

## **The effects of displacement on the economic development of a community with special reference to the !Xun and the Kwe**

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### **Abstract**

In this paper the relationship between poverty and displacement with reference to the !Xun and the Kwe, resettled from the Kalahari in Namibia to Platfontein close to Kimberley in South Africa, is discussed. A case study design was used in the research process. Data was collected by making use of structured questionnaires, non-structured interviews and observations. The economic development data were collected on income, education and health. The data was compared to existing data of the Northern Cape and South Africa. The economic development data of the !Xun and the Kwe indicated that the community is impoverished. The development indicators were also measured against the income datum cut-off measure of less than \$1 per day to indicate poverty and it was found that the !Xun and the Kwe's income is much lower than this measure. Using the Involuntary Risk and Reconstruction model developed by Cernea it became apparent that all eight risks mentioned in the model, that could lead to impoverishment of a community were present amongst the !Xun and the Kwe. Intervention is needed to turn around the impoverishment of the !Xun and the Kwe and to prevent the disappearance of this ancient culture.

### **Introduction**

Among the earliest representatives of humanity in the world, and the first inhabitants of South Africa, were the Khoisan (San) or 'Bushman' people. The first San lived more than 23 000 years ago in Southern Africa, long before the first Bantu-speaking inhabitants (Barnard, 1992). The Khoisan is a symbol of Africa and South Africa and as such the language of the Khoisan is used as the motto on the South African Coat of Arms. The motto, written in !Xun, one of the Khoisan languages, is “!Ke:/xara/ ke”, which means 'diverse people unite.'

Considering the importance of the San people in the history of South Africa and as a marketing tool to attract tourists to the country, it is surprising to find that they are not mentioned as an ethnic group in the Constitution (Act 1 of 1998). The only reference made is '!Xun is a non-official language in South Africa'. As little as they are recognised in the Constitution, they are also neglected as an indigenous group. Where once the San men were an elite fighting unit of the South African Defence Force, now they and their families are a displaced impoverished community.

The San, consisting of two tribes the !Xun and the Kwe, fled from Angola after the Portuguese withdrawal in 1974 (Robbins 2006, 19). They found refuge at the Omega military base in northern Namibia. The men were trained as soldiers and served in the South African Defence Force (SADF) in its struggle against the South West African People Organisation (Swapo),(Robbins 2006, 2). In 1990 Namibia regained its sovereignty and the South African fighting units had to be withdrawn from northern Namibia, known as the Caprivi. Many of the San soldiers chose to resettle in

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South Africa fearing the wrath of the newly elected Swapo party. The San soldiers were told by the senior officers of the SADF that they would never be abandoned and that those that opted for resettlement would be provided with housing. In April 1990 approximately three thousand seven hundred and twenty people were resettled from Namibia to a tented camp at Schmidtsdrift, a farm in the Northern Cape near Kimberley (Robbins 2006, 21). In South Africa the long road to democracy was well on its way and peace negotiations at the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) were undertaken by the African National Congress (ANC) and the then ruling party, the National Party of South Africa. One of ANC's demands was that the most notorious SADF battalions had to be disbanded. These battalions included Battalion 31 – the San, Battalion 32 – the ex-Angolan soldiers and Koevoet – the police battalion. In 1993 a democratic election took place and won by the ANC. In 1994 Battalion 31 was disbanded. All financial support to the San soldiers was immediately stopped and the employment of the soldiers was ended. The soldiers, many with 20 years of duty in the SADF, did not receive any pension and only a few were given a meagre severance payment. With no funding from the SADF all hopes of a new settlement diminished. A !Xun and Kwe trust, consisting of representative members of the San community and experts on the San and township development was established with the main aim to find the displaced land to develop their own township. It was only 13 years later that they moved into their permanent home at Platfontein, approximately 15km from Kimberley.

According to Mc Dowell (1995, 2) 'The involuntary movement of people has been repeated across the world, often with disastrous results. In 1995 there were 18 million cross-border refugees, 24 million internally displaced and a further 25 million environmental refugees and at least 90 million people displaced by dam construction and urban transportation developments'. During the 1990s a model for involuntary displacement was formulated by Cernea. (2004,14) According to Cernea, the biggest risk due to forced displacement is the impoverishment of the community, thus the main challenge for any model is to provide means to prevent this risk. (2004, 14). Cernea identifies eight risks that lead to the impoverishment of the community. These risks are landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalisation, food insecurity, increased morbidity, loss of access to common property resources; and community disarticulation. According to Cernea, 'before displacement begins, these processes are only impending social and economic risks. But if appropriate countermeasures are not initiated, these potential hazards convert into actual impoverishment disasters'. (Cernea 2001, 4). According to Cernea, if these risks do occur, they convert into an actual impoverishment disaster

In the case of the !Xun and the Kwe various studies have been done on the culture, languages, folk lore, dances and rock drawings of the San, but none explored the impoverishment risk due to displacement.

In this paper the relationship between displacement and impoverishment with special reference to the !Xun and the Kwe will be explored. Various economic development indicators were gathered to establish the extent of the poverty experienced by the San community. The indicators were also used to discover if the eight risks, which lead to impoverishment, identified by Cernea (2001, 4) are evident amongst the !Xun and the Kwe. In the next section of the paper the model of involuntary displacement will be explained and the concept "poverty" defined.

**A model of involuntary risk and resettlement: (Cernea, 2004, 1-52)**

In studying displacement various models have been developed to predict, diagnose and resolve the problems presented by *voluntary displacement*, though the models representing involuntary displacement are limited.

In 1982 Scudder and Colson (1985, 23-152) formulated a model distinguishing four stages namely; recruitment, transition, development and incorporation/handing over, but this model had limited application as it initially was developed to analyse voluntarily displacement, but could also be applied to involuntary displacement if the resettlement was successful.

In the 1990's an impoverishment risks and reconstruction model for resettling displaced populations was developed by Cernea especially addressing involuntary resettlement and reconstruction (IRR). (Cernea, 2001, 4) Risk is defined by Cernea as the possibility that a certain course of action will trigger future injurious effects, losses and destruction (2004, 14). He identifies eight risks that lead to the impoverishment of a community (Cernea 2004, 18). The eight risks are:

*Landlessness*, if people are removed from their land they are also removed from the main productive resource. Both people's commercial activities and subsistence livelihoods are removed. In this case the people lose both their natural resources and their man-made capital. (Cernea 2004, 19).

*Joblessness*, the risk of losing employment is very high in displacements and to create new job opportunities in a new established community is very difficult and requires substantial capital. (Cernea 2004, 19)

*Homelessness*, the loss of a home or shelter is normally only temporary for many displacees; but, for some, homelessness can imply deterioration of their housing standards. 'In a broader cultural sense, the loss of a family's individual home and of a group's cultural space tends to result in alienation and status-deprivation. For refugees, homelessness and 'placelessness' are closely related.' (Cernea 2004, 21)

*Marginalisation*, occurs when families lose economic power. Many individuals cannot use their earlier acquired skills at the new location and previously acquired human capital, including skills are obsolete Economic marginalisation is often accompanied by social and psychological marginalisation, expressed in decreasing social status. Displacees often lose confidence in society and in themselves. They suffer from a feeling of injustice, and feel vulnerable. The displacees are often seen by host communities as a socially degrading community. This social degrading is also reflected in the displacees' self-image (Cernea 2004, 22).

*Food Insecurity*, the forced removal of a community often increases the risk that people will temporarily or chronically be undernourished, defined by Cernea as, 'calorie-protein intake levels below the minimum necessary for normal growth and work' (2004, 23).

*Increased Morbidity and Mortality*, massive population displacement threatens to cause serious declines in health levels. Displacement-induced social stress and psychological trauma are sometimes accompanied by the outbreak of relocation-related illnesses, particularly parasitic and vector-borne diseases such as tuberculosis and schistosomiasis. Water supply that is not safe and substandard sewage systems can lead to epidemics and chronic diarrhoea. The infants, children, and the elderly are affected most severely (Cernea, 2004, 24).

*The loss of access to common property and services* such as pastures, forested lands, water bodies, burial grounds and quarries, results in the deterioration in income and livelihood levels of displaced communities. Normally the losses of common property assets are not compensated by governments. Public services such as access to schools are also lost. Empirical evidence shows that in all regions a significant share of the poor households' income comes from edible forest products, firewood, common grazing areas, and public quarries. Loss of these resources leaves a big gap in the provision of necessities. Sequeira (1994) mentions the following examples revealed in his studies, 'in semi-arid regions of India, between 91 and 100 percent of firewood, between 66 and 89 percent of domestic fuel, and between 69 and 80 percent of poor households' grazing needs are supplied by lands held under a common property regime' When displaced people's access to resources under common property regimes is not protected, they tend either to invade on reserved forests or to increase the pressure on the common property resources of the host area's population. This can lead to social conflict and harming the environment.

Displacement leads to *Social Disarticulation* If a community is displaced it tears apart the existing social structures. "It breaks up families and communities, it also dismantles patterns of social organisation. Life-sustaining informal networks of helping one another, local voluntary associations, and self-organised services are disrupted. This is a net loss of valuable 'social capital' that adds to the loss of natural, physical and human capital." (Cernea, 2004, 26).

The eight risks mentioned above, are interconnected and tend to be forced onto a community. The affected community is expected deal with all these risks concurrently and this can result in the impoverishment and social degeneration. of the displaced community.

### **Definitions of poverty**

To establish if a community is impoverished by displacement the concept 'poor' needs to be defined. A definition used by Hirschowitz to describe poverty is: '[p]overty is the denial of opportunities and choices most basic to human development to lead a long, healthy, creative life and to enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity, self-esteem and respect from others." (Hirschowitz et al. 2000, 54). This is a relative definition of poverty that refers to the minimum acceptable standard of living applicable to a certain region and within a person's own society.

There has been much debate about 'absolute' and 'relative' definitions of poverty and the difficulties in comparing poverty. In 1995 at the UN World Summit on Social

Development, 117 countries agreed on two definitions of poverty –absolute and overall poverty. Overall poverty, according to the UN World Summit, ‘has various manifestations, including lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments; and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterised by a lack of participation in decision-making and in civil, social and cultural life’. (UN 2005) Absolute poverty is defined by the UN World Summit as ‘a condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to social services.’ (UN 2005)

Taking cognisance of the definitions of poverty, the paper intends to establish if the !Xun and the Kwe are poor and exposed to the eight risks of impoverishment as set out by Cernea. (2004)

### **Methodology**

The approach used to conduct the research is a case study design. The unit for analysis is both a person and a household in order to attain per capita data and income data per household.

Guided by the Human Development Index as explained by the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report 2006, variables on per capita income, education and health were collected to establish the development level of the !Xun and the Kwe. The researcher obtained permission from the Kimberley Hospital to take part in a two day campaign held at Platfontein. The hospital collected health and other relevant demographic information on the !Xun and the Kwe. The method of sampling was convenience sampling. A sample size of 465 mothers out of a total of 1300 households took part in the survey. Structured questionnaires were used to collect the relevant data. The researcher also interviewed selected candidates chosen by means of judgement sampling. The respondents were chosen on grounds of their status in the community. Random non-structured interviews were held with members in the community. Observation was the last method employed to collect data on the infrastructure of the township and the sociological aspects of the community.

Research was constrained due to the language barrier, though interpreters were used. It was found that some of the older community members were not willing to take part in the survey.

The model of Cernea (2004, 14), discussed previously, was used as measure to test the susceptibility of the !Xun and the Kwe to impoverishment.

In this paper the income datum method to determine the poverty level will be applied. The income datum definition gives a financial cut-off, any household earning less than the cut-off is perceived as poor. In this study two different cut-off measures were used. The first was \$1 a day, used by the United Nations.. If a person earns less than \$1 per day he/she is perceived to be poor. The average nominal exchange rate of

the Rand will be used to convert the rand income to dollar income. The other cut-off measure is one calculated by Schwabe (2004,2), which looks at the average income for a household of a certain size. If the average income for the size of the household is less than the cut-off amount it indicates that the household is poor.

The study of Schwabe (July 2004) will be used to determine the cut-off amounts to identify poor households in South Africa. The cut-off income datum calculated by Schwabe (July 2004) was adjusted by using the Consumer Price Index for South Africa (Stats SA 2005) for the last month of each year.

Table 1 gives the Rand cut-off values to determine poverty for different sizes of households (Schwabe 2004, 2), for an average household of five persons an income of less than R1 662 per month, earned in 2005, indicated absolute poverty.

**Table 1. Poverty income by household size (R per month)**

Household size	2001	2005
1	587	709
2.	773	934
3.	1028	1242
4	1290	1558
5	1541	1662
6	1800	2174
7	2054	2481
8+	2503	3024

Source: Schwabe 2004, 2

To summarise, the case study approach was followed in this research. The unit of analysis was both individuals and households. Data were collected by means of structured questionnaires, interviews and observance. The income datum measure for poverty and the Involuntary Displacement model of Cernea, were used to ascertain if the !Xun and Kwe community was poor.

### Findings and discussion

Table 2 shows the various development economic indicators obtained in this study for the !Xun and the Kwe and compare it to the existing figures for the Northern Cape and South Africa.

<b>Table 2. Economic development indicators for 2005: A comparison</b>			
	<b>!Xun Kwe</b>	<b>and Northern Cape</b>	<b>South Africa</b>
<b>GNI per capita (US\$)</b>	\$246	\$2 299	\$2 600
<b>Occurrence of Tuberculosis (per 100)</b>	15	3.39	2.18

<b>Malnutrition Under 3<sup>rd</sup> percentile</b>	34%	16.5%	9.8%
<b>Life expectancy at birth</b>	65	54	48.8
<b>Unemployment</b>	95%	22.3 %	27.8%
<b>Population</b>	4 500	1. 1 mil	45. 026 mil
<b>Households</b>	1 300	200 000	9 million
<b>Adult literacy rate (% ages 15 and above)</b>	13.3%	83.8%	86%
Population living under \$1 per day	97%	7.1%	40%

Source Human Development Report 2006, Platfontein survey 2005

The Gross National Income per capita per year in 2005 of the !Xun and the Kwe was \$246 dollars, compared to the \$2 299 for the Northern Cape and \$2 600 for South Africa, thus plus minus only a tenth of the average income of a South African citizen. This amount converts to 97% of the total !Xun and Kwe population living under the \$1 per day cut-off amount to indicate poverty. Making use of Schwabe's income datum measure calculated for South African households, the cut-off income for an average household of five persons is R1 662 per month, the !Xun and Kwe's average monthly income per household only amounts to R255, this is 6% of the cut-off income datum. The monthly income of the !Xun and the Kwe places them in the bottom of the lowest quintile of income earners, indicating absolute poverty

Employment figures indicated that only 58 !Xun mothers and fathers were employed, this represents an employment rate of 13,6%, or an unemployment rate of 87,4% compared to 22,3% for the Northern Cape and 27% for South Africa. The unemployment rate is almost four times that of the Northern Cape and indicates the lack of employment opportunities among the !Xun and the Kwe.

Moving to the health indicators. Fifteen out of a 100 cases seen at the clinic suffered from tuberculosis, compared to only three cases in the Northern Cape and only two cases in South Africa. It seems that the San people are very susceptible to Tuberculosis, an illness mentioned by Cernea (2004, 16) as one of the illnesses common among the poor. Malnutrition is indicated if a child's weight is under the third percentile, 158 children's weight was below this percentile, this converts to 33% of the children, compared to only 9, 8% in South Africa.

Communication with other groups is a major problem experienced by the !Xun and the Kwe, even communication amongst themselves are difficult as their dialects differ remarkably. Only 46 of the interviewed mothers could speak either Afrikaans or English. When reading and writing are considered it must be born in mind, that alphabets for !Xun and Kwe were only adopted in 2006 and 2006 Consequently the

illiteracy rate amongst the tribes is very high. Adult literacy rate is only 13, 3 %, compared to 86%.in South Africa.

Reviewing the per capita income, the health and the education variables, the levels of development indicators of the !Xun and the Kwe are much worse than those of both the Northern Cape and South Africa. In using the income datum method it was found that most of the !Xun and the Kwe received less than \$1 a day and using the Schwabe method for household data less than R1 662 per household per month, the !Xun and the Kwe can be classified as absolutely poor. In the next section each of the impoverishment risks identified by Cernea (2004, 14) will be explored to determine if the !Xun and the Kwe are exposed to these risks of impoverishment.

### **The risks experienced by the !Xun and the Kwe**

Findings from the study were grouped to illustrate the eight risks identified by Cernea. (2004, 14)

The !Xun and the Kwe, are not landless. They purchased Platfontein by raising funds from various institutions including the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) (Robbins, 2004, 20). From the interviews it became evident that although the !Xun and Kwe owned land they still had no sense of belonging and many of them would like to return to their ancestral lands. From the data collected at the survey held at Platfontein it was determined that only 30% of the community had South African identification documents and could be seen as South Africans, the rest were still Angolan citizens. The implication of not being a South African citizen is that the San-community does not qualify for any of the South African social security grants, including old age pension, child support grant and disability grant.(Platfontein Survey, 2005).

The people at Platfontein suffer from the risk of joblessness. According to the respondents interviewed very few employment opportunities exist at Platfontein and job opportunities outside Platfontein are limited due to language problems, lack of skills and transport problems.

The !Xun and the Kwe are not exposed to the risk of homelessness in the sense that they do not have houses, rather that they are not accepted by neighbouring communities as South Africans. This affects their self-esteem and their feelings of self-worth. (Interviews, 2005)

The !Xun and the Kwe are economically marginalised. The survey indicated that their specialist knowledge of the veldt and game, tracking and hunting are obsolete and these skills can not be used to earn a living at Platfontein. They are also socially marginalised. The men's and their families' status of being a part of an elite soldier community was taken away from them with the disbanding of Battalion 31. It became evident in the interviews that they harbour a feeling of being nothing special, misfits, with no future. Signs of depression were observed amongst the community. Signs of a degenerating society including alcohol abuse, family violence and deteriorating health levels were observed at the medical clinic.



The community suffered from the risk of food insecurity. They lack income and natural resources to supply in their food needs. The survey at Platfontein also revealed that 33% of the children suffered from malnutrition. (Survey Platfontein, 2005).

The risk of increased morbidity and mortality is relevant among the community. Diseases like tuberculosis, related to poverty are rife among the !Xun and the Kwe. Other diseases caused by poor hygiene (such as diarrhoea and dysentery), and parasitic and vector-borne diseases are frequently diagnosed by the clinic. (Platfontein Campaign 2005)

The !Xun and the Kwe depended on basic food from vegetation that they gathered and the game they hunted in the Kalahari and later the SADF provided in their basic needs. They were self sufficient, but their loss of common property and the services rendered by the SADF, left them incapable of providing in their own needs.

The community suffers from social disarticulation. According to Robbins 'the !Xun and the Kwe are expected to adjust to a Westernised style of living, where survival depends on reaping all the benefits for yourself and increasing your own wealth. Among the Bushman community it was exactly the opposite that led to the survival of the clans in the deserts. They had to share with everybody and were dependent on each other for survival.' (Robbins, 2004, 18)

Each of the risks mentioned by Cernea (2004, 15-23) features prominently amongst the !Xun and the Kwe and it can be taken that the San tribes are exposed to all the risks of impoverishment and the risk of disappearing as an indigenous group in South Africa.

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this paper was to establish if there is a relationship between displacement and impoverishment. To establish such a correlation the poverty experienced by the displacees had to be measured. Two different approaches to the income datum method of measuring poverty were used. The first was 'the less than \$1 per day method' used by the United Nations and the other was comparing the average income of a five person household to the cut-off amount calculated by Schwabe (2004, 2). The results from both methods indicated that the poverty experienced by the !Xun and the Kwe was well below the cut-off amounts, indicating that the community suffers from severe poverty. Other development economic data were also collected on education and health and it was found that all the data indicated severe poverty conditions experienced by the !Xun and the Kwe.

A poverty risk analysis was also conducted to determine if the !Xun and the Kwe are in danger of the eight risks described by Cernea's Involuntary Risk and Resettlement Model. It was established that signs of all the risks are evident in the community, indicating an imminent risk to impoverishment.

Further research will be needed to address the policies, processes and action that can be taken to limit the impoverishments risks and the severe poverty condition

experienced by the !Xun and the Kwe. The institutions responsible for the displacement of the !Xun and the Kwe will have to take responsibility for the predicament in which the residents of Platfontein find themselves in. They will have to make good on their promises.

If measures are not taken to alleviate the impoverishment of the !Xun and the Kwe communities, it might lead to the end of an ancient culture, leaving a void in the history of man

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