

RELENTLESS COLONIALISM: THE CASE OF THE REMOTE AREA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (RADP) AND THE BASARWA IN BOTSWANA.

ABSTRACT

Colonial processes continue to dominate many Indigenous peoples development programmes in countries around the world. This paper examines some of the underlying factors that contribute to continued failure in the implementation of the Remote Area Development Programme (RADP) in Botswana. It argues that it is not just failed implementation that is the problem, but a more fundamental problem found in its philosophy, which suggests relentless colonialism. This paper is based on the empirical findings of a recent study in one Basarwa settlement in Botswana and draws on the practical experience of the author. Case examples from this study are used to unravel and illustrate embedded colonial practices of the RADP. Recommendations from the findings argue for the development of a decolonising approach of development practice that may respond effectively to problems that result from this relentless colonialism.

Introduction

In recent times, much debate and theorisation has focused on developing effective implementation tools for policies and programmes that facilitate sustainable development. For Indigenous peoples, implementation of development programs have focused mainly on delivery of social and economic services by the government and non-governmental organizations to meet their needs and ameliorate problems they face.

However, in Botswana, since independence in 1966, there has been repeated disappointment at the overall failure in government development programs for Indigenous peoples, including its key policy in this area - the Remote Area Development Programme (RADP)¹. The most commonly cited obstacles include: excessive bureaucratisation in planning, lack of inputs, and lack of coordination and

¹ RADP is a Botswana Government program that seeks to address the plight of the Basarwa. The Basarwa are known as the “first people” of Botswana. They have over centuries been hunted, persecuted and driven off their traditional lands by more assertive tribes to the point where they now live in landless poverty. They have always made up a distinctive population in Botswana with subsistence economy based on foraging (hunting and gathering). They speak a number of phonetically highly complex khoisan click languages, they are light skinned and somewhat smaller in physical stature than their and their social organization is based on small bands united in flexible egalitarian structures. All this is in contrast to the Tswana-speaking agro-pastoralists who migrated into the region between 1800 and 800 years ago (Tlou & Campbell, 1984).

The RADP was Officially launched in 1978. Its main objective is to integrate the Basarwa into mainstream Tswana society by creating settlements and providing them with basic social services such as water, education, health facilities as well as opportunities for access to land and cash incomes through the promotion of economic activities.

cooperation between sectoral ministries and government departments (Lucas, 2000; NORAD, 1997).

The fundamental argument of this article is that failure in the implementation of the RADP cannot be blamed only on the above obstacles. At independence, Botswana inherited the colonial economy, its structures, bureaucracy, values and practices, all of which have perpetuated colonial forms of development practices. It may not be unrealistic therefore to argue that deeper problems are rooted in an administrative structure that is inappropriate and reflects its origins and embodiment in the colonial structures. It may also be argued that independence in Botswana was never true independence for her Indigenous peoples - the Basarwa,² because its rhetoric was not matched by promoting appropriate policies geared towards improving their quality of life. On the contrary, almost all post-colonial programs aimed at addressing the Basarwa, in particular the RADP, appear to have primarily functioned as a vehicle for their continued colonisation. These underlying factors, as well as more immediate obstacles, have to be overhauled if the implementation of future development policies for Basarwa is to be effective.

The article begins with a brief overview of the characteristics of Indigenous peoples, followed by an outline of the concept “relentless colonialism”. Later, the RADP and the subtle way it operates for the Basarwa’s development are examined in the light of findings from an empirical study. The aim of this analysis is to demonstrate colonial practices inherent in the implementation of the RADP and to argue for alternative development approaches to the problems posed by relentless colonialism.

Indigenous peoples

The concept of Indigenous peoples as it has been developed through international discourse (in politics, law and UN resolutions) is based on a comparison of similarities in the structural position of Indigenous peoples within modern nation-states (ILO, 1989). Over the last decade, a consensus has been reached regarding a

² The Basarwa are generally regarded as the Indigenous peoples of Botswana. The word Basarwa is supposed to come from the Setswana phrase *ba ba ba sa ruing kgomo* (those who do not rear cattle), which establishes lack of cattle ownership. This is the criteria by which the Basarwa are judged in negative terms in contemporary Botswana. They are known by various names such as the bushman, San or Khoe. However, they prefer to use their own titles that connects them to Earth and to deeply significant spiritual relationships. For example, they prefer to call themselves N/oakwe or Kwe, that is, the “red people” because of their skin colour and association with the desert in which they live, or the “First People of the Kalahari”. For a thorough discussion of the terminology issue, see Robert Hitchcock and Megan Biesele, “San, Khwe, Basarwa, or Bushman?": <http://www.kalaharipeoples.org/documents/san-term.htm>

definition of Indigenous peoples around the globe. Saugestad refers to the following most used criteria to identify people as “Indigenous”:

First come; that the people in question are descendants of those inhabiting an area at the time of the arrival of other groups; non-dominance; that the people in question are placed under a state structure with social and cultural characteristics alien to theirs, do not control the national government, and constitute a numerical minority; cultural difference; that the people in question have had a traditional adaptation using resources and territories in ways that differ from the social and economic adaptation of the present majority; self-ascription-increasingly the people in question perceive themselves as different from the majority, and define themselves as Indigenous (1998: 24-44).

Other factors that relate to the description of Indigenous peoples include: precedent habitation, historical continuity, attachment to land, community right and cultural distance from dominant groups (Thornberry, 2001 cited in Barnard & Kenrick, 2001:87).

These shared experiences are based in part on the fact that Indigenous peoples subsistence patterns while usually varying greatly within the category “Indigenous” differ from those of the dominant populations in ways that leave them particularly vulnerable to exploitation and consequent denial of human rights (Suzman, 2001). In an effort to guard against potential exploitation of the world’s Indigenous peoples, the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1989 passed a convention (The International Labour Organization Convention no. 169). This convention recognizes the aspirations expressed by Indigenous peoples to exercise control over their institutions, ways of life and economic development. It also acknowledges their aspirations to maintain and develop their own identities, languages and religion within the framework of the states in which they reside. The convention stresses the responsibility of governments for developing, with the participation of the peoples concerned, coordinated and systematic action to protect the rights of these people and to guarantee and respect their integrity (Article 2), as well as recognise their rights of ownership and possession of the lands they traditionally occupy (Article 14).

Although the government of Botswana does not explicitly use the concept Indigenous in its policies and programmes (Butale, 1993) and has not ratified the ILO Convention 169, the Basarwa are internationally regarded as the Indigenous peoples of Botswana.

Relentless colonialism

According to Ife (2002), colonialism involves the act of colonising, invading, conquering and taking over other people's land, resources, wealth, culture and identity. The emphasis is on invasion, oppression, and domination of the colonised (Said, 1993). Colonialism represents a set of values and belief systems held by the colonisers. The colonising power regards itself as superior in terms of its culture and imposes political and economic systems over that of others.

Relentless colonisation is a term that recognizes that colonialism is not an event but a process, it keeps marching on. It shows how powerful the voices of the colonizers have been and continue in stripping the colonized of their fundamental rights and freedoms to development and affirms a "change from below" perspective that seeks to reverse patterns of colonialist domination and allow space for the colonised to affirm their own reality rather than be dictated by the coloniser (Ife, 2002). For example, while the dream of political independence in Botswana was to put an end to British colonization, for the Basarwa this has not been achieved, as colonialism persisted and overspilled into the post-colonial period. This means that colonialism did not end with the removal of the British flag and rising of the new Botswana flag but continued because the institutions, colonial practices and values that sustain it remained.

The roots of this concept (relentless colonialism) as used in this article, can be traced to the ideas of Gramsci (1971) on hegemony. Gramsci uses the notion of hegemony to describe the cultural processes by which those in power maintain their privileged position. Political and economic power is maintained largely through being able to naturalise a particular way of seeing the world, in particular social relationships, rather than through overt repression. Consequently, hegemony attempts to obscure the political nature of the dominant-subordinate relationship to those that are subordinate by making it appear as a natural order. These relationships often (consciously or unconsciously) find their way into the formulation and implementation of social policy and subsequent programs. Contemporary manifestations of this process are evident in the design and implementation of policies like the RADP, in which the Basarwa cultures and traditions are rejected in preference for the dominant Tswana-speaking peoples' lifestyles.

This is illustrated in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Historical manifestation of colonialism: Contact between the Basarwa, Tswana-speaking groups and European settlers

Years (between)	Period/phase	Land occupation	Contact
Before 1500	pre-colonial	Basarwa –owners of land	pre-contact self-sufficiency
1600-1700	onset of colonial invasion by the Tswana	shared	Mutual
1700-1800-1900 (creation of Tswana state)	colonial invasion by both Tswana and British intensified; arrival of white settlers in southern Africa	-Tswana and British appropriated land -Basarwa driven to the periphery -Beginning of land-dispossession (agriculture)	the rise of serfdom (<i>botlhanka</i>)
1885-1940s	consolidation of colonialism (multiple-colonisation by both Tswana and British)	Tswana/British Basarwa-landless	serfs, (incorporation into Tswana imperialism) (<i>botlhanka, kgameo</i>)
1900-1966	Protectorate; colonial era of consolidation and grabbing of land (relentless colonisation)	Tswana/British Basarwa – limited access (settlement camps)	Violent subjugation and exploitation; invasion displacement; enforced servitude; domination; integration/ assimilation
1966 – to date	independence/colonial/post-colonial (relentless colonisation)	Tswana/British invasion and dispossession of lands continues under the guise of development and national interests	development, policies, programmes (RADP); continued exploitation; domination and colonisation; integration; assimilation
1966 – to date	independence/colonial/post-colonial, globalisation, marketisation (relentless colonisation by Tswana)	Tswana and British invasion and dispossession of land continues under the banner of development and national interests	development: mining, tourism, game reserves (national interests); Basarwa need help; “it’s in their own interest” directives, no consultation

Table 1 shows the historical manifestation of colonialism, as reflected in the contact between the Basarwa, Tswana and British settlers. It is clear from the table that the Basarwa were first occupiers of land. They were subsequently colonized by the Tswana-speaking groups who came from the Transvaal in South Africa running away from Difequane wars (Tlou, 1984). When the British arrived from Europe in the early 19th century they colonized both the Basarwa and Tswana and when they left in 1966, the Tswana dominated the Basarwa (Silberbauer & Kuper, 1966). A dominant-subordinate relationship developed which became a major structural determinant in relation to access to resources, opportunities and development assistance. The historical account shown in Table 1 explains Basarwa’s enduring stigmatised social position that allowed dominant Tswana groups to judge and treat them as inferior. According to Mazonde (2002), the negative attitudes towards the Basarwa are so deep

rooted and widespread that it is evident not only at a personal and community level but at government level as well. This simply means that the raw deal and lack of recognition that the Basarwa receive in their interactions with the dominant social groups at the individual level is sanctioned by communities and up-held by the state through the national institutions and governance. Thus, the negative attitudes held by mainstream Tswana society have constructed the Basarwa identity as a marginalised ethnic group. For example, although the Basarwa are allowed to settle and live among dominant Tswana groups, they could only settle in the fringes and were absorbed as servants of the master, a relationship that entrenched and perpetuated their marginality.

For the present purposes, it is sufficient to note that colonialist attitudes, practices and relationships are alive in Botswana today and that empirical evidence provided below demonstrates that the RADP is driven by a colonialist ideology and that, this is resented by the Basarwa.

The RADP and the plight of the Basarwa

The government of Botswana formally adopted the Remote Area Development Program in 1978 as its chief strategy for the Basarwa development (MLGL, 1978), and in doing so affirmed its commitment by recognising that the Basarwa are disadvantaged relative to mainstream Tswana groups (Wily, 1982). The overall objectives of the RADP is to settle the Basarwa into Tswana type settlements in order to improve their socio-economic conditions so that they can live a life comparable to that of other Batswana. The government, in setting up settlement schemes, gave several reasons for this move. First, it is easier to provide water and social services such as education and health, if people are concentrated in limited areas. Second, settlements are viewed as a means of encouraging the Basarwa to settle and to integrate into the national economy and society of the country. A third benefit of the scheme was that it provides a focal point for targeted development assistance, such as the Economic Promotion Fund (EPF) that focuses on promoting income-generating activities such as carpentry, bakery and weaving in Basarwa settlements (Hitchcock, 1999). Thus, integration (or assimilation) has been the main approach or purpose of the RADP as the government views the Basarwas' problems as being rooted primarily in their rejection of, exclusion from, or inability to enter mainstream society.

However, whether we view integration as desirable or undesirable, as an only option, this approach does not seem to have worked.

Over the past decades, a compendium of studies have been conducted on the Basarwa on a wide array of policy issues and resultant programme responses to address their plight (Egner, 1981; Good, 1993; Good et al. 2000; Hitchcock, 1987; Kann et al.,1990; Le Roux, 1996; MLGL, 1978; NORAD, 1997; Saugestad, 1998, 2001; Suzman, 2001; UNDP, 1998). These studies generally conclude that the Basarwa constitute, by a considerable margin, the most conspicuously marginalised of all socio-linguistic communities in Botswana. They are characterised by lack of land rights and access to natural resources, extreme poverty and dependency on welfare programmes, weak representation in political and administrative structures, exclusion from the mainstream, social discrimination and prejudice.

The reality is that the RADP has failed. Hitchcock (1999) attributed its failure to limited success of broader trickle-down poverty reduction/alleviation programs to effect any meaningful change in structural poverty; unwillingness to accommodate the Basarwas' collective concerns or to recognise them as distinct, self-identifying cultural communities; lack of material and financial resources; human resources problems exacerbated by social prejudice at a variety of levels in government structures; a top-down, non-consultative and paternalistic approach to development that effectively disempowers its intended beneficiaries at a variety of levels and actively discourages their participation in decision-making processes; and limited government commitment to expand or protect the Basarwa land rights and access to natural resources. These arguments support the central theme of this article that the government of Botswana's RADP functions primarily as a vehicle of colonisation. It shows that the replacement of white colonial officials by local officials did not change the attitudes, perceptions and biases of the colonial era. In other words, this development approach is not genuine but constitutes what Battiste (2000) refers to as "internal colonisation". It promotes colonial forms of development practice that privilege the world-view, interests and needs of the Tswana dominated government rather than those of the Basarwa.

The RADP: A vehicle of colonization?

Like many formerly colonised African countries, Botswana's independence marked the beginning of the end of governance based on hereditary rights of kings and the

arbitrary exercise of an external colonial power. The new national flag and constitution ushered in a rule based on multi-party competition for government power that would ideally rest on the popular consent of citizens enjoying equality of status and various rights and freedoms meant to guarantee the integrity of the system. However, this vision was lost for the Basarwa. Independence brought them few benefits, as they continued to live with a more or less similar set of laws and policies to those of the past. For example, the post-colonial government did not address pertinent issues relating to structural inequalities emanating from decades of colonial rule, nor did it develop infrastructure to cater for their economic and social welfare. Thus, instead of transforming oppressive colonial institutions and creating empowering relationships and strategies aimed at promoting growth and potential for self-reliance, it pursued, and continues to pursue, policies that are inadequate and inappropriate relative to their problems and needs. Thus, while independence saw the end of British colonial rule with Tswana nationalism triumphant, development thought and practice, regarding the Basarwa, came to be one of the most enduring legacies of the colonial government because policy responses, such as the RADP, pursue a prejudicial approach to Basarwa development (Good, 1993; Taylor, 2000). This approach is aptly summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Processes that help formulate interpretations and implementation of the RADP and its outcomes

RADP objectives	When evaluated and by whom	RADP approach to Basarwa development	Cumulative effects/outcomes/relentless colonisation
-resettlement -integration -provision of social services -promotion of economic activities	-Egner (1981) -Kann et al., (1990) -NORAD (1997) -Good et al., (2000)	-top down -domination and control -Basarwa “given” development -despise Basarwa knowledge -no consultation -welfare paternalism, palliatives, clientasation of welfare recipients -service oriented -RADP officer’s perceive Basarwa as children -Basarwa stigmatised	-poverty, marginalisation -oppression -subjugation -dependency -alcohol abuse -poor basic health and education -Basarwa remained invisible and inaudible category of the post-colonial state -exclusion from decision-making processes -social discrimination and prejudice -Basarwa culture devalued and perceived as primitive -Basarwa remain subservient to Tswana groups -domination and control -rely on dominant Tswana groups for solution of Basarwa “development” problems

Table 2 shows RADP approach to development and the effect this has on the Basarwa (as indicated in column, 3 and 4). Dominant Tswana-speaking groups perceive the Basarwa as uncivilised, backwards, primitive, lazy, irrational, stupid and as “children” with no potential to solve their problems. Unfortunately, these perceptions find their way into the formulation and implementation of the RADP policy. These perceptions to a large extent form the bedrock of relentless colonialism and have greatly disadvantaged the Basarwa. Until these perceptions and institutions that promote and perpetuate them are changed, colonization of the Basarwa will continue and it will keep marching on.

Today, the Basarwa participate only marginally in the social, political and economic development in Botswana. The circumstances of their lives are often dictated by various governmental and non-governmental organisations, and by the dominant Tswana groups. For example, they are told where to settle, who to appoint as chief, where to take their children to school, provided with food rations and imposition of political representation. The arrangement has ensured that the Basarwa remain subservient to dominant Tswana groups.

The reality is that the difference between the colonial and post-colonial government for most Basarwa was a difference between a “colonial” government that did not interfere too much in their lives and a “post-colonial” government that assumed more control over almost every aspect of their lives.

The above points have been made before by various researchers, practitioners and commentators on the Basarwa, but without much empirical evidence. The next section seeks to rectify this lacuna.

Experiences from the margins: Stories of the Basarwa of Kanaku

Evidence from a study I conducted in 2000/2001 among the Basarwa in the Kanaku settlement identified several obstacles to the implementation of the RADP. The study aimed to explore understandings of development among the Basarwa as a result of their experiences with the RADP and their aspirations for appropriate development programmes, founded on the notion that the Basarwa understand their problems well and are probably best suited to guide and provide solutions for themselves. The focus group discussions, involving ninety-three community members who participated in the RADP projects and services participated in the discussions. These include; Basarwa men, women, youth, village development committee members, welfare

recipients, drought relief workers and others. All discussants were recruited in Kanaku settlement.

RADP's philosophical orientation

The basic philosophy that dominates official thinking on the Basarwa is that they are at the most elementary state of civilisation, far below an average Tswana-speaking person, and as such do not need to be consulted. Throughout my fieldwork observations, I saw lack of consultation and a lack of respect from government officials in their interaction with Kanaku's residents. I observed this at a number of *kgotla*³ meetings I attended. For example, on many occasions residents were told what to do how and when to do it. They were told repeatedly that they were irrational and stupid. Consequently government officials only informed them of what the government had decided to do and of how they were expected to participate. An RADP officer told me:

Masarwa are not people but animals ... they will never change ... I think they should be left alone in the bush ... government is just wasting resources trying to tame them because they will never understand what development is all about. All they want is to be told what to do ... given food ... and again they do not want to work ... they are lazy.

The above thinking is linked directly to the history of the nature of the relationship between dominant Tswana groups and Basarwa (Tlou & Campbell, 1984; Datta & Murray, 1989). Influenced by this philosophy, the Government of Botswana has applied several measures in an effort to "develop" what are perceived to be uncivilised and backwards elements of the population. The Basarwa articulate this thinking based on their experiences with the RADP:

They gave us services such as food and water, but these services have not improved our lives. We continue to suffer and we are very hungry. Settlement

³ a *kgotla* is a place where members of the community gather to discuss issues of mutual concern to the community or any issue raised by the chief, village development committee or other local committees and government officials. The *kgotla* is generally used to test public acceptance of issues often already discussed by government. *Kgotla* is usually the seat of traditional and political power where the chief resided.

life is worse. We want to go back to the bush to continue our hunting and gathering lifestyle⁴, which was good because we had plenty to eat.

We think the problem is the RADP officers do not like us. They despise us and think we smell so bad. They are always happy to see us as beggars and destitute. They do not have confidence in us; they do not think we can create our own employment and deliver our services or at least work with them. *Re ba gacolole* [assist and advice them] on what we think is a better way to engage in sustainable development in Kanaku.

The RADP's paternalistic approach described above has profound implications on the well being of the Basarwa. Essentially what this means is that the Basarwa are not given the opportunity to participate in the design and implementation of their development programmes, in particular, delivery of their own social and economic services. As such they have to rely on the government for all welfare provisions:

All income-generating activities stated under the RADP have not been successful. This is because they did not consult us. We were told what the government has decided in order to "give" us development. Unfortunately, government development projects did not meet our needs and address our problems. Many people did not participate in these programmes because they are bored and not interested in projects that increase their poverty. As a result we have lost our independence and became *bana ba ga goromente* [children of the government]. They give us phalaletshe [mealie-meal] and they call that *ditlhabololo* [development]. This mealie-meal is not enough, so we are hungry. *He sodega heri ... he sodwa ke Bagkhweni le goromente wa bone* [we are suffering too much ... suffering in the hands of Tswana [Bagkhweni] and their government].

As this quotation attests, the RADP policy approach is top-down, paternalistic, dominant and controlling. It should be noted that, generally, all government models of development aimed at both the Tswana-speaking groups and the Basarwa reflect these characteristics (NORAD, 1997). However, policies specifically meant for the Basarwa tend to be more paternalistic and are characterised by a higher failure rate than those meant for other groups. Good et al. (2000) expressed this concern and observed that, where policies have favoured the Basarwa, government officials have often proved to be either unwilling to implement these effectively.

⁴ The expression "we want to go back to continue our hunting and gathering lifestyle" sounds romantic as there are relatively few open hunting grounds today. The government has imposed a total ban on hunting save for those with special hunting licenses.

Government thinking is often guided by a mistaken notion that the Basarwa are child like and as such should be treated as children and be “given” development by the government. This has led to the development and delivery of ineffective and inappropriate social and economic services that perpetuate dependency on the government:

We have been told many times by the government and the RADP to move and settle like *Batswana* so that the government can “take care of us by giving us development”. Yes!! since the RADP started operating here they build us a school, *kgotla*, gave us cattle, goats and food rations⁵. They also taught us skills in sewing, bakery and carpentry so that we could start our own income generating projects. Because these projects did not put money in our pockets we remain totally dependent on *mophako* [food rations].

This orientation is fundamentally flawed because it promotes Tswana-centric administrative structures that undermine rather than strengthen the Basarwa capacity to implement their own development programmes. This is because services following the dictates of the government almost always result in program guidelines that reflect the views of how to respond to the priorities of the Government, rather than to the needs, problems and aspirations of the Basarwa. This has had a devastating effect on Kanaku residents who have become dependent on the Government for services. The orientation loses sight of the inherent desire of human beings to determine their own destiny. As such it constitutes a primary obstacle to the implementation of the RADP and is a tool of continued colonization.

Manufacturing colonial mindsets

At the root of the predicament facing the Basarwa in Botswana is that they are not accorded full rights as Botswana citizens due to the perceptions of their inferiority by the dominant Tswana groups (Mazonde, 2002b). Inherent in the RADP is a recreation of the notions of “us” and “them” or “these people” – a divisive and oppositional framework that recreates the vices of colonization and colonial mindsets. As with other cases of discrimination found around the world, such deep-seated prejudices are

⁵ It is important to note that although Basarwa are provided with cattle, goats and trained in income-generating skills such as weaving and carpentry, they still lack money to buy basic needs such as food and clothing. This is because they produce poor quality products which they are unable to sell. They cannot make money from the sale of cattle either because they are not allowed to do so by the RADP until such time that the cattle have multiplied. Under the circumstances they are forced to depend on the government for food rations.

difficult to overcome. Clearly, they do not help planning, implementation and delivery of effective and appropriate local development policies and programmes but ensure that the Basarwa remain subservient to dominant Tswana-speaking groups:

You know they [RADP officers] look down upon us and call us names. They say we are *ba tengnyanateng* [those from deep inside deep], *matshubanaga* [those who burn the bush]. That we are ignorant, lazy and useless people who cannot contribute anything to our own development. This is painful and frustrating because we feel that we have something to offer to develop our settlement but they have written us off and would not listen to us.

We have told them the kind of income generating projects we need but they ignore us and provide what they think is good for us. Unfortunately, what they think is good for us continue to fail. We think there is a problem with the way projects are implemented. The problem is, we do not sit together and talk about what could be the problem and better ways of dealing with it. Because they think we are stupid and useless they do not want to talk to us when projects collapse, instead they shout at us and blame us for failing the government.

When I told them [Bagkhweni] that they are not supposed to use our water, they told me I am stupid, dirty and disgusting. That a *Mosarwa* has never owned a borehole and will die without ever owning one. They said it is their tax and I do not pay tax. I was disappointed and kept quite because I am afraid of them. There was nothing I could do as a *Mosarwa*.

The foregoing comments suggest that it is this lack of recognition of the Basarwa by mainstream Tswana society that contribute to continued failure in the implementation of the RADP. This, in many ways, justified the imposition of the RADP project on the Basarwa, thus, reinforcing arguments that continued failure in the implementation of the RADP is a function of policies emanating from decades of colonial oppression and post-colonial governance.

Negative attitudes were further illustrated by a cattle allocation exercise I witnessed:

An RADP truck arrived in Kanaku loaded with cattle to be allocated to applicants. Instead of reporting at the *kgotla* and greeting local people on arrival, as protocol demands, the officers went straight to the Village Development Committee compound and shouted at people to follow them. The headman was not given the respect he deserves either. Once people were gathered, an officer took the stand. He did not have kind words for the residents. He chronicled a list of failed RADP projects in Kanaku, blaming it all on them and threatened those who will let the cattle go astray with imprisonment. "You *Masarwa* are useless ... government gives you everything and you do not appreciate ..." Names were

called and the cattle off-loaded into the open. They all ran away into the bush and people started chasing them.

This incident demonstrates the disempowering nature in the implementation of this programme. It also shows that negative attitudes are deeply embedded in the ideology and practice of the RADP's approach to Basarwa development. In contrast to these negative experiences, residents of Kanaku gave numerous examples to demonstrate their potential to take control of their lives and determine their own destiny:

We are custodians of nature ... we are good conservationists and managers of our natural resources... we have lived with the animals and protected edible and medicinal plants for a long time ... and we did not finish them. Right now we still harvest *sengaparile* [grapple plant]. *Sengaparile* provide income to many families in Kanaku. We use money from the sale of *sengaparile* to feed our children and buy them clothes. We cannot depend on *mophako* forever [food ration]. All we want is for government to support us to buy *sengaparile* on a sustained basis.

I work in Mabutsane as a night watchman. It helps me because even if the money is not enough, I am able to feed my family. I hate getting *mophako* [food ration] from the council. I can say my life has improved because I can buy food and soap and eat with my children. I am also building a house for my family. I think the RADP in Kanaku should focus on employment creation. You see, with jobs people can make money to buy their own food instead of depending on handouts from the government.

You see, when a man is hungry do not give him meat teach him how to hunt. This is very important because in that way you are giving him life skills that he can use tomorrow to survive independently. I think this is what we want from the RADP. We want education, skills and training that will strengthen our capacities to live an independent life. For example, we have suggested to the RADP that we want a game farm and leather-tanning workshop. These are our traditional skills, which we want to put to good use. Most Basarwa are excellent hunters and leather tanners ... we do not want our traditional skills to disappear ... we want to pass them to our children before we die.

From these comments, it is clear that it is not in the interest of the Basarwa of Kanaku to be patronised. They want economic independence, which will give them the opportunity to control their lives and determine their own destiny.

Discussions: Reversing the old trend in the implementation of the RADP

Throughout this article it is clear that the RADP has failed to address the plight of the Basarwa. To respond effectively, a radical shift in the RADP approach is required. This means adopting decolonising approaches.

Decolonisation rejects domination and control and campaign against marginalisation and social exclusion (Smith, 1999). Decolonising approaches are based on the conviction that the Basarwa have ideas, a spirit of community, leadership qualities and the potential to contribute to their own development (Table, 3).

Table 3: Conventional and decolonising approaches to Basarwa development.

Obstacles to implementation	Conventional approaches	Decolonising approaches
Policy design and philosophical orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -top down -domination and control -government defines development -patronising/paternalistic -do not promote indigenous concepts such as self-reliance (boipelego); consultation (therisano), Cooperation (tshwaragano) and humaneness (botho) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -bottom-up -facilitate platform for self-expression -privilege indigenous knowledge and skills -encourage Basarwa to define and give meaning to the concept development -participation and dialogue -promote indigenous
Mode of service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -emphasises on service delivery, -lack of participation -treat Basarwa as clients to be serviced by the government -lack of commitment to participatory democracy -despise indigenous knowledge -promote marginalisation and exclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -focus on community capacity building -believe strongly in participation of people in the delivery of their own social services -treat Basarwa as equal partners in development -commitment to participatory democracy -privilege indigenous knowledge and the voices of the Basarwa -believe in inclusive politics i.e. promote inclusion of the Basarwa in the decision-making regarding provision of social services -participation in the implementation process
Perpetuation of dependency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -service oriented -welfare paternalism -palliatives -clientisation of welfare recipients -focus on what the Basarwa are lacking and not on their potential for participation and self-reliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -empowerment through participation and dialogue -develop knowledge and skills for capacity building -focus on cultivating a sense of independence and self-reliance participation/dialogue -Basarwa define what they are lacking

Column 2 in Table 3 summarises the detrimental elements in the implementation of the RADP and the need for alternative approaches to the Basarwa development. The Basarwa experience the above problems on a daily basis (FPK, 1993; Hitchcock, 2002; Le Roux, 1996; Taylor, 2000). For the Basarwa, the implementation of the RADP has meant continued socio-economic and political marginalisation, poverty, exclusion, suffering, deprivation and exploitation by the dominant Tswana groups. The exclusion of the Basarwa from participating in decision-making processes regarding the development of social services in their communities has had a devastating effect in becoming totally dependent on the government, to the extent that they come to regard themselves as *bana ba ga goromente* [children of government]. Consequently, as clients of the state they expect everything to be provided for them. The RADP's paternalistic approach to the Basarwa was challenged by articulate young people in Kanaku thus:

Now tell me ... what kind of development is this that does not recognize the views of others but is only interested in making them dependent on *mophako*? This move has totally destroyed our survival skills. The question is, for how long are we going to keep doing this?

Re batla go rerisiwa [we want to be consulted]. This is important because if we are, we can make a contribution to our own development. For example, they can learn something from us and in turn we learn from them. You see by talking to people you may begin to realise that they can help you and that they have just what you need, and you may begin to recognise their potential and that they can make a positive contribution to development.

You see, we are willing to work with the RADP and advise the officers on how best to approach the Basarwa development. We are willing to share our past experiences, which may be useful in this regard. For example, our traditional survival skills could still be revived. Who knows, they may be a solution to the RADP's failed paternalistic approaches.

We used to be independent and did everything ourselves. We were self-sufficient in food and animals, until modern government came and stole our land and animals and put us in settlement camps. Now *he sodega heri* [we are suffering]. We have no choice but to become the children of government. But this is what we do not want ... we want to be independent. To achieve independence we need education and paid jobs. What we want now is for the government to support and help us create our own employment opportunities. We want to work for ourselves, create jobs for our own people and even hire those Bagkhweni from outside Kanaku. We want to be free from continued exploitation ... we want freedom from Bagkhweni, the RADP and the council. We want to proudly call ourselves by our own name ... Basarwa and not *bana*

ba ga goromente [children of government] as is the case now. We want to be empowered so that we can make decisions independent of the council and the RADP.

Clearly, the RADP's shortcomings far outweigh its successes and there is a gap in translating its objectives into action. Above all, there are problems with the RADP objectives themselves. The reasons for this lie embedded in the very nature of the RADP's approach to development which focuses mainly on promoting integration and assimilation despite the fact that the approach has proved detrimental to the well being of the Basarwa. Thus, the RADP legitimises top-down forms of development interventions that do not value dialogue or the need to incorporate the views and perspectives of the Basarwa in the development process. As a result, the Basarwa have been excluded from decision-making processes meant to benefit them. According to Hitchcock (1987), a combination of these processes served to undermine rather than strengthen the Basarwa's traditional socio-economic systems.

The challenge to successful implementation of the RADP lies in changing its philosophical orientation, its mode of service delivery and the negative attitudes that inhere in its relationship. It requires changing the perception that the Basarwa are inferior and, as children, they should be "given" development and be supervised by the government. The critical question is how and in what ways can the existing colonial institutional structures, values and practices that underlie the implementation of the RADP be changed to make it responsive to the developmental needs of the Basarwa?

A possible future

A decolonising approach to the Basarwa development is a direct reversal of past procedures of delivering social and economic services by the RADP. It entails new interaction between the Basarwa communities and development practitioners. This approach demands that:

- The RADP change their perception of the Basarwa communities and view them as equal partners in development rather than as children to be "given" development.

- Decision-makers let go their superior status and work with the Basarwa who will then be enticed to share their experiences and aspirations for more appropriate development programmes.
- The state must change its role as a provider and implementer to that of a facilitator of development programs. It advocates for empowerment of the Basarwa by strengthening their capacity, skills and knowledge, seeing them as rational agents in terms of their own circumstances and available options.
- The RADP must give away some of the authority that is most treasured its officials, that is, the authority to decide for others.
- The RADP should hand over development initiatives to the Basarwa, that is, giving up their own “we are” holier than thou attitude. Above all, it calls for a radical change in management styles, official and personal interactions and procedures.
- The RADP should soften its hierarchy, to revise project management procedures and produce new management styles and implementation procedures that incorporate Basarwa ideas of development.
- The RADP should be adapted, adjusted, or better still, integrated into the specific conditions prevailing in the Basarwa communities so that development becomes a culturally grounded process where objectives are not formulated on the exclusive conceptions of RADP officials.

A decolonising approach acknowledges that these demands are easier said than done. The implementation of this approach is not without problems. Entrenched negative attitudes, excessive bureaucratisation and unwillingness of dominant Tswana groups to accept Basarwa as equal partners in development present major obstacles. For example, it is not easy to detach the RADP from the bondage of government bureaucracy. To shift from what is a conventional well established approach to a new approach that seemingly challenges the existing power structure (colonial mindsets) may create tensions. In Botswana, top-down development approaches predominate not only amongst the Basarwa but also amongst the dominant Tswana groups. For example, there is not a single government sector that I know of where a top-down approach to development has been transformed. However, not all government development programs are paternalistic to the degree of the RADP. Bureaucrats from

mainstream society are not comfortable with working methods, such as those that privilege Indigenous knowledge and treat the Basarwa as equal partners in development. As indicated earlier, colonial structures perpetuate colonialism.

This is a great challenge to the Basarwa communities, whose experience with the RADP is now unpleasant and a recipe for holding them back from active participation in the implementation of their development. To change the situation the following measures are suggested:

- The Basarwa institutions and social movements such as the First People of the Kalahari should be strengthened (FPK, 1993).
- The government should provide a platform to engage Non-Governmental Organisations, Community-Based Organizations, the Basarwa and other stakeholders in dialogue, in order to do away with the colonial mentality that has resulted in a complete lack of confidence by the government in the Basarwa's abilities to find solutions to their immense socio-economic problems.
- The government should learn as much as possible the limitations of a top-down approach to development with a view to transform such an approach. To achieve this transformation requires the government to build upon the Basarwa strength and resources within their community and to treat them as equal partners in development. A reasonably good relationship with various stakeholders, including government, in my experience is far more likely to secure the interests of the Basarwa rather than quick fixes solutions so far adopted by the RADP.

These initiatives are intended to promote a Basarwa-centred development, rather than Tswana-centric development. Basarwa-centred development is characterised by participation and dialogue as an overriding operational principle that underpins all development activities. Thus, participation and dialogue must be intrinsic to project development rather than an activity that is undertaken at intervals by outsiders to ignite interest from the locals.

Summary

The aim of this paper was to explain the factors that contribute to continued failure in the implementation of the RADP in Botswana. Obstacles to implementing the RADP have greatly alienated the Basarwa from the process of development and reduced them to marginalised dependent recipients of Government welfare services. Underlying the rhetoric of the Basarwa development, processes can be identified which suggest that developments in the Basarwa communities are organised and structured in ways that serve the interests of the dominant Tswana-speaking groups and government and thus primarily function as vehicles of colonization.

An alternative is a decolonising development approach. This approach may unravel the often-unquestioned institutional assumptions that construct, entrench and perpetuate the marginalisation of the Basarwa. It affirms the Basarwa's human rights to development, not only at the rhetoric level but also in practice. Once this is understood it may be possible to abandon colonial mindsets with a view to develop appropriate solutions to the problems at hand to increase the likelihood of achieving the ultimate aims of development – improving quality of life for all.

References

- Barnard, A. & Kenrick, J. (eds.) (2001) *Africa's Indigenous peoples: "First people" or "marginalised minorities"?* Edinburgh: Centre of African Studies-University of Edinburgh.
- Battiste, M. (2000) *Reclaiming Indigenous voice and vision*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Butale, C. J. (1993). Official opening: Second regional conference on development programmes for Africa's San populations. Gaborone: NORAD.
- Datta, A., & Murray, K. (1989) The rights of minorities and subject peoples in Botswana. In J.D. Holm., & P.P. Molutsi (eds.), *Democracy in Botswana*. Gaborone: Macmillan.
- Egner, B. (1981) *The Remote Area Development Programme: An evaluation report to the Ministry of Local Government and Lands*. Gaborone: Government Printer.
- FPK-First Peoples of the Kalahari (1993) *Organisational Objectives*. Ghanzi: FPK.
- Good, K. (1993) "At the end of the ladder: Radical inequalities in Botswana", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 31(2): 203-230.
- Good, K., Mazonde, I., Rivers., R. & Cassidy, L. (2000) *An assessment of the status of Botswana's San population*. Windhoek: Legal Assistance Centre/EU.
- Government of Botswana (GoB) (1997). *Long term vision for Botswana: Towards prosperity for all*. Gaborone: Government Printer.
- Gramsci, A. (1971). Selection from the prison notebooks. London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Hitchcock, R. (1999) Resource rights and resettlement among the San of Botswana, *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, 22(4): 51-55.
- Hitchcock, R. (1987) Anthropological research and Remote Area Development among Botswana Basarwa. In Hitchcock, R., Parsons, N., & Taylor, J. (1987). *Research for development in Botswana: Proceedings of a symposium of the Botswana Society* Gaborone (August 19-21, 1985).
- Hitchcock, R. (2002) Removals, politics and human rights. *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, 26(1): 25-26.
- Ife, J. (2002) *Community Development: Community-based alternatives in the age of globalisation*. Frenches Forest, NSW: Pearson Education.
- International Labour Organisation (1989) *Convention No. 169: Convention concerning Indigenous and tribal peoples in independent countries*. Geneva: International Labour Office.

- Kann, U., Hitchcock, R., & Mbere, N. (1990) *Let them talk: A review of the accelerated Remote Area Development Programme*. Gaborone: Ministry of Local Government Lands and Housing/NORAD.
- Kuper, A. (1970) *Kalahari village politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Le Roux, B. (1996) Community-owned development: *Exploring an alternative rural development support programme* D'Kar: Kuru Development Trust (discussion paper March 20-25).
- Lucas, T. (2000) "Understanding implementation: The case of Remote Area Development Programme in Kweneng District of Botswana". MA dissertation, University of Botswana-
- Mazonde, I. (2002b) The San in Botswana and the issue of subjectivities: National disintegration or cultural diversity. In I. Mazonde (Ed.). *Minorities in the millennium: Perspectives from Botswana*. Gaborone: LightBooks.
- MLGL- Ministry of Local Government and Lands (1978) *Minutes of the Remote Area Development workshop*. Gaborone: Government Printer.
- Nthomang, K. (2002) Exploring the Indigenous minefield: Social policy and the marginalisation of Bushman in Southern Africa. *Journal of Social Development in Africa*, 17(1): 99-121.
- Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1997) *NORAD support of the Remote Area Development Programme (RADP) in Botswana. An evaluation report*. Oslo: Chr. Michelsen Institute.
- Said, E. (1993) *Culture and imperialism*. Chatto & Windus: London.
- Saugestad, S. (1998) *The inconvenient Indigenous: Remote area development in Botswana, donor assistance, and the first people of the Kalahari*. Tromso: Faculty of Social Sciences-University of Tromso.
- Saugestad, S. (2001) *The inconvenient indigenous: Remote area development in Botswana, donor assistance, and the first people of the Kalahari*. Stockholm: Nordic African Institute.
- Silberbauer, G., & Kuper, A. (1966) Kalahari masters and Bushmen serfs: Some observations. *African Studies*, 25(4): 171-179.
- Smith, L.T. (1999) *Decolonising research methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples*. London: Zed Books.
- Suzman, J. (2001) Indigenous wrongs and human rights: National policy international resolutions and the status of the San in Southern Africa. In A. Barnard, & J. Kenrick (eds.), *Africa's Indigenous people: "First peoples" or "marginalised minorities,"?* Edinburgh: Centre of African Studies-University of Edinburgh.

Thornbery, P. (2001) Indigenous peoples in international law: Definition, claim and process. In A. Barnard & J. Kenrick (eds.), *Africa's Indigenous peoples: "First peoples" or "marginalised minorities,"?* Edinburgh: Centre of African Studies-University of Edinburgh.

Tlou, T., & Campbell, A. (1984) *History of Botswana*. Gaborone: Macmillan.

Taylor, M. (2000) Life, land and power: Contesting development in northern Botswana. PhD dissertation, University of Edinburgh.

UNDP (1998) *Human Development Report*. New York: United Nations.

Wily, E. (1982) A strategy of self-determination for the Kalahari San. *Development and Change*, 13(2): 291-308.

Glossary of Tswana terms

Bagkhweni: a term used by the Basarwa to refer to Tswana-speaking dominant groups in Botswana.

Tswana: a member of Tswana speaking groups.

Sengaparile: a grapple plant well known for its medicinal properties that is in high demand both locally and internationally. With proper management and marketing, *sengaparile* has the potential to bring more income to Kanaku and boost its economy.

Mophako: food rations provided by the government through District Councils.

Namola Leuba [drought relief]: Another form of food handouts to temporarily relieve people from drought. This form of assistance is determined from time to time by the government given the perceived drought situation.

Word Count

Abstract: 137

Essay : 7, 690