he had just talked alone...

(F.A. 30.03.01, translation to Afrikaans: K.K., to English, mine)

Isaak's objections were not taken seriously and did not have any consequences. The people had to move. Most went by foot, and some were brought with lorries to Namutoni and Okaukuejo, where lorries were already waiting to transport people to different farms in the vicinity of the game reserve. The Haiom had to give up their bows and arrows to the police, and people were divided and brought to different farms. Some farmers came to the game reserve in search of suitable labourers.

[...] Later in time, the Government decided, they said, Schoemann and Aschenborn, and the police worked also together with [...] the Nature Conservation to bring the people out, to bring them away from the waterholes. But they were not transported, they were just told, "go to Okaukuejo." Some went by foot, others were brought with the cars. So we came here, and here they divided the people. Those people who should go out to the farms and those who should stay here to work for the Government. We were also from the people who had to go out. There at Namutoni, that other area, from Halali the other side, they did the same. Those who should stay with the Government stayed behind, other people: out. The people were called, and the farm owners came and they have chosen by themselves, how many and whom they wanted to take. They asked which people are from one house, so the people from one house [family] were taken by one man, one man took those people. So we were brought out. There was no gate, there was no border, there was nothing. We went there to the farms, we stayed there [...].

(K.K., 7.11.2000, translation, mine)

These various voices about the eviction are personal reminiscences. They have not been transformed into oral tradition about the removal in the form

of a unanimous account of exodus. Instead, we are left to puzzle over the different perspectives and interpretations of the events.

And after? The South African Period (1954-1990)

Let us shift back to the official version. In the same year as the eviction meeting, 1954, the SWA Parks Board was accorded responsibility for the maintenance and expansion of game reserves (Gaerdes 1957:43). More funds were made available for the expansion of tourism, resulting in more specific planning and development. At least some Hai@om could stay in the park, although no longer at the various waterholes, but under tight control at the rest camps at Okaukuejo and Namutoni and near the two gates, Lindequist and Ombika.⁸¹ In the 1950s, regular patrols were undertaken to apprehend Bushmen at the different waterholes. Those who were caught were charged for being there without a pass. But, due to a lack of time, the patrols were often restricted to waterholes near the police stations and/or rest camps, or the main road between Namutoni and Okaukuejo, a fact regretted by the officers.⁸²

After 1958, Game Reserve No. 2 became Etosha National Park (Berry 1980:53). Due to the shift in objective from game reserve to national park, fencing became both an important and difficult task. The first fences at Etosha were erected by European farmers on the southern boundary during the period between 1955 and 1960, but the fences were discontinuous and easily broken. In 1961, an epidemic of foot-and-mouth disease in the northern regions of Namibia resulted in the erection of a 'game-proof' fence along the eastern and southern boundaries. The complete fencing of Etosha was finished in 1973 (Berry 1980:54). Since governmental interest in tourism had increased significantly, especially in the 1960s under the Administrator of SWA Daan Viljoen (Viljoen 1961:3-9), and a greater awareness of conservation had also become evident (de la Bat 1982:20), there was no lack of labour in the following years for the few remaining Hai@om. Tourist facilities were expanded or constructed, and a new location for 'black' employees was built.⁸³ Women were employed to clean rest camps, and as domestic workers for the sergeants and game wardens. Men were employed in road construction, as cleaners, mechanics, and

⁸¹ Since 1967, some have also stayed at Halali, an additional rest camp opened during that year (Berry et al. 1996:38).

⁸² NTB N 13/3/2: Monthly Reports Namutoni, e.g., July, December 1957, May 1958.

⁸³ NTB N 13/3/2, 1958.

assistants of the *veldwagters*. Until the 1960s, they were also still engaged as tourist attractions, dancing ‘traditional’ dances in ‘traditional’ clothes for visitors twice a week in the Okaukuejo rest camp⁸⁴. No explanation could be found in the documents consulted for the abolition of this custom.

Those who were born in the park were given permission to stay there for the rest of their lives⁸⁵. In 1984, 244 Hai@om lived in the park at Okaukuejo, Halali, Namutoni and the two gates (Marais 1984:37f.).

Views from Within

As mentioned above, the complete consequences of the removal were not anticipated by many people. Before the 1950s, the Hai@om lived in Etosha, but went to farms to work for a couple of months or they visited family members who were already staying and working regularly on a farm. Thus, in the beginning, it was nothing really new for them. And since there were no fences, they thought that it would be easy to return to those waterholes not under regular inspection from park officials. But after a while they realised that things had indeed changed:

K: [...] But the old people, they said, come, we are going back [to the park]. They decided, come, we are going, back, what are we doing here [on the farms]? We cannot stay here for a long time! We want to go back home! [...] We are going back home! We are going to @Nasoneb [Rietfontein].

But they met the police sergeant on their way back home, and he asked them what they were doing there.

K: We said, we are coming back! He said, where are your papers, passes, where are your passes? We said, what kind of a pass? We just come back!!! No, not again, it is finished, you won't come again! You, as you look for work, look to other places for work! Not here! You don't have to come here! We went back to Oberland.

J: [...] So they thought perhaps we shall come back. They said, we are just going there to work [to the farms], we will always come. So like K. said, when you come back, you need a pass.

⁸⁴ SWAA A511/1, n.d.

⁸⁵ I did not get the exact information about the date, but both the Chief Game Warden and Hai@om informants assured me that they could stay there if they had been born there.

You have to come with a pass, you must not come like that. Go back. They were hunted away and they stayed, stayed, stayed, but you don't forget! Your place, you are coming back, this side ... [?] What is this man looking for? Tell him that he comes! When you pass here, there were a few people ... [?], he was a police man, at the police man. He is going there [?]. What are you looking for? I just visit these people. No, you have to bring your pass! Where is your pass? He [the "trespasser"] is locked up. He is going to jail [laughing]. Until we nearly forget this place! The old people, the old people were very afraid for the whites that time! [...talking Hai@om...] you will be beaten. We are going back! We went back to the farms, we stayed, stayed, stayed. But I never forgot this place, I came always, then I worked here [...]

(K.K. and J.T. 22.04.01, translation, mine)

Shortly after the expulsion, the Hai@om encountered problems whenever they met the police or tried entering through the gate when returning to the park. It was not advisable to visit waterholes situated near the main road, the stations or rest camps, but otherwise, their movements could not be completely controlled. People remember two Hai@om who stayed continuously at !Gobaub near the southern boundary of Etosha until at least the end of the 1960s. Others went back 'home' for some time (weeks or months), but returned to the farms or the rest camps later on. What is said for the animals applied for people as well: "Initially the definition of Etosha's boundaries made virtually no impact on the movement of wild animals [...] Physically the boundaries consisted of surveyed points and later firebreaks were cleared along some of them" (Berry 1980:54).

An interview with a white woman who owns a farm along the border of Etosha supports this assumption. The Hai@om who worked on the farm sometimes went back 'home' to hunt meat, which she would find later on near the houses of the workers. Discussions about it would have meant the discovery of an offence, thus, she kept silent and did not inquire⁸⁶.

⁸⁶ Q: ..Zurückgegangen?

T: Doch, vielleicht, um mal nen Gemsbok oder was zu holen, so n bisschen gegangen, Fleisch war bei ihnen also das, wirklich das, was, worum ihr ganzes Leben...Und manchmal, wenn ich dann an dem Pontoks (?) ankam, wo die wohnten, dann siehste da Fleisch und du siehst da so'n, so'n Spieß, so, und du siehst noch, da, das Fleisch, das hängt da in den Bäumen, und du weißt, das ist nicht deins, [...], du hast es nicht gegeben, aber du sagst nichts, du machst, als ob

Some Hai@om first went to farms, but legally returned to the park after a couple of years to take up employment. A labour force was needed within the park due to the development of tourism.

The fence is now put up. The gate is there now. We came there, they said, no, you are not coming in anymore. Who is on that side, stay on that side. Who is inside, stay inside. We were lucky. We came in before the fence was put up. That time we were already here. And the people who stayed behind, they came there, the gate was there, it was said, no, you should not come, you will stay outside, you are not coming in anymore. The people they tried, no, we are coming back... but that was still a little bit better, the men they came to look for work, and they came in at the gate. Later they said, no you have to have a permit to enter. But as long as you are a Hai@om you could come in if you are looking for work. So they got a job.

(K.K. 7.11.00, translation, mine)

The informants emphasise that Hai@om could always get regular employment within the park. It was accepted – even by advocates of nature conservation – that the Hai@om had been the former residents of the area. People vividly describe their relationship to certain officers, game rangers and sergeants who were employed within the park. They obviously appreciated the dances for the tourists on Wednesday and Saturday evenings and some can exactly explain the events:

Yes, 5 o'clock, about 5 o'clock, the *voorman* had to make the fire. A big fire. Then one Ford, a car, the car of the Administration, would load the women [at the location of Okaukuejo] and bring again and load again, and bring and load and bring, and load all around and bring. They [the women] wore skins now. And my father, those had skins as well. Then we danced there, there were busses and busses and busses, which had come. Uh! And they played!

(T.G., 13.09.01, translation, mine)

du's nicht siehst. Denn se ham sich nen bischen von ihrem Zuhause was geholt. Wir warn ja ungefähr nur drei, dreitausend Meter von, von...[Unterbrechung] Dann weißt du genau, sie sind mal n bischen nach zuhause gewandert, ham sie irgendwo nen Wildebeest geholt oder was, du sagst nix, eisern, du machst, als ob du das überhaupt nicht siehst. Denn wenn du da, das nun zur Kenntnis nimmst, dann mußst du sie fragen, und das war ja strafbar. (E.T., 3.3.00)

On the same evenings at Okaukuejo, another tourist attraction was presented before the Hai@om dances: game rangers and tourists visited a specific waterhole for so-called 'lion parties.' A zebra was slaughtered and the tourists could watch a lion devouring the meat. Another zebra would be slaughtered for the Hai@om. Both attractions were stopped in the early 1960s. It was difficult to find an explanation for this cessation. One informant mentioned that the lion parties stopped because the old lion, Castor, who was 'tame' and lazy (he was used to the visits to that waterhole and the offered meat), was killed by another lion who moved away with the two lionesses that had been with Castor. It was not possible to lure new lions willing to regularly visit that waterhole. But he has another explanation for the cessation of the Hai@om dances:

The Hai@om did change as well. They did not want to dance any more. The young people, they did not want to dance anymore. They did not want to dance. But that time, that man, de la Bat, he said: The people have to continue with their tradition! But they said: no, we are not any more wild, we won't continue! They stopped by themselves. It is true! They are talking about traditions today, but the Hai@om did stop by themselves! De la Bat, he said, the Hai@om, who were brought out, all have to come back. But they did not come back, those who came back, they just made trouble and were brought out again. They did stop by themselves with those traditional things. But he talked nicely [de la Bat?], he said: come back and do your traditional work/things.

(K.K. 29.10.01, translation, mine)

This is an interesting perspective. Instead of accusing the policies of nature conservation, he places the responsibility on the younger Hai@om, who were no longer interested in "tradition." It is noteworthy that this particular informant was employed in Etosha most of his life until his retirement and had a good relationship with his employers.

During the time of the liberation struggle in the 1970s and the 1980s, men were recruited for the South African Defence Force (SADF) as trackers. Every year, they were called upon for a couple of weeks, and the payment was good. It was impossible to refuse. Otherwise, the men would have been accused of supporting the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO). Some were also employed as soldiers on a regular basis for some years. Etosha National Park was not protected against the influences of the war. The location at Okaukuejo was sometimes combed by security forces.

People don't talk a lot about that time, and in this they are not exceptional in Namibia.

The people who stayed in Etosha after the expulsion were better off than those who had left the park. Wages were considerably higher than those paid on farms, and the men, often working on road construction or with rangers, had the opportunity to visit their old places. Some rangers were also particularly interested in the knowledge the Hai@om⁸⁷. This sharing of knowledge reinforced the feeling that Etosha is actually their place.

Life on the farms was often tough. The wages and rations that were paid, as well as treatment and workload, depended entirely on the farmers' discretion. Some farmers were well known for their cruelty, others treated their employees acceptably. Only a few Hai@om stayed at any one farm for the rest of their lives; the majority moved from one farm to another, and some of them worked on more than twenty farms in the region around Outjo and Otavi.

Independence

With Namibia's independence in 1990, the political environment changed. The following assessment of Kruger National Park is valid for Namibia, too: "In the African version of wildlife conservation history, the experience has been that game reserves are White inventions, which elevate wildlife above humanity and which have served as instruments of dispossession and subjugation" (Carruthers 1995:101). Thus, with independence, new concepts of nature conservation and tourism needed to be developed. Now, the impact on, and the eventual benefits to, the local population had to be taken into consideration. Hitherto, no general method had been found to reconcile the interests of local people with those of conservation. Several initiatives were taken, especially by the Ministry of Wildlife, Conservation and Tourism (now the Ministry of Environment and Tourism [MET]) to approach this issue. Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) is one important approach towards reconciling such apparent contradictions of interest. It aims at providing "communal area residents with appropriate incentives to use their resources sustainably and combines reform of policy and legislation with implementation at

⁸⁷ One ranger in Okaukeujo told me, for example, that he owed much of his knowledge about the park to one Hai@om man, still employed at Namutoni. The Hai@om themselves talk about specific wardens or rangers who were particularly interested in their knowledge.

community level” (Jones 1999:2). Community-based tourism is another relevant concept being developed in communal areas as well (see e.g., Research Discussion Papers of the MET 1994-1999).

Since the majority of the Hai@om do not live in communal areas, they have not benefited from these initiatives.

Views from Within

Today, people often glorify the ‘good old days’ when they were still allowed to stay in Etosha, interestingly more in terms of life today, than to after the eviction.⁸⁸ There was no hunger, no diseases like today, and there was no war. Landlessness is seen as one of the most important problems by the majority of the Hai@om (which fits very well in the actual discourse about land in Namibia; see Widlok, this volume). In the interpretations of this, some people focus on the eviction from Etosha, others focus on the withholding of a ‘homeland’ for the Hai@om during the Apartheid Era.

Many Hai@om all across the region regard Etosha as their ‘homeland,’ even if their direct ancestors never stayed in the area that later became Etosha National Park. This is not surprising, since Etosha was the last area where the Hai@om could at least partly continue to lead a relatively autonomous life. Oshivambo-speaking groups had already occupied areas north of Etosha for centuries, and white farmers increasingly occupied the areas adjoining the park to the south and east, especially since the early 1900s once the railway line to Tsumeb, Otavi and Grootfontein was completed in 1908 (Gordon 1992:54). Today, most of the Hai@om live on farms owned by others or in the towns of the Kunene and Otjozondjupa Regions.

Many elder Hai@om claim that life worsened after independence. We can only speculate about the reasons for this. Maybe promises of the prospective government played a role, maybe living conditions became more difficult in some respects, maybe it is part of the human character to glorify the past. People who were formally employed in the game reserve and are still there today, complain that their children do not get jobs within the national park anymore. According to their perspective, the former government respected the fact that the Etosha area was formerly occupied by Hai@om, which led to the employment of Hai@om within the park. We could conclude that land rights as subsistence rights on this land, and not

⁸⁸ This is true not only for the people who could stay in Etosha after 1954 due to their employment, but also for the residents of Outjo and farmworkers.

only ownership (see Widlok, this volume, for discussion about the concept of land rights) were an acceptable form of 'land rights.' Today, young people living in Etosha are confronted with difficulties in getting employment, and the Hai@om have no better chances than people from other language groups.

I assume that they do not feel like citizens of the new nation, especially the elder Hai@om. They do not feel able to actively take part in shaping policy in independent Namibia. This can be partly explained through their powerlessness over the past century. The Hai@om, like other San groups, were often treated as objects rather than subjects by most others, a fact that may have influenced their self-perception in regard to the 'outside,' or the wider political system in which they are involved. Another important aspect may be their involvement in the SADF. They did not actively fight for the liberation of the country, nor do they feel that they benefit from this liberation. This may partly explain the revitalisation of a Hai@om identity that can be observed today.

There have been some attempts made to improve the Hai@om's situation. They are struggling to unite their communities into a stronger political organisation. The NGO Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (WIMSA), a San organisation whose activities are focused particularly on land tenure, institutional capacity building, education, training and networking of the various San communities in Southern Africa supports the Hai@om in their aspirations (Brörmann 1999:22, 2000:3). In 1996, the Hai@om elected a chief to represent them on the Council of Traditional Leaders,⁸⁹ but he was never recognised by the government, and over the years he lost the support of most Hai@om⁹⁰.

In 1997, a demonstration at the gates of Etosha National Park was organised by the Hai@om to re-claim their ancestral land. Thus, Etosha has

⁸⁹ Traditional leaders in Namibia now play vital roles at the national and local levels, as defined by the Traditional Authorities Act of 1995. At the national level, their task consists of advising the President, through the Council of Traditional Leaders, on "the control and utilisation of communal land." The council also provides a means for information to be communicated from the government to the people, and traditional leaders have to be recognised by the Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Housing (Blackie and Tarr 1999:17).

⁹⁰ Hai@om are no exception; several San communities still struggle for political representation and recognition by traditional authorities. They are often confronted with statements like: "You people never had leaders. Why do you need leaders today?" (œUseb 2000).

become a reference point for identification. Seventy-three people who were demonstrating at the gates and blocking roads were jailed, some were granted bail and later the charges were dropped⁹¹. It was the first time that the fate of these people achieved national and international recognition,⁹² but due to internal struggles for representation within the Hai@om community, these steps were not followed up on. The potential for a group experience from this event was lost. New elections for a traditional authority are always in discussion, but have not yet taken place. Because the establishment of a recognised Hai@om Traditional Council has continued to fail, another strategy to unite the different Hai@om communities under one umbrella organisation was taken. In 2001 the @Naisa !Nanis San Development Trust was established with the support of WIMSA and Centre of Applied Social Studies (CASS), but hitherto the initiative of the trust is still in its infancy (see Widlok 2002, also this volume).

Conclusion

Several issues must be stressed. The first needs to be mentioned, even if it is not surprising and also is part of the methodological aspect. It concerns the different source material, either archival material or oral history, and the different 'histories' we discover in these perspectives: from the local people on one hand, and on the other, from the representatives of the colonial state. To merely interpret one source independently from the other one would create quite a different picture.

Furthermore, it can be misleading to draw conclusions from the analysis of the material from one side about the other side. When reading archival material about the Bushmen and the development of Etosha National Park, one would expect a far more antagonistic attitude from side of the Hai@om. Two points, the event and the discourse, will serve as illustration:

a) The eviction could make us think that the Hai@om would have developed a far more critical attitude towards nature conservation or the whole colonial

⁹¹ Allgemeine Zeitung, 24. Juni 1997. *Buschleute frei.*

⁹² The Namibian, 16. January 1999. *Copaction slammed: 21 Hai @om remain in jail.*
The Namibian, 23. January 1997. *San vow to fight to bitter end for land.*
The Namibian, 31. January 1997. *Government giving urgent attention to Hai @om case.*

Allgemeine Zeitung, 21. January 1997. *Premier verteidigt Polizeieinsatz.*

Allgemeine Zeitung, 21. January 1997. *DTA fordert Freilassung der Hai@om-Demonstranten.*

Republikein, 13. January 1997. *Boesmans beleër Etosha.*

power than they apparently do. But by analysing their perspectives, we can infer that the eviction is just one point in a long story of subjugation, dispossession and disempowerment that was not reversed with the independence of Namibia in 1990. Their heritage not only consists of landlessness and conflicts within the Haiǀom 'community' scattered about large areas of northern Namibia, but it also implies a critical attitude towards the new government, which has not yet managed to solve the problems and continues to create a problematic self-perception in regard to their own power or co-determination in the new nation.

b) The language often used by the officers does not pretend to imply a very human attitude. However, we have to take into consideration that theory and practice, in this case language and behaviour, are two sides of a coin. It is quite possible that the official reports we got to know are not completely consistent with the actual behaviour of those officers. They adapted to the official discourse about the Bushmen, but also got to know some of them quite well and treated them in a way that was acceptable to the people⁹³.

However, we must differentiate further: the material from both sides does not present a consistent perspective. Due to the individuals involved in the whole process, people developed varying viewpoints. The opinions of representatives of the colonial administration were not by no means unanimous. The same is true for Haiǀom voices. They are not uniform in their interpretations, and there is no single oral tradition about the events.

I will now leave the standpoint regarding the different perspectives and interpretations and shift back to a bird's-eye-view of the impact of nature conservation on the local people. Regardless of interpretations, we can note that some one hundred Haiǀom were evicted from Etosha National Park during the 1950s. In contrast to many other ethnic groups, the Haiǀom were not granted any 'homeland' under the South African Apartheid Regime. Today, the Haiǀom are scattered over a huge area, with the majority living in townships in commercial areas, on farms or in some areas of the four O-Regions (see Widlok, this volume). Thus, in addition to other sectors of the South African policy during their mandate period, nature conservation legislation was one important aspect that resulted in their landlessness. Along with other San groups, the Haiǀom are one of the most marginalized people in Namibia (UNDP Report 1998,1999), which is partly a result of their landlessness.

⁹³ Needless to say, this interpretation should not be understood as any kind of justification.

Since 1990, new approaches in Namibia have been taken. They aim to combine the interests of local people and protect natural resources in the planning and realisation of conserved areas. These attempts are mostly limited to communal areas and therefore do not affect the HaiⒺom. Political pressure on the government from the people who have lost their land for the sake of nature conservation interests is not (yet?) strong enough to create serious official attempts of compensation. Regarding the need and struggle for a general land reform, which is actually taking place in Namibia, this is not surprising at all.

The old approaches towards resettling local people have not (yet?) been completely thrown on the scrap-heap. In 1997-1998, GⒺwi and GⒺana were resettled to the Central Kalahari Game Reserve in Botswana (Ikeya 2001). But today, in general, the tendency to integrate local people into the plans of conservation projects can be observed. The question about the loss of land by the people who were resettled during the colonial era remains. There are some sparks of hope. In South Africa the ⒺKhomani San have managed to regain rights to parts of their ancestral land in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park (formerly the Kalahari Gemsbok National Park) from the South African Government (Hitchcock 2001:140), hitherto the only case in Southern Africa. Certainly, the regaining of land rights to ancestral land is not the only solution for local people who were affected by nature conservation legislation during the colonial period, but political discussion about possible ways to deal with it are still necessary.

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