

The 'Bushmen' or San people as a homogenous group is a European concept that actually incorporates many groups of peoples indigenous to Southern Africa (Gordon and Douglas 2000). These peoples have been oppressed historically through military recruitment and apartheid abuses exemplified in the poor conditions at Bushman capital Tsumkwe where death rates exceeded birth rates, and the practice of 'civilizing' through different forms of torture and murder (Gordon and Douglas 2000:2-4). The Bushmen are considered the most 'victimized and brutalized' people in the history of Southern Africa (Gordon and Douglas 2000:10). Post-apartheid, there have been efforts by the San through community-based non-profits and cultural tourism to gain cultural recognition from governments that resist giving them marginalised status and associated benefits (Giraud 2018). On the surface, tourism practices increase cultural awareness and economically support San groups. However, to satisfy the outsiders that the tourism industry is dependent on, both the San and tourists are reduced to stereotypes, making the industry detrimental to intercultural understanding. The tourism industry can also be exploitative as the San are at the mercy of more powerful agents and lack alternative forms of income.

Tourism and Stereotypical Cultural Understanding

Tourism spreads knowledge about the San people and their culture. However, this cultural interpretation is altered by the need to adhere to the 'Bushman myth', the singular image of all San people as primitive hunter-gatherers living in harmony with nature that has been fabricated by scientists and the media (Gordon and Douglas 2000). Many tourists are disappointed when the San that they encounter do not match this image. In Kagga Kamma, the preferred use of Western items such as Swiss army knives, bottle necks, and blankets instead of traditional items such as stones, wood pipes, and animal skins was communicated to tourists (Sehume 2012:104). The representation of San culture at Kagga Kamma was unsatisfactory to some tourists and one visitor from Argentina claimed he would travel to Kalahari next to see the authentic, unspoiled Bushmen (Sehume 2012:104). In order to best satisfy tourists, the San must be presented stereotypically, regardless of authenticity. For the Intu Afrika tourism venture, Bushmen from Schmidtsdrift were brought in to work (Sylvain, 2005:365). These Bushmen had dark skin and were tall and therefore did not physically align with the idea of short and light-skinned Bushmen that prevailed (Sylvain, 2005:365). Also, they had previously enlisted in the South African Defence Force during Namibia's liberation battles, wore Western clothing, drank alcohol, and didn't behave like ideal Bushmen (Sylvain, 2005:365). The dissimilarities of these peoples to the idyllic Bushman caused the owner of Intu Afrika to send them back, proving again that the stereotype is more important than the truth in cultural tourism (Sylvain, 2005:365). Another instance where reality disappointed was the

traditionally performed dance in the Treesleeper Camp which was considered by visitors to be too monotone and boring (Hüncke 2010:120). They desired the addition of instruments like drums as well as a more captivating performance overall (Hüncke 2010:120). The dance did not match their ideas about African dancing and was the least purchased event in the Treesleeper venture with only forty percent of visitors purchasing (Hüncke 2010:112). This indicated that non-stereotypical displays are not economically advantageous.

In opposition, the most popular booking at the Treesleeper Camp was the Bushwalk, booked by eighty percent of visitors where at the end, the guide changes into a loincloth and creates a fire in the traditional way for the tourists (Hüncke 2010:111-113). Although the guide does inform the tourists that fire making is no longer practiced by the San people, the tourists still see him performing the action which can cause them to think of Bushmen in that image (Hüncke 2010:113). The Treesleeper guides also highlight the continuity of traditional practices. The sustained collection of termites by the Hai//om is shared along with the consumption of *biltong*, a form of dried meat that is still made by the San and sold at supermarkets (Hüncke 2010:116-117). By emphasising the persistence of these habits, the contemporary culture of the San is equated to the traditional culture, spreading the idea that the San are still hunter-gatherers who live off nature. The village walk offered by the Treesleeper Camp also presents the San stereotypically. Two homes are selected for the tour, both of which are below average and showcase the poverty of the inhabitants (Hüncke 2010:128). The display of impoverished households diminishes the modernity of the San people as poorer San cannot afford modern amenities. The concept of the San as in poverty and of lower status is also spread with the deliberate showcase of these poor families. The creation of reconstructed traditional villages for visitation is another way false realities are spread. In Kagga Kamma, the Kuiper people act as if they live in the reconstructed *lapa* village and visitors are only told that they do not live there if they ask (Tomaselli 2012:113). In reality, the Kuiper take part in many aspects of modern life including wearing modern dress, shopping for food and goods at the local supermarket, traveling in cars and planes, and using modern technologies (Tomaselli 2012:112). The Izintaba Zulu Cultural Village is another village on display for tourists. The Zulu also do not live in the *kraal* village but live across the valley and participate in parts of modern life such as listening to the radio (Stauss 2012:94). However, in the *kraal*, the Zulu are seen by visitors dressed in traditional animal skins, cooking and eating maize, living in huts, doing traditional dances, and consulting *sangomas* instead of contemporary physicians (Stauss 2012:97). Through these reconstructed villages and inaccurate depiction of San people, the concept that the San people continue to live in this traditional way is communicated to visitors. The sale of traditional goods is

another common practice in cultural tourism. At the Tsodilo World Heritage Site in Botswana, the Ju/'hoan community sell necklaces made from mokolwane palm nuts, seeds, and ostrich eggshell beads, as well as leather bags and bow and arrow sets (Giraudo 2018:222). The sale of these items decontextualises them and makes them representational of the San people and their culture. So, although many San no longer hunt regularly, including the Tsintabis, the sale of bows and arrows spreads the idea to buyers and those they share the purchase with that the San still rely on hunting and the use of these tools (Hüncke 2010:115).

Tourism also exposes the San to outsiders whom they categorise and reduce into stereotypes to understand their desires and sell to them. This harms true comprehension of other cultures. In the Izintaba Zulu Cultural Village, there are different brochures that cater to different languages (Stauss 2012:87). In the German language booklet, the Zulu are presented as warrior peoples. On the other hand, in the English one, the craft heritage of the Zulu is emphasised. The Germans and English-speaking are therefore understood in the context of marketing and are reduced to the conceptions of liking war and products. Dawid Kruiper, the leader of the ≠Khomani San is also quoted in 2000 as considering all Western tourists as rich and powerful (Stauss 2012:89). This is a vast simplification and groups all Westerners together without consideration of internal differences. The status of others as tourists causes simplified cultural understanding and divides the San from other cultures.

Exploitation and External Dependence

The San are exploited in the industry in varying degrees of directness. The San's limited formal education and job opportunities as well as their inability to be self-sufficient because of inadequate access to land and resources can cause economic struggles and restriction to the tourism sector for work (Giraudo 2018:225). Therefore, vulnerable groups of San can be forced to work under false pretences. For example, San women have been offered money and other forms of payment by other ethnic groups such as the Damara people of Namibia and the Herero to dance in traditional !gu clothing or naked for tourists (Sylvain, 2005:363). The San were driven to locations and danced for the audience but were not reimbursed for their work (Sylvain, 2005:363). If they were compensated, they were given less than was offered. This is seen in the small package of tea, sugar, and soup given to the women in Tchi!o's village instead of the money and food promised (Sylvain, 2005:364). The desperation of these dancers was clearly taken advantage of by those in positions of control.

Visitations of San in their private homes and villages can also be exploitative. Although Alexandra von Stauss had arranged an interview and viewing at a private home in the Witdraai village through

an intermediary, the Kruiper people in the home did not welcome the intrusion (Stauss 2012:95). They refused to speak to the visitors directly and carried on with their tasks such as cleaning dishes, having discussions, and playing with games (Stauss 2012:95). Although they technically allowed the visitation, they did not desire it and therefore may have been motivated by possible economic remuneration offered for the visit. The !Kung are also visited at their homesteads by tourists. They appreciate the visitation and accompanying photography when they are given compensation like gifts (Hüncke 2010:129). The San peoples whose homes are invaded give consent primarily due to economic necessity, making the permission forced and the practice exploitative.

San-owned tourism ventures can be considered the most moral as power is placed in the hands of the San themselves. However, these are still controlled by non-San indirectly. Both Non-Governmental Organisations and governmental agencies such as the Namibia Community Based Tourism Assistance Trust promote and manage local tourism ventures. The Nǀa Jaqna and Nyae Nyae conservatories are marketed as San owned but are strategized and marketed by a German and Namibian NGO (Giraudó 2018:222). Treesleeper is another example of NGO influence as it was created by the Hai//om, a Dutch NGO, and other Namibian and international organisations in the early 2000s (Giraudó 2018:223, Hüncke 2010:100). As these projects are funded and managed by outside organisations, the San must follow their parameters and do not have full freedom over cultural representation. The downside of local tourism ventures reliance on NGOs is seen with the Uruke Bush Camp Adventures struggle to attract visitors and succeed as a business in 2014 (Giraudó 2018:224). Giraudó attributed the deficiency to lessened financial and managerial support by NGOs which were struggling at the time.

I have argued that contemporary cultural tourism negatively impacts transcultural understanding as tourism forces the stereotypical homogenising of groups. The tourism industry can also be exploitative of the San as they are dependent on it and those that control the industry including other African groups and organisations. Although it is argued that tourism is an outlet for cultural knowledge, political awareness, and economic gain for the San people and that the San have agency in contemporary tourism (Koot 2018), the realities of the industry are still damaging.

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