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The San and Relocation: Why the Promised Land is Not Attractive

A. M. Chebanne

University of Botswana

Department of French

e-mail: chebanne@mopipi.ub.bw

Abstract

Resistance by the San/Basarwa to the relocation to social amenities and development infrastructure, undertaken by the Government of Botswana, may surprise. Do the San refuse development? Is the Government using undue force? Why then are there agitations by Basarwa groups? Who are the Basarwa? Why is there misunderstanding? These are intricate if not delicate questions to respond to, primarily because in the official view or the practice thereof, citizens of the land are not classed ethnically, and accordingly they must be equally afforded the same developmental facilities. This paper will attempt to respond to these questions by providing an ethnographic definition of the Basarwa as autochthonous groups of Botswana and a description of what constitutes them. In the second instance it will examine the relationship of these groups with the policies of the State that seem not to respond to their ethno-cultural, linguistic, and general social welfare. The assumption is that the inappropriate policies of the State on land, education, language use, culture, and development are at the root of this resistance to relocate (to the promised land). The paper will conclude by making specific recommendations that, if adopted, should bring about a harmonious dialogue in the development of minority identity and the maintenance of inter-ethnic relationships predicated on social and legal equalities, even within the settlements of relocation.

Introduction

The San, a label preferred by the Working Group on Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (WIMSA (cf. the Punduka Declaration, 2001)), are also commonly called Basarwa in Botswana, and Bushmen in other publications. The San/Basarwa form tiny and varied ethno-linguistic and cultural communities that are dispersed all over the national territory of Botswana. They have specifically not featured in socio-economic planning and political considerations for development. The only significant development plan in Botswana that has affected their life, albeit not expressly intended for them alone, has been the Remote Area Development Programme (RADP) (Botswana Government: Relocation Website, Botswana Government, NDP 5). This programme has focused on drought and hunger relief for rural and remote populations. The RADP experienced costly implementation, and by the mid-1980s it was clear that the only viable strategy in view of the size of the country and populations involved would be relocation to accessible locations (cf. National Development Plan 6). It is this option of relocation which has bedeviled this development programme in its attempt to provide social amenities (health, water, and drought relief), education of children; and limited seasonal employments for the adults (cf. First People of the Kalahari, 2005; Cassidy, et al., 2001). The concerned communities have been increasingly dissatisfied with the social and economic consequences of relocation. The First People of the Kalahari (FPK) and local and outside non-governmental organizations have been raising voices to protest the state policies (Mphinyane, 2002; Saugestad, 2001). Their view is that the reasons for policies of relocation are fraught with injustices, deprivation, and marginalization.

Added to this general social disquiet has been the issue raised by Survival International (SI), to whom the First People of the Kalahari made recourse to internationalize their socio-economic predicament, in the relocation to designated settlements. However, it is important to note that relocation as it will be submitted in this paper is not limited to the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR), with its inhabitants relocated to New Xade. That is just one case of relocation, and perhaps more painfully

felt by the communities concerned and those who represent them (cf. Survival International). However, there are others in the Ghanzi District (Kagae, East and West Hanahai, for example), North West District (Gudigwa); Central District (Xere and Malatswai), Kweneng (Kaudwane), and Kgalagadi District (Ncang, Ngwatle, Hunhukwe). The question of relocation has created a difficult relationship between the government and the Basarwa communities. From an outsider's perspective, this relationship demonstrates either speaking at cross-purposes or altogether lack of understanding on the part of the government of the real issues causing agitations from the communities and their international advocacy agencies such as Survival International. It may also be a broader issue of ethnicity and the laws and policies of Botswana as the report on Botswana of the United Nations Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2006) seems to suggest:

The Committee is concerned that the State party's objective to build a nation based on the principle of equality for all has been implemented in a way detrimental to the protection of ethnic and cultural diversity. The Committee notes in particular the State party's reluctance to recognize the existence of indigenous peoples on its territory. (Articles 2 and 5).

The Committee, recalling that the principle of non-discrimination requires that the cultural characteristics of ethnic groups be taken into consideration, urges the State party to respect and protect the existence and cultural identity of all ethnic groups within its territory. The Committee also invites the State party to review its policy regarding indigenous peoples and, to that end, to take into consideration the way in which the groups concerned perceive and define themselves. The Committee recalls in this regard its General Recommendations 8 (1990) on self-identification and 23 (1997) on the rights of indigenous peoples (CERD, observation 9 on Botswana, 2006).

This view is important as it bolsters arguments that the status quo of laws and policies of development precipitated acculturation and assimilation into the mainline society (cf. Nyati-Ramahobo, 2002). Consequently, whether declared or not, the policies of the State deny the existence of Basarwa as linguistic and cultural entities that could define themselves and live according to their cultural traditions and customs. And within the current constitutional and policy provisions they cannot, as ethnic communities, meaningfully negotiate with the Government on the question of land ownership and the ethno-cultural and economic conditions of relocation.

Why is the Promised Land Not Attractive?

The 'promised land' is used here with its historical symbolism of a religious metaphor of moving into a 'land of plenty.' This is the land that the government has garnished with social amenities and developmental infrastructure to make the lives of the Basarwa communities comfortable and modern. This metaphor also suggests compliance and religious norms where the powers that be will do all according to the perceived needs of the people. However, when looked critically into, this 'promised land' is not the biblical 'land of milk and honey.' Socio-economically and ethnically, the situation is complex in its history and its consequences. It is in the Legal Assistance Centre report of Cassidy et al. (2001) that one gets a summative account of the issues behind the origins of the Basarwa communities' relocation in Botswana. The settlement or re-settlement programmes tied to the RADP first and foremost targeted Ghanzi Basarwa populations who had already been displaced by ranching developments. The settlement programme culminated in villagization of communities outside the farming areas. Because of the poverty and land dispossession, these communities could not hope that the new settlements would offer anything attractive. The relocation and resettlement from the CKGR followed on the same policies. The Basarwa communities, therefore, through those who represent them, have argued that the

new settlements with social amenities were not suitable for their livelihood and the exercise of their culture (FPK reports, 2005, 2006; SI reports, 2005, 2006). They claimed estrangements, social ills brought about by alcohol abuse and breakdown of social fabric (cf. Cassidy et al., 2001), as well as loss of ethnic and linguistic identity (Monaka, 2006; Chebanne & Monaka, 2005). Besides the claim by the Basarwa for historical and cultural attachment to the Kalahari (land of their sustenance and culture), the autochthony of Basarwa puts them in a special vulnerability.

The Basarwa philosophy, of land and existence, and land and identity, is diametrically opposed to the dominant ideology of the government, which sees land through the cattle culture in a cash economy and urban land values. For many thousands of years, the Basarwa have had a special adaptation to this harsh environment. This is the land that the Botswana government believes is deprived of any resource and is not naturally and socially endowed to attract any meaningful sustenance or development to the people who live there. Where the government sees desolation, the Basarwa see the support of their history, culture, and identity. Where the government sees huge developmental and financial implications, the Basarwa communities see opportunities to thrive through natural means. Essentially, as a human community, their vulnerability and likely death is in the disappearance of their distinct ethno-linguistic character (cf. Brenzinger, 1992), and leaving their claimed land is like departing from their life source. It is not bearable, humanly speaking.

One aspect of this distrust of being moved to modernity is that social, economic, and demographic policies have been formulated from a monolithic perspective (cf. Skelemani: CERD Responses, 2006) and a "one size fits all" approach as Ditshwenelo put it (Botswana Centre for Human Rights, 2006), and have completely overlooked diversity and difference. The position of the government is that in all policies have their priorities and due processes, and nothing can happen overnight, without a democratic decision. And this "democracy" seems to be represented by the majority, which has no problem in the status quo. This should be seen as founded on the constitution provisions, which in essence generalize on Human Rights, and do not guarantee collective rights but individual ones (cf. Mazonde, 2002). By enshrining and entrenching colonial privileges of those who had "territorial land rights," it effectively denies that any other community may have anything else in its own right. The Basarwa communities believe in their historical and cultural rights to use land in the support of their livelihood and culture. But the government believes in land rights only as administrative units on accepted customary and statutory laws (cf. Botswana Constitution: *Chieftainship Act* [Cap. 41:01-03], Sections 77-79 of the constitution; Tribal Territories Act [Cap. 32:03]; Sections 3 and 15). This point will be elaborated later on. Therefore, this variance in social and legal perspectives constitutes the main issue of contention. Yet, granting of land rights is the most effective possible action the government can take to help Basarwa overcome the developmental crisis they are facing. Outside their land, these communities cannot live their identity and promote their culture.

The main concern of the Basarwa, as indigenous people, is evidently that of marginalization and the threat to their autochthony (cf. Brenzinger, 1992). According to Chebanne (2002a: 6) and Eide (2001:4) what is normally held to distinguish indigenous or autochthonous peoples from other groups is their prior settlement in the territory in which they live, combined with their maintenance of a separate culture which is closely linked to their particular and peculiar ways of using land and natural resources. The cultures of these people also make a distinction between the people's habits/ways/manners and the "foreign people's" habits/ways/manners. Theirs is considered human, couch, and harmonious, not aggressive, not greedy, and their philosophy is that they should be at peace within and with the other people and the environment. Therefore, the greatest tragedy for them is to be violated by what they consider not Khoe-khoe or Taa-Tuun, that is, a foreign view of life and its purpose (Chebanne, 2003).

Of greater importance in their concerns is that in the main Botswana developmental perspective, the Basarwa people are generally considered hunters and gatherers, and therefore disregarded and disrespected in development. The Basarwa understand that they are living a precarious life, and that

is how they have lived, for thousands of years (First People Report, 2005; cf. Saugestad 2001), but that is what makes their ethnic identity. However, this view has often led to them being despised and antagonized by those who historically and currently do not value their way of life. These communities also feel that there is lack of respect and selfishness and greed in the way that 'modern' ways go about conceptualizing allocation of land (First People Report, 2005), undertaking economic activities, and determining the way to access development.

However, what is now important is not these indigenous groups ancient territorial history, for example in the CKGR, but what becomes of their lives and identity in the future of a developing state such as Botswana. The question of concern is, "Will they be still ethnically Basarwa by the benchmarked national Vision 2016 and beyond?" This is their chagrin and bane, to die alive – when a living body has no soul – understood here as the inner-most existence of an ethno-culturally and linguistically fulfilled and self-defining person (cf. Monaka, 2006). The situation that these communities find themselves in Botswana is also eloquently recounted by Saugestad (2001), who qualifies as "inconvenient indigenous," the relationship between the State the indigenous minorities. Their socio-economic life and its failure are a frustration and embarrassment to the policy makers. Thus, the Basarwa, under the guise of linguistic and culturally neutrality, are silenced and brought under the tribal hegemonies of recognized tribal communities (cf. Mphinyane, 2002).

To some analysts, the social inequality of these groups is exacerbated by the postcolonial elite domination of the main Botswana socio-political processes, which determine participation in or exclusion from social and economic amenities, institutions, ethno-cultural discourse, and the political economy (Thapelo, 2002; Mphinyane, 2002; Cassidy et al., 2001). It is therefore evident that whatever can be envisaged without consultation and guaranteeing land for the Basarwa will not resolve the problem. The outside activism championed by SI (2005) and relying on anthropological and linguistic characterizations, looks at the collective ethno-cultural identity and agitates for a special treatment of these groups to safe-guard their continued peculiar linguistic and cultural identity within geographical and historical areas that enhance their existence as autochthonous groups. This is in consonance with the territoriality model that Boran (2001) and Reaume (2003) have argued for elsewhere and has the relevance of ensuring that indigenous ethno-linguistic communities' language rights are catered to in language planning policies. This is important as this model points to land as the main resource to achieve indigenous communities' language and culture promotion. It is their language and culture that can empower them to be confident and to effectively engage in development wherever they may be found. Otherwise the government's generalized policies for national development, which effectively suppress or assimilate autochthonous groups, will ever be detrimental to indigenous communities' self-definition. The other underlying factor in the Basarwa interaction with the mainline society is that there is no aspect in the contact with these other groups where they emerge as equals or as people with equal rights. When anything is done for them, it further entrenches negative difference and marginalization.

Over and above this unattractive relocation is education and the role it plays in socialization and in socio-economic advancement, especially when this education is not tailor-made to mitigate the ethno-cultural conditions of such groups (cf. Hargreaves 1999; McCarthy 1999). It is important to note that the creation and the maintenance of live and dynamic cultures are better exercised by the ethnic communities themselves, according to their own terms and means. And this involvement occurs when their identity, beliefs, and arts are preserved through recognition in the national socio-economic system (Chebanne & Monaka 2005). What has happened is that since independence in 1966 there has been a negative ethnicity development which translates practically into two things: firstly, poverty in the cultural domain and the blossoming up of what was exotic and gathered from four corners of the globe in the name of modernism and development. And secondly, poverty and marginalization and deprivation in the socio-economic domains as detailed by Thapelo (2002).

The Misunderstanding or Misrepresentation of Indigenous Basarwa Groups: Has the Constitutional Framework of Ethnicity Any Role?

All research in the social processes in Botswana evidently indicates that Botswana minority groups are in many accounts second class citizens, and this seems not to bother the laws and policies of the government (Chebanne, 2002c; Nyati-Ramahobo, 2002; Diushwanelo, 2001; Chebanne & Monaka, 2005). When the Botswana government affirms in Vision 2016 that it aims to be equitable, democratic, prosperous, educated, and informed, no voice in the socio-political arena seems to ask how and by what means, when at this point in time nothing is on the ground, as attested by Minister Skelemani's Responses to CERD (Republic of Botswana, OP 2006). Considering these responses by the government, it is not evident that the government is prepared any time soon to change the status quo. The constitution and laws of Botswana are now a daunting liability where responding to ethno-linguistic and cultural issues is concerned (cf. CERD Report 2006). Instead, in Botswana there has always been this adumbrative conception of ethnicity and identity which does not achieve anything for the marginalized groups. In the main, the laws and policies are still addicted to neo-colonial ideals, rather static and widely irrelevant to the people and to the development of a truly democratic legal system. As a consequence, the neglecting of the positive aspects of diversity in languages and cultures of the society have led to the loss of value in the whole definition of the country's ethnic and linguistic resources. A democracy that has a low regard for these aspects of human rights has no means to respond to demands such as those conveyed by the Basarwa.

However, the argument here is that if we want to seriously talk about ethnic rights and their value in development and democracy (cf. Lauder, 1999; McCarthy, 1999), we need to understand the elements that constitute a culture and an ethnic community. These are the guarantee of use of their language and culture in education, the respect of their customary laws, the unconstrained use of resources in their historical ecosystem, and the guarantee of their voice in decision making. In the context of our discussions, these elements must be explicit in the constitution and in the cultural policies. It is the esteemed assumption and argument in this paper that Botswana ethnic communities have developed throughout their history cultural knowledge and technologies which make them culturally viable. Their languages and customs provide the most vivid and practical way of communicating their vision of the world and their understanding of their own existence. Efforts to bring indigenous ethnic groups to the mainline national linguistic-cultural groups, through education in the languages of other people, do nothing that effectively improves the lot of this people who are systematically dispossessed and disenfranchised by the hegemonic ethnic entities and the State. As it is, it is all about more fully empowering the already powerful, and making the wealthy wealthier. It is a shining example of neocolonial economic imperialism, and a crude way of responding to postmodernist agitation for rights (Chebanne & Monaka, 2005; cf. McCarthy, 1999; Okoth-Okombo, 1999). Unfortunately, some within the government have vehemently defended this current agenda (cf. Skelemani 2006; Botswana Government Relocation of Basarwa webpage). However, it is not necessary, in order to look developed, that we have a well-dressed person with a feeling of emptiness within, to have free for all education, but without any knowledge of ethno-anthropological values; and to be counted among those nations that have made strides in infrastructural development, but have a people without a vibrant cultural life and therefore without a soul.

The fundamental question in Botswana, when one talks of the Basarwa groups is not so much whether they are indigenous or the minority, but whether they have or do not have ethnic rights (linguistic, cultural) and territorial rights (customary land rights) recognized by the state (cf. Tribal Territories Act; Chieftainship Act; Section 77 to 79), especially when one looks into these Acts and Laws as determinants of the socio-ethnic recognition of people of the country. It is about those under the generalizing effects of the majority of the society who find their identity diminished, and their participation in socio-cultural activities devalored, and this is the greatest of all the concerns. It is not how to access development, but who you are in development.

Modernism, Postmodernism, and the Question of Relocation

The question of relocation of ethnic communities in Botswana will ever remain an intricate one, until an appropriate perspective is adopted to address it. This new perspective consists of elaborating on the issues of human and personal rights to include the elimination of discrimination, tolerance, and the removal of negative a view of ethnicity, culture, and territoriality attachment (Chebanne & Monaka, 2005; cf. Nyati-Ramahobo, 2002; Chebanne 2002a, 2002b, 2002c; Saugestad 2001). From this viewpoint, relocation should not be construed as a simple geographical movement of a people, but a whole social transformation of a community that has depended on a certain environment from time immemorial. It is also a question of not matching with the other aspects of existence and identity, such as language and culture. The Basarwa are estranged by everything that is done for them. How can the Basarwa thrive in a 'strange land' and with strange means? The modernist developmental model of universal access, uniformity, equality, and equity are ever current in the socio-political debate, and have been underscored in Botswana during the National Development Plans (cf. NDP 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9). Their importance is in the idea that they provide a lucid idea of democratization in development. However, in the postmodernist political perspective, they do not entail going beyond the socio-political and ideological inhibitions so that new and different questions about the social processes could be asked. They do not cater for new voices that could start questioning the developmental choices and the associated models.

The argument here is that while postmodernism as a framework that is adopted in this discussion does not fit into any political philosophy, and therefore would not suggest a particular solution in this situation, it does have a rudimentary coherence with respect to the sets of problems and issues that assail the country's Basarwa communities, in answer to which new voices and visions of things have been arising. As postmodernism entails a certain deconstruction and or a reconstruction, the socio-political issues and problems that are being raised here should be seen in the refusal of a monolithic model of development and ethno-cultural construct which are often appealed to and put forth in the apologetic justifications of uniformity and equality. Issues of uniformity and equality do not necessarily respond to those of equity and ethics. The lack of action in the response to ethno-social based issues and situations strongly contrasts with the good number and sophistication of initiatives in other developmental domains. Therefore, the government and the Basarwa groups need a direct and transparent discussion to resolve the issues of relocation and the fear of ethnic identity loss and linguistic death.

It is the philosophical assumption of postmodernism that ethnic identity responds to aspirations of self-esteem and re-confirmation of cultural values, and in this regard it is at the same time the mediation of social contradictions and the institution of a socially equitable system. The ethnic or tribal cultural policy, if it can be made to comply to demands of historical lands, the fulfilment of the desire to exercise self-defining culture, and use of linguistic resources, would thus be revealed as an appealing factor. Contrary to that, if it cannot comply, and thus become an exacerbation of these issues, it will turn out as the source of aggravation of ethnic conflicts (cf. Okoth-Okombo, 1999). What is evident in Botswana is that the country constitutes an ethnic and cultural space which is subjected to the globalizing dynamics of the modern world, and ethnic, linguistic, and cultural heritages cannot be left to vague wishes and definitions, as indeed nature does not tolerate vagueness. Finally, Botswana, if it must define itself nationally, or benchmark its development and democracy, must understand its constituent parts, made of ethnicities, languages, and social organizations, and therefore ensure equity in the definition of and contribution to national unity.

Botswana must therefore seriously consider other models of social development (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2002) for its indigenous people and recognize its multi-ethnic, multilingual, and multi-cultural nature. There is also a need for the government to ratify all UN charters relative to indigenous and autochthonous communities and the issues that concern their well-being and their future (cf.

Saugestad 2001), especially in the context of globalization, which as it has been said again and over again, will present such communities and their cultures with the threat of extinction (Chebanne, 2002b; cf. Okoth-Okombo, 1999; M'bokolo, 1996). It is important for Botswana to have a broader perspective on these issues, and a mechanism for the ethnic and linguistic survival of its Basarwa communities and other ethnically and linguistically marginalized people. The enactment of these provisions will make the country an equitable and caring nation according to its Vision 2016. Without prejudice to the approaches in which these diverse debates have arisen, one can certainly consider as consequential several points that were raised in the discussion. These are the need to adapt a broader conception and perspective of ethnicity and territoriality transcending all the social domains. In such a perspective, ethnicity cannot be viewed solely as the convenience of an administrative setup for rural communities, or any community whatsoever, but the success of a humane system that looks into the totality of concerns and needs of citizens in their linguistic and cultural diversity. If it is going to be argued that land and territoriality have no significance in any ethnic identity, it should be insisted that the promotion of ethnic identity through language and culture are every human being's rights wherever that person is found, as these are linked to life and the expression of identity.

Ethno-anthropologically, what has been argued for here are facilitations of momentous intercultural as well as socio-political dialogues. Any question arising from these debates should henceforth engage the question from three approaches: 1) sociological – handling of all social phenomena through research; 2) anthropological – handling all civilizational questions from the perspective of daily realities of existence, customs and habits and attitudes of communities (McCarthy, 1999); and finally, 3) semiological – acknowledging, interpreting, understanding or relating the cultural connotations, collective representations, and myths of communities as a means to a deeper understanding of their existence (cf. M'bokolo, 1996). Botswana is in an opportune time in its development to implement sooner rather than later constitutional and social programs that take indigenous autochthonous communities into account as a human developmental issue. These issues are important to the indigenous communities and to engage them in development as equals is a recognition of their humanity (cf. Visser 1998; cf. Lauder, 1999). It should be noted that tribalism or ethnicity is not when indigenous minority groups engage in the expression of demands for ethnic rights to culture, language, and land, but in the obstinate and subjective refusal of such rights. Tolerance, equity, and respect of ethnic identity are also such magic palliatives in a situation of ethnic crisis, and the lack thereof will constitute a problem and make dialogue impossible. At the end this country will not be remembered for how much of the national budget and the attended resources it used to develop these autochthonous communities, but whether or not in Botswana their existence as ethno-cultural and linguistic groups has been preserved.

In conclusion, it is important to state that political postmodernism analysis as a discourse of plurality, difference, and multi-narratives, integrates issues of democratization and access into the very process of developmental choices (Giroux, 1999). For the Basarwa this postmodernist perspective is important as it brings a second generation type of liberties that individuate and appeal to the promotion of personal choices. These perspectives in the analysis of the ethno-cultural phenomenon of Botswana should entail a re-democratization process and provide a basis for the liberation of a socio-political expression and the facilitation of common understanding and dialogue. This will constitute the constitutional modernization which will be important to move out of the vicious cycle in the stand-off between the Basarwa and the government. The following views provide what this paper recommends: (a) while the legality of relocation can be argued by the government, the fact that for the Basarwa relocation has a nefarious impact on their ethnic and cultural identity means that the laws must ensure that these communities do not lose their special existence, and altogether do not move; (b) equality is a trite concept without equity in the provision of socio-economic amenities and a deliberate entailment of the provision of basic liberties and choices that make a human person respecting and respectable, responsible toward the community and not irresponsible and misguided. Such qualities are derived from the right to self-identity through language and ethnicity; 3) Botswana must ratify the International

Labor Organization Convention (ILO; UN 2002, No. 169) concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples as this forms a basis to objectively engage the debate over the Human Rights of the Basarwa and their free choice in developmental policies.

Further, to add to these recommendations, a certain territoriality is required to exercise the right to be respected and thrive in self-identity, the right to protection from the generalizing and the globalizing effects of the present world order, and the right to one's meaningful ethnic language and culture. These are the issues that define a human community's existence (Chebanne, 2002c). ILO Convention 169 (UN, 2002: No. 169), which is often used in arguing the case for indigenous and tribal people, states that, "The rights of ownership and possession of the peoples concerned over the lands which they traditionally occupy shall be recognized." Related to these rights, is also the question of the right of education and culture in one's own language, and this is the aspect that even external activism overlooks. It should be noted that wherever they are relocated, the Basarwa, as characterized by autochthony, remain dominated and minoritized and marginalized. The land that is not their cultural attachment becomes an alien land (Chebanne & Monaka, 2005). What this means is that in Botswana, the Basarwa are special communities who qualify for indigenous peoples' considerations (cf. UN, 2002; United Nations: ILO/CERD Reports, 2006), and consequently need special and specific solutions to their problems. They should be considered as indigenous because of their history and autochthonous adaptability to the environment from which they are being relocated, and therefore the rightful owners of the territories that they inhabited historically.

Conclusion

The relocation of the indigenous Basarwa communities whose peculiar history and culture and destiny are closely attached to their precarious existence in the Kalahari is problematic because of their socio-economic status. Their attachment to land has a special characteristic in their existence, even as they are facing the assailing force of modernity. There are no guarantees that even when granted the land they will not undergo any social upheaval, but it is better not to be a deliberate agent of the destruction of their history and culture. It is also not just their territoriality which is at stake, but the need to assist them to preserve their language and culture, and especially to those who are already relocated. It is evident that until the government and the Basarwa reach a common understanding of issues, through transparent discussions of concern and of fundamental essence, there will be no possible meaningful dialogue. There is evidently a problem of existential nature which creates a dialogue of the deaf between the government and relocated Basarwa communities. The situation has its own intricacies, social and political, and the paper has consciously avoided engagement in a narrow social anthropology theory which would be inadequate to interpret the socio-political theory that animates the relocation debate. It is therefore not the claim of this paper to bring clear-cut responses, but to engage the Basarwa and the Government in some fundamental debates on the issues that have been raised.

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