

Charles University in Prague
Faculty of Humanities, Study Programme: Anthropology

Radek Nedvěd

Urbanisation of the !Xun Bushmen in the area of Grootfontein in Namibia

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Prague 2014

Author: Mgr. Radek Nedvěď

Supervisor: Prof. PhDr. Josef Kandert, CSc.

The year of the dissertation defence: 2014

Nědvěd, Radek. Urbanisation of the !Xun Bushmen in the area of Grootfontein in Namibia. Prague: Charles University, Faculty of Humanities, 2014. 411 pages. Supervisor: Prof. PhDr. Josef Kandert, CSc.

Annotation:

Although overlooked by both administrators and anthropologists and numerically rather marginal, the Bushmen have been always part of the Namibian urban spaces on their erstwhile territories. Based on several field research trips to the area of Grootfontein between 2007 and 2013 and archival research, this dissertation outlines the complex historical processes and factors influencing the mobility of the !Xun Bushmen into and out of the urban space of Grootfontein in the commercial farm area of Namibia. Even though the mobility to its urban space was largely legally controlled during both the German and South African rule, the Bushmen continuously managed to penetrate it. With the development of the Blikkiesdorp settlement in the township of Grootfontein in the early 2000s the number of !Xun in the town considerably increased and they became an integral part of the settlement. This dissertation argues that the reasons for Bushman urbanisation are far more complex than being solely economically motivated. Although, the main focus of this case study is on the urban locality of Grootfontein, its author is convinced many of its data are generalisable on other urban areas within the commercial farm area as well.

Keywords:

Bushmen, !Xun, !Kung, urbanisation, Namibia, mobility, hunters and gatherers

Author's declaration:

This thesis is a presentation of my original research work. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly.

Srbín, 11 May, 2014

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Acknowledgements

I am especially grateful to two people: my main informant Kashe, this thesis is in fact our joint work and I feel deeply indebted to him; and Dirk de Vos of the Grootfontein Dutch Reformed Church, who assisted me in every possible way during my field research trips to Grootfontein.

I also would like to thank all the !Xun Bushmen from the area of Grootfontein and former western Bushmanland who provided me with the information contained in this study.

There were many other people who assisted me in the course of my work in one way or another, mostly by sending me publications, which was very important for me. I would like to list in alphabetical order: Matthias Brenzinger, Ute Dieckmann, Bruce Frayne, Clemens Greiner, Wilfried Haacke, Radovan Haluzík, Bernd Heine, Werner Hillebrecht, Mirka Holubová, David Hughes, Willemien le Roux, Bony Sands, Rainer Vossen, Michael Schnegg and Renee Sylvain. Any shortcomings of the text, however, are solely my responsibility.

I also would like to thank Josef Kandert for accepting to supervise my PhD Thesis.

This research was realised in its initial phase with the support of the Czech Science Foundation (Grantová agentura České republiky) project No 405-07-0277 Continuity and Discontinuity in Communication. The project, headed by Petr Zima, was operated at the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University, and the Centre for the Studies of Contacts and Conflicts in Language and Culture (Europe and the Others).

Last but not least, I would like to give thanks to my wife Martina for giving me such space for my studies. No one else could have done so.

Preface

The idea of writing a PhD thesis on the Bushman urbanisation in Namibia was conceived in the year 2005 when I was travelling through Namibia. After a short visit to former eastern and western Bushmanland, I saw a pick-up on which were sitting three men in blue overalls driving along the main street of the town of Grootfontein. They seemed to be Bushmen. Even though I was attracted to idea of conducting research among the Bushmen in the communal area, I found studying them in the urban area even more fascinating.

The study I present here is a result of nine years of intensive dealing with this under-researched topic. Although the study is quite extensive, it deals only with some aspects of the Bushmen's urbanisation and leaves vast areas still to be studied. If this study contributes to our understanding of the complex process of Bushmen urbanisation, my mission was meaningful.

Srbín, 11 May 2014

Introduction

Overlooked Bushmen “urban” dwellers

This thesis has the ambition to shine more light on the very under-researched phenomenon of Bushman urbanisation and “urban” Bushmen in Namibia. The „San“ or „Bushmen“¹ are among the most studied peoples in Africa. However, researchers, and likewise the interested public, have been from the beginning fascinated by Bushmen whose physical, cultural, social, economic and linguistic features remained „pure“, „pristine“, „real“, „unspoiled“ and „uncivilised“: by the “real wild Bushmen“ who live as hunter-gatherers. Therefore, the fascination with the Ju/'hoansi, in older anthropological literature called !Kung, in the eastern part of former Bushmanland in Namibia and over the border in Botswana, who stole the limelight from the other Bushmen groups thanks to the work of the Marshall family and Harvard Kalahari Research Group.

The majority of the San living in other areas, especially farms, escaped this scientific attention for a long time, as they lacked the features Western social scientists were looking for. Later, attention turned to the farming areas (e.g. Guenther 1979, 1986, though in Botswana; Sylvain 1999 and Suzman 2000 in Namibia). But until quite recently there was almost no field research on the San living in urban environments; regarding Namibia, the only exceptions I am aware of are Sylvain (1999, 2006), who studied the Ju/'hoan San in Epako township near Gobabis and Dieckmann (2007), who researched the Hai//om in Outjo. It is striking that despite the enormous number of studies on Bushmen, as yet there is no monograph dealing with the phenomenon of San urbanization. The studies of Sylvain and Dieckmann did not specifically focus on urban places, but dealt with larger areas, and so did not focus primarily on the urbanisation of the Bushmen and “urban” Bushmen.

Some neglect of the urban environment by researchers is understandable for two main reasons:

1) The cultural mind set of Western researchers and the Western imagination generally. The notion of human beings the white people call Bushmen, who accordingly later started to call themselves Bushmen as well, living in an urban environment seems to be in total contradiction with the notion of people who are seen as traditionally hunters and gatherers. As if “Bushmen”, who were considered by some researchers to be representatives of, or at least a link to, the ancient way of life once common to us all - that of hunters and gatherers, a kind of living fossils, could not “naturally” exist anywhere except for the bush. And if exposed to „outside“ world, such as Western civilisation, then they would be acculturated and lose any scientific value.

These following words come from J. H. Wilhelm (1954 in Guenther 2005: 182), who between

¹ Both Bushmen and San are problematic terms. According to Maho (1998: 108) “San' is derived from a Khoekhoegowab verb sā ('to collect' or 'to gather') which, with the added plural suffix -n, becomes sãn, meaning 'collectors' or 'foragers'... The term ... bears almost exclusively a derogatory connotation in colloquial Khoekhoegowab.” However, the !Xun in Grootfontein seem to use the term Bushmen mostly without any negative connotations. A negative meaning is sometimes attached to the term by the non-!Xun. In the text I will preferably use the term Bushmen, if I use the term San it is mostly for stylistical reasons to avoid frequent repetitions of the former term.

1914 – 1919 had a farm close to Otjituo and developed a keen interest in the Bushmen in the area of Omuramba² Omatako and eastward of it:

As hunter, none of the natives of southern Africa are as accomplished as the Bushmen. Since time immemorial hunting has been his primary occupation, and he has become a past-master in this area. He has developed endurance and energy to the highest extent. Self control and tracking skills have reached the highest degree of perfection... Not the slightest spoor of alteration of the ground gets by him when he tracks a fleeing animal... Neither glowing heat nor thirst keep the Bushmen from reaching his goal when he is out hunting. He cares little if necessity forces him to walk 100 kilometres on one day. **But it has been only in this one area that the Bushmen race has developed itself to such heights; in all other areas it is lacking in energy and persistence.** His habit of ceaseless, restless roaming which the life as hunter brings with it has developed a love of freedom in the Bushman, which preclude regular, methodical work. **Thus, the contrast between him and civilisation is unbridgeable and spells his doom. The extinction of this race lies not too far in the distance.** (parts put in bold by R.N.)

The Bushmen in Wilhem's view, in many ways similar to other observers of his time, were a restless race, by their very nature incapable of any mode of existence other than foraging, incapable of stepping into "civilisation". At the same time, in Namibia the "town" has been regarded as the beacon of civilisation, the „white man's achievement“ established "out of nothing" in the bush. In the German period, when the basis for the urban centres in modern Namibia was laid, it became a symbol of "Deutschtum". The town was conceived and established as a white people's settlement, while, as Silvester, Wallace and Hayes (1998: 20) put it, the mobility of the African people was regarded by the colonists as the "antithesis of civilisation". From the point of view of the German colonisers there was even a kind of three-layer hierarchy among the peoples of German South West Africa. First, there was a gap between the whites and the natives, and then, as highlighted by Gordon (2009: 56) between "Eingeborenen" and even less civilised "vagabundierenden Buschleuten".

However, the prospective extinction of the Namibian Bushmen peoples did not materialise. Even though once regarded as an „almost extinct branch of human race“,³ according to recent estimates, there are about 38 000 San in Namibia (Hitchcock, Ikeya, Bieseke, Lee 2006: 4). Nowadays the number of San in Namibian urban areas may realistically run into thousands. For example, the squatter settlement Epako near Gobabis had only grown to 7,000 people during the 1990s, and up to a thousand of the residents, that is somewhere between 10 and 15 %, were Bushmen. In Oshivelo there may have been a similar number of the San at the end of the last century and by that time many San in the Herero communal areas lived in „locations“ near larger settlements such as Epukiro, Otjinene, Okakarara and Otjimanangombe (Suzman 2001: 19 - 20, 35). During the first half of the 1990s Tsintsabis settlement had more than 500 dwellers, something less than half of them were the Hai//om and there were also many !Xun (Widlok 1999: 20, 129). Many Bushmen have also gone to urban areas such as Outjo, Tsumeb, Otjiwarongo, Otavi, Otjituo, Rundu, Katima Mulilo⁴ or Tsumkwe. According to the last national census in 2011, at least one in five "San" households were living in an urban area.⁵ This marks a significant increase, since in 1981 around 3,6 % percent of Bushmen

² Term used commonly in Namibia for most of the year dry river bed.

³ Report of South West Africa Commission (1936: 29)

⁴ Brenzinger (1997: 22) observed the Kxoe Bushmen moving to Katima Mulimo at the beginning of the months to find piece-work there and to move frequently between this place and their village.

⁵ Out of the 228 955 households counted in Namibia in the urban area 0,3 percent of them were „San“ and out of the 235 884 households in the rural area 1,3 percent were „San“ (Namibia 2011 Population and Housing Census, p. 172).

(1200) were living in urban areas (Adams and Werner 1990: 150) and in 1991 it was 3,4 % of Bushmen /921/ (Pendleton and Frayne 1998: 3).

This process is, by all accounts, not specific to Namibia, but also underway in other countries with Bushmen populations. San urbanization can be observed also in Ghanzi township, Serowe, Mmadinare and Maun in Botswana and Plumtree in Zimbabwe (Le Roux 1999: 97).⁶

“This I never expect from Bushmen,” the reverend Hahn revealed in surprise in the 1850s on finding out that the Hai//om Bushmen in the Otavi area were actively trading copper ore with the Ovambos for corn, tobacco and calabashes (Gordon 1984: 212). The reason for not seeing the Bushmen in the town have lain similarly in the expectations of the non-Bushmen about who the Bushmen were *supposed to be*. Thus, „we consciously and unconsciously neglect and avoid the !Kung who don’t conform to our expectations,“ admitted the specialist on the Ju/’hoansi N. Howel (Howel 1986 in Gordon and Douglas 2000: 3) when deliberating on why researchers preferred to study those Bushmen living „traditionally“ to the majority of Bushmen who are employed as farm workers.

2) Second, the conspicuous movement of the Bushmen to the towns is very much a recent phenomenon, resulting from the profound political, social and economic changes and processes in Namibia after its independence in 1990. These changes and processes had, however, in some aspects begun even earlier.

If researchers knew from the national census statistics, with all the attendant doubts about the accuracy of those census results, that, for example, in 1970 out of the 21 900 Bushmen living in Namibia less than 100 were living in urban areas (Gordon 1983), this would hinder the stimulation of scientific interest in the phenomenon. Nevertheless, neither archival research on the Bushmen urbanisation nor oral history field research, which could put the study of the “urban” Bushmen in a different light, has been conducted. At the same time, as apparent from the figures above, the in-depth on-going anthropological research on the Bushmen starting in South West Africa in the 1950s that focuses on the “traditionally” living Bushmen, dealt with a minority of Bushmen as well, since according to the census cited above only a few hundred of them lived in the official „reserve“ of Bushmanland in the 1970s.

At the same time, there is also the question of whether the South African administration, especially in the politically sensitive period starting after World War II when it was under scrutiny from the international community regarding its administration of this territory, would allow social scientists to conduct studies of Bushmen in the crowded urban areas and living within the boundaries of restrictive urban legislation. Therefore, from the point of view of the administration it was safer to allow the study of “wild” Bushmen in remote and isolated areas (Gordon 2000: xiii, Gordon 1997: 139).

Only anthropologists with impeccable conservative credentials were allowed in and then, inevitably, they were only allowed to do research on Bushmen in out of the way areas like Nyae-Nyae or the Caprivi. This administrative funnelling of research served to distract

⁶ A specific case is the Platfontein settlement near Kimberley in South Africa consisting currently of about 7000 !Xun and Khwe Bushmen, who (or whose) predecessors used to serve at the South African (SADF) army bases in the north of Namibia and in former Bushmanland, but with the withdrawal of the army decided to accept the South African offer to settle in Northern Cape and left Namibia in 1990. It is maybe the biggest Bushmen settlement ever. I was visited Platfontein between 28 - 29 October 2011.

attention from more pressing and embarrassing problems and issues in the more inhabited parts of the country. (Gordon 1999: xiii)

It would also be useful to look at other continents to see how anthropologists have dealt with the issues raised by the urbanisation of former hunter-gatherer groups: both for the comparison of available data and for self-reflection on the nature of the Bushmen studies.

Focus of the study



The main aim of the study is to answer the questions of how and why the Bushmen have penetrated the urban areas and how they live there.

In order to obtain the data which would to the greatest extent reflect reality and would enable us to understand these processes, I decided to focus on a limited area and people: the location/township Omulunga of the town Grootfontein, in the northern part of the “traditionally” white commercial farm area and its Bushmen dwellers from the !Xun group (see the map on this page).

This study deals predominantly with the area that starts geographically in Grootfontein, then goes northeast, east and southeast of Grootfontein up to Omuramba Omatako, an area which was called in the reports of the German colonial period, due to its physical characteristics, *Grootfonteiner Fläche* or *Grootfonteiner Ebene*, thus, up to the area of the western part of former western Bushmanland along the mentioned omuramba. It consists mostly of open grassland and approaching the omuramba turns into sandy area, called at that time *Sandfeld*. The area southeast of Grootfontein was called in German *Palmenzone*, *Palmenstreifen*, *Palmengebiet* or *Palmgürtel* (named after there common palm species *hyphaene ventricosa*), in Afrikaans and by the !Xun it is known as *Makalanivlak*, and forms a strip approximately 40 kilometres long and 10 to 20 kilometres wide. Most of the region became a white farm area during the German era and was part of the so-called Police Zone controlled by German

authorities.⁷ Many of the farms west of Omuramba Omatako belonged already to the sandy *Sandfeld* (Jaeger and Waibel 1921: 68).⁸

This study attempts to provide an understanding of the following questions:

- **Who are the !Xun in the Grootfontein area?**
- **Why and how did the !Xun move and were living in the location/township?**
- **What was their mobility history?**
- **What are their present mobility patterns? (with an emphasis on the relation between Grootfontein and former western Bushmanland, after independence Tsumkwe District West⁹)**

The aim was not to apply or test theories on mobility or urbanisation, but to gather and analyse the data on a concrete Bushmen “group” in a concrete geographical space. Thus, the study has the form of a case study.

As regards anthropological studies, the !Xun (!Kung) are by far the best-known Bushmen group. Proepper (2008) lists an annotated bibliography focused on predominantly ethnological works dealing with the !Xun that were published before 2002 and it runs to 40 pages. As a result, it is generally thought that the !Xun „are the Bushmen“ overlooking the whole diversity of Bushmen groups (Smith, Malherbe, Guenther and Berens 2004: 65). The !Xun became famous especially because of the research, films and activities of the Marshall family and the research of Harvard Kalahari Research Group of scholars, most prominent among them being R. Lee. M. Shostak’s biography of the !Xun woman Nisa (1983) revealing the intimate life of a Bushwoman, even became a bestseller.¹⁰ However, these researchers focused on the Bushmen, who call themselves Ju/’hoansi, of only two neighbouring areas, the Nyae Nyae region in Namibia and the Dobe area across the border in Botswana (see Barnard 1992: 39 - 40), who gradually became “due to their spatial remoteness and ‘traditional’ lifestyle... conceivably the most written about, filmed and photographed people in the country” (Suzman 2001: 39).

!Xun speakers in other areas have remained in the shadow of the Ju/’hoansi. The !Xun in the Omaheke area (also Ju/’hoansi) became visible only later on with the studies of Sylvain and Suzman, both working with the farm Bushmen. But there are still vast regions in Namibia occupied by the !Xun, where such in-depth on-going anthropological research has not been conducted. This applies to the northern communal areas (although there we have some data) and the communal area of former western Bushmanland and the adjacent commercial farm area towards Grootfontein, with which this study deals. Because of the lack of comprehensive information on who these !Xun are I will inquire into this question in detail.

There has never been any anthropological research conducted in the township of Grootfontein. Valuable data on its socio-economic setting in the 1950s, including some

⁷ The creating of the Police Zone dates back to 1906 and it consisted of the central and southern part of the country. This area was under direct colonial control and whites were allowed to settle there. After 1919 when the administration prohibited any whites to cross without permission its borders, it became known as Red Line. (Silvester, Wallace and Hayes 1998: 3)

⁸ Jaeger and Waibel (1921: 69) put the border between the *Grootfonteiner Fläche* and *Sandfeld* along Omuramba Ondengaura and Omuramba Omatako till Otjituo and northwards to farm Neitsas.

⁹ Since the !Xun call this area still Bushmanland I will do this further in the text as well.

¹⁰ Moreover, the attention of the international public was drawn to the !Xun by J. Uys’ movie *The Gods Must Be Crazy*.

notices on its Bushmen dwellers, was, however, gathered by Köhler (1959b), even though the data seem to be, to a significant extent, a compilation of the reports of district and town administrators. The Bushmen area in the commercial farm zone north-east, east and south-east of Grootfontein have remained virtually unreported. The !Xun inhabitants of former western Bushmanland attracted a great deal of attention from the German and South African administrations in the first half of the 20th century because of their constant cattle thefts and thanks mainly to Seiner (1912, 1913), Wilhem (1954 in Guenther 2005) and Lebzelter (1934 in 1996) we have some anthropological data on them from the 1910s and 1920s, when these !Xun were labelled No-gau. However, this area, although it went through dramatic changes after the establishment South African military bases there in the late 1970s, remains strikingly under-researched as well.

Although, the main focus of this study is on the urban locality of Grootfontein, I am convinced many of its data are generalisable on other urban centres within the commercial farm area as well, although probably to a much lesser extent to the towns in the communal areas.

In terms of mobility patterns, the !Xun live in and move between four socio-economic domains: the urban areas, commercial farms and communal areas of former Bushmanland and Hereroland. Besides the urban environment and the farm area, by which Grootfontein is surrounded, the focus of this study is the western part of Bushmanland, in the area along Omuramba Omatako, where many !Xun dwellers from Grootfontein had relatives during my research. This will enable us to obtain answers also to, of course, somewhat strange but common question: where “should” a “Bushman” live? In the “bush” or can a “Bushman” live in a town? Interestingly, this question does not seem to be asked about Namibian non-Bushmen “natives”, reflecting the biases of non-Bushmen observers.

Thus, the aim of this study to describe, based on gathered “facts”, the mobility and urbanisation patterns of the !Xun, confronts also the non-Bushmen imagination about the Bushmen, which has always shaped the relation between the San and the Others.

The understanding of Bushmen mobility, as perceived by the Others, has been often surrounded, if not not replaced, by myths. The Bushmen were perceived as “ein Volk, dessen innerstes Wesen ein unbezähmbarer Freiheitsdrang ist, dass eine Lebensweise führt, die von der jedes anderen Volkes gänzlich abweicht” (Vedder and von Zastrow 1930: 433). They were “Menschen, die sich ihr ganzes Leben im Felde herumgetrieben... haben” (von Zastrow 1914: 5) and regarded as “ohne Habe”, “vogelfrei” (Deutsche Kolonial Zeitung 1888: 38), as “scheue Vögel” (Rohrbach 1909: 43) and preferring “romantic mode of life”¹¹. It was regarded as a “fact” that with the onset of the rains the Bushmen farm workers “could not resist” the “call of the wild” and left for the bush (Doke 1925b: 43 - 44). “Um so bedauerlicher is es, das dieses liebeswürdige und bescheidene Volk, dessen einziger Fehler seine nich zu bändigende Freiheitsliebe ist, dem Untergange geweiht sein soll” (Deutsche Kolonialzeitung 1909: 27). The conviction of the innate nomadism of the Bushmen was expressed in a very extreme way by the Grootfontein district commissioner for native affairs in his report for the year 1957: „Die boesmans word geredelik deur ander stamme absorbeer, ... en aanvaar dan sulke naturelle se goontes en leefwyse. Die vrouens behou egter die drang om maar van tyd tot tyd weer na die wilderness te vlug, wat beteken dat die mans hulle dan

¹¹ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/2, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1941, Magistrate Grootfontein, 14.1.1942.

weer moet gaan soek.”¹² These statements were the products of the white settlers’ “shadow knowledge” of the natives (Gordon 1998).

Even nowadays many white farmers or even black people in Namibia think that the Bushmen “must” move and are unable to stay in one place for any length of time. Anthropologists, of course, emphasise that there must lie some concrete reasons behind the moves, which evade the knowledge of outside observers. This study attempts to understand these reasons in all their variety and complexity and to go beyond explanations that portray mobility as a survival strategy, explanations which are too simplistic and obscure any understanding of the reality.

Histories of towns as physical and not social spaces

It is not that just “urban” Bushmen have been overlooked, but this is a fate suffered by other urban native dwellers. In the Namibian context, we generally lack studies that approach urbanisation as a social and historical process and urban space as a social space.

Monographs on the history of towns in Namibia often read as celebratory portrayals of successful endeavours to develop a centre of civilisation in the middle of an uncivilised and uncultivated land. Thus, E. P. W. Freyer writes that his book on history of Otavi serves to honour „des Mutes, der Mühen und der Leistung aller derer, die ... hier auf diesem schönen Erdenfleck aus dem Nichts heraus (put in bold by R.N.) eine aufstrebende Stadt und eine tüchtige Menschengemeinschaft aufgebaut haben“ (Freyer 1966: 4), „aller derer“ in this work meant the whites. These books then read as histories of the town’s white settlement, its leading white personalities, its streets, important buildings such as stores, churches, factories, company headquarters, hospitals, schools, police and railway stations and fortresses, which were often photographed, preferably just the very structures without the presence of people. However, the non-whites, who were living in *Werften* (sg. *die Werft*, during the German colonial period this word was used for the compounds/camps of natives both in and outside urban areas; German synonym is *die Ansiedlung*) and locations (in Afrikaans *lokasie* /pl. –s/, during South African rule this was a commonly used term for native areas within urban spaces, in independent Namibia it has been replaced by „township“), are mentioned only marginally, although they usually numerically outweighed the town’s white population. The non-whites in urban spaces remain anonymous and almost invisible in the town histories.

The history of Grootfontein, the focus of this study, is the subject of not a single monograph. The only published book giving some information on its history was written in Afrikaans by C. J. Mouton in 1995.¹³ There is one monograph on the history of nearby Otavi (Freyer 1966) and Tsumeb (Söhnge 1967). All three studies furnish us with descriptive information on the technical development of the town or mines, but not much on the lives of their inhabitants.¹⁴

¹² LGR 3/3/3, Jaarverslag oor Naturellesake: Distrikt Grootfontein: 1957, Naturellekommissaris.

¹³ In the local *Allgemeine Zeitung* (issues from 11. April, 9. Mai and 8. August 1997) was published also a short history of Grootfontein during the German era with the title „Gründung und Entwicklung von Grootfontein“, whose author was given as von Zastrow, which remains, however unclear. On the the issue of the authorship of the study see below.

¹⁴ Criticism on the „tradition of uncritical and descriptive historiography“ of the urban spaces in Namibia expressed for example Melber (1996: 4).

Namibia's path to urbanisation

Namibia has always been a little populated land and in comparison with other „Third World“ countries has never had much in the way of urbanised land. At the end of the 19th century the total native population dispersed on its vast territory was estimated to stand at approximately only 200,000, out of which 86,000 were Hereros, 60,000 Ovambos, 25,000 Bergdamaras, 10,000 Hottentots (Nama speakers), 2,000 Basters (Coloureds) and several thousand Bushmen (Windhoeker Anzeiger 1898: 5). Given the small population, harsh environmental conditions and the fact that it did not lie on international trade routes, in the precolonial times before 1884 larger population centres such as in Angola, Zimbabwe and South Africa were absent (Tvedten and Mupotola 1995: 7). However, the history of urbanisation in the country dates back to pre-colonial times, when the foundations of some future urban centres were laid as mission stations and the headquarters of semi-nomadic groups, but the foundation and development of most of the present urban areas was a product of the German colonial period (Wallace 2011: 154, Weigend 1986).

The state of urbanisation at the end of the 19th century was described by the *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung* as:

Von den Ortschaften mit grösserer weisser Bevölkerung besitzen nur Swakopmund und Windhuk je etwas über 500, Warmbad and Keetmanshoop über 150, Omaruru, Otjimbingue, Ukamas und Bethanien nur ungefähr je 100 weisse Einwohner, nirgends existiert demnach bisher eine 'Stadt'. (*Deutsche Kolonialzeitung* 1899:18).

Importantly, the urban centres developed within the white commercial farm areas. The more populated north of the territory was regarded by the colonial administration as a pool of labour for the urban spaces to its south and the development of urban areas in the north started more intensively only in the 1960s (Tvedten, Mupotola 1995: 7).

During the German colonial period the labels used for Grootfontein were *Ortschaft* and also *Ort* or *Platz*, and, towards the end of the German colonial era, *Kleinstadt* and *Städtchen*. The concept of the *Platz* (in Afrikaans *plek*) was used for all towns, including Windhoek, which had at the beginning of 1907 only 1 531 white inhabitants. Grootfontein, with its settled population of dozens of whites at that time, was the 18th biggest white settlement in the colony (*Deutsch-Südwestafrikanische Zeitung* 1907: 103). The state of urbanisation in the territory was later cogently expressed by Jaeger and Weibel (1921: 42) when referring to neighbouring Tsumeb: “Die kleine Bergbaustadt, die hier entstanden ist, ist einer der grössten Orte des Landes.”

South West Africa's towns did not follow the rapid urbanisation of their South African counterparts in the interwar period and, with the exception of the capital Windhoek, the only major urban centre, remained small and mostly centres for services, trade and administration without any notable manufacturing industry (Silvester, Wallace, Hayes 1998: 29). The numbers bear this out: Windhoek, by far the largest town, had in 1921 a population of only 7 859 and by 1946 this had grown to 14 929. In the same year there were just 30 000 urban black residents on the territory and in 1955 49 000 (Wallace 2011: 220, 251). In 1970 there were only four towns with more than 10 000 inhabitants - Windhoek, Walvis Bay (although this had a disputed status), Tsumeb and Keetmanshoop (Simon 1982: 240). In the 1980s, when the legal influx control measures had already been dismantled and the number of urban dwellers went up, the urbanisation of native population was still not regarded as being out of control. Thus, in the middle of the 1980s researchers could confidently state that South West

Africa had „as yet no examples of serious urban decay“ (Stals 1987: 26). This put the country in rather a different light to many other developing countries.

However, since independence the number of people living in urban areas has grown rapidly. Shortly after independence in 1991 28 % of the country's population lived in towns, but in 2011 the figure was already 43 %, that is more than 900 000 out of a total population of 2,113 million. Windhoek had 325 858 residents in 2011 and the second largest town, Rundu, only 63 434. This striking population gap between the capital and other towns has remained up to the present. In 2011 Grootfontein had 16 632 dwellers, ten years earlier the figure had been 14 249. Thus, its population grew by 16.7 % in the decade, significantly lower than the national average (Namibia 2011 Population and Housing Main Report: 37 - 40).

The challenges connected to the process of urbanisation in modern-day Namibia seem to be in many aspects very similar to those in other African countries. It is also modern-day Namibia that has seen Bushmen come to the urban areas in unprecedented numbers.

„Urban“ space in Namibia

It is critical to be aware of the ambiguity of the term “urban”, especially in a Namibian context. This concept also seems to be problematic in the way it is used by census institutions (see the criticism expressed by Melber 1996: 4). How do we define urban space? Where does urban space start and when does it end? What are the criteria? When is a person urbanised and when not? In Namibia in official population surveys the criterion for counting people as “urban” is when they reside at that time in an area proclaimed as urban by the government, in other words, either in municipalities or towns, that is, in places that have a certain form of local management (Land Authority Act 1992). The United Nations definition that urban space starts from a concentration of more than 20 000 people (Stals 1987: 8), is problematically applicable for Namibia, since there are only a few places with that number of inhabitants (in 1991 only Windhoek, Walvis Bay, Oshakati, Rehobot and, depending on the urban area definition, Rundu). And what of people living in peri-urban areas, in the case of Grootfontein in the „locasions“ on private plots, run as small farms, next to the town? Is Tsumkwe, the main settlement of the Tsumkwe district, an urban space?

The Hai//om lived in large aggregations at the Finish mission centres set up in the 1960s in the Owambo region (Widlok 1999: 5, 127 - 128), and !Xun and Khwe (labelled also Vasekela or Barakwena) Bushmen were concentrated in large numbers at SADF military bases in the very north of the territory and former Bushmanland. Since the 1960s large numbers of Bushmen also concentrated in Tsumkwe. From the perspective of the Bushmen, these settlements resembled „service centres“ (Ibid., Widlok's term), and the Bushmen there were totally dependent on the „colonial benefactor“ (van der Merwe 1989). Did they lead an „urban“ life there?

Aware of these complexities, for the purpose of this particular study of the Bushman urbanisation and Bushmen urban dwellers I perceive the urban environment as different to the farm and rural communal area in three aspects:

1) First, it is a space of high physical concentration/density of people.¹⁵ In contrast to the socially familiar environment of the farms or communal area settlements, most people do not know each other in the town.

2) It is a space which brings together people of highly heterogeneous ethnic, cultural and language backgrounds and heterogeneous socio-economic statuses.

3) Urban dwellers do not live on their own agricultural produce and in order to live in the town, which is a cash-economy environment, they must generate some income (although some urban dwellers can rely to some extent on the provision of agricultural products from their kin in rural areas).

Grootfontein is the only major urban settlement in the vast area up to the border with Botswana in the east and up to Rundu at the Angolan border in the northeast. Thus, with regard to the criteria of population density and ethno-linguistic heterogeneity, the difference between Grootfontein and the sparsely populated farm or communal area from which most !Xun dwellers in the town I met there during the period of my research originated, is among the most significant in this geographical space.

Methodology

Field research

I have conducted six short-term research trips to Namibia between 2007 and 2013: September - October 2007, July - August 2008, July 2009, November - December 2010, December 2011, April - May 2013. During these trips I spend there in total five and half months. The aim was to spread the field research over several years to be able to observe the mobility patterns of the !Xun over a longer period.

During my first field research trip I had to rely on translators. Since the second trip I have communicated with the !Xun in Afrikaans, which most of them learnt at the farms and which largely serves as lingua franca of the Grootfontein urban environment.

During the field research I was gathering both qualitative and quantitative data. The most important method for the collection of qualitative data was interviewing: ranging from informal and unstructured, to semi-structured and structured interviewing. However, it soon became clear that there was a certain social barrier between the Bushmen and me, which

¹⁵ If it comes to the Bushmen aggregating in large number at one place, we know that the Bushmen - foragers, the traditional focus of Bushmen studies, were for ecological reasons living in the rain season in small bands dispersed on large territories and in the dry winter months they concentrated in numbers up to 200 at the permanent water holes (Lee 1979: 365 on Ju/'hoansi). In Botswana Guenther reported that the farm Nharo could gather in hundreds to celebrate a trance dance (Guenther 1986: 294). Regarding the area of this study I may add, that in December 1911 a police patrol at Blockfontein came across an abandoned Bushmen camp of the No-gau of the Karakuwisa group with 68 windscreens, which could allegedly correspond to the population of 350 people (Seiner 1913: 302). Karakuwisa itself was in the German period also a settlement of around 150 !Xun. The !Xun Bushmen further gathered in large numbers at the police stations Nurugas and Otjituu as a result of German authorities effort to make the Bushmen more settled and controllable. According to von Zastrow (1914: 6) at the Otjituu police station were dwelling in 1913 more than 200 Bushmen. Bushmen could also live or squat in large numbers at particular white farms, if their owner allowed it to them.

could be overcome only gradually. While M. Shostak (1990), L. Marshall (1978), R. Lee (2003) and M. Guenther (1986) were given by the Ju/'hoansi (among this group of Bushmen they conducted research among largely "traditionally" living communities) or Nharo their Bushmen names thereby integrating them into the kin system, I remained *meneer* (mister) to almost all the !Xun in Grootfontein. The Grootfontein area the !Xun who had worked for most of their lives for Afrikaner farmers or had done yardwork for Afrikaners in the town to some extent approached me with a similar respect and distance. Even though they without doubt soon realised the differences, to lessen this distance was quite difficult. Thus, my main informant Kashe told me during my third field research to Namibia that he felt we were "friends", but that during my two previous research trips he had been "a bit afraid of me". It was only during my fifth visit in 2011 that Kashe and his father started to call me by my first name.

I found out that in order to receive answers to my questions I had to gain their trust and I could achieve this only if I worked continually with a limited number of people. When working with too broad sample of informants I would receive only generalised "superficial" answers, which would not help me much in an understanding of the matters on which I focused. We know that "interviews are social encounters" and that "people manipulate those encounters to whatever they think is their advantage" (Bernard 2002: 237). It became soon clear that "manipulation" was greater the more random and less frequent was my work with the informants. Thus, for my purposes I decided on a twofold approach:

1) I worked with one particular !Xun "family", that of my main informant Kashe¹⁶, who dwelt in the town at a plot (in Afrikaans *erf*, pl. *erven*) I number in this study as plot 1 for most of the time during my research. I reconstructed the mobility history of the !Xun from this plot with emphasis on my main informant Kashe, born 1970, and his parents, whose date of birth remained uncertain, but the ID of his mother Maria stated the year 1925 and his father Willem's, 1934. For obtaining qualitative data I was working mostly with a few relatives of Kashe who also lived in the township and with whom he had a close relationship. The fact that I was Kashe's "friend" and was coming to Grootfontein virtually each year and always paid visits to them, gradually helped in building mutual trust.

2) When I needed quantitative data I broadened my sample to another 11 !Xun plots in Grootfontein at which in 2008 Kashe had kin (I asked him to show me "the places in Grootfontein where your family lives") and where there lived in 2008 in total 114 people, out of whom 112 claimed or were claimed to have !Xun ethnic identity.¹⁷ These plots are numbered in this study from 2 to 12. Many of them were scattered across the township, but the majority lay in Blikkiesdorp. Thus, all the people in my sample in Grootfontein comprised a certain whole. When I was visiting the !Xun at these plots, Kashe usually accompanied me and assisted me in my work, which significantly eased my communication with his kin and allowed me to conduct semi-structured interviews to get comparable data. In fact, people knew me as the "white man who is all the time with Kashe".

When I first asked Kashe about the places where he had lived, he convincingly listed around 10 of them in the order he had moved from one to another until he "settled" in Grootfontein.

¹⁶ In this study I changed the names of my key !Xun informants and of some places, especially farms.

¹⁷ Kashe led me also to another two plots: their inhabitants declared their identity as Damara-Hai//om with only one member in each plot being in a kin-relation to Kashe's plot 1, claiming mixed !Xun-Hai//om identity. These families seemed to be in the process of assimilation into a Khoekhoegowab speaking environment and, for Kashe, the least important.

His parents listed even fewer places. In the course of time, Kashe recalled other places he had lived at in the past. This process became frustrating for me: at the moment I thought the list of the places was complete and I knew his mobility history quite well, Kashe would recall another movement. Only during my third field research in Grootfontein did the list (almost) stop rising. Only after the fourth field research was it virtually “complete”: Kashe could not recall any other places. If I had worked with a more numerous sample of people in the hope that the information they would provide me with would be generalisable and so more valuable than when working with only a few individuals, it would have been a mistake.

For Kashe it must have been sometimes a gruelling task: I wanted him to recall his past movements in as much detail as possible and if there were any inconsistencies I made him review his previous versions of events. I continued to observe his movements also during the period of my research. The most important questions raised by each movement were: why did you go to that place and why did you leave it? If on the first day when Kashe told me about his “all” 10 movements in his life I made notes on two pages of my notebook, after about four months I compiled material that covered the approaching 120 pages presented in this study.

Reconstructing Kashe’s movements in the past became in a way a process of reconstructing the most important events of his life and this part of the study resembles a biography in many ways. There were events in his life about which he did not want to talk about, because they were sensitive for him. It was only during the third or fourth research that he opened up even more. However, it is highly probable that I was sometimes not given the whole truth.

Kashe became crucial for me when it came to any information about the !Xun during my research. Since I could not understand the conversation the !Xun led in their language, I relied heavily on Kashe to explain me the events around me, which he did very willingly and patiently. He would also interpret for me the information I was given by other !Xun and tell me, if I was, in his view, told the truth or not. The information was “sifted” through his mind.

In fact we became important to and, in a certain sense, dependent on each other. He became for me the source of information and I could relieve him, while I was with him, from some of his daily struggles. For most of the time he lived in the town Kashe was an unemployed “*zula* boy”, eking out a living by gathering and selling empty bottles and scrap metals and by these activities providing for his family. When I was there, I would buy basic foodstuffs for him and Kashe did not have to *zula*. It was a kind of mutually advantageous arrangement: Kashe gave me information and opened the door to his kin, I gave him food and sometimes some a small amount of money and his status among the township dwellers was enhanced by my presence. Once I could not stop Kashe laughing when I compared my arrival every year to the coming of a 50-kilogram sack of mealie meal, the !Xun’s staple food, which most of them can never afford to buy in such a big quantity. I was occasionally asked by other !Xun if they could “work” for me. I would talk to them as well, but I felt it was important for Kashe that he was my main “worker” and never let him doubt it. When I gave him my phone number in the Czech Republic after the first field research in 2007, he wrote it into a small notebook, but crossed out the last number claiming that he had memorised it and that if some of the !Xun got hold of the notebook they could not tell me any bad things about him. We soon understood our mutual roles and I think we played them well, without much effort and often with fun.

During my research Kashe was often with me from the morning until late evening seven days a week. Since I was sometimes under pressure to collect a lot of data within a relatively short

time, it occasionally affected his life. At the end of 2007 Kashe broke-off with his alcohol-addicted wife, but their two small sons stayed with him and he had to provide for them. During my second field research the four of us often went in the evening from the township several kilometres to the accommodation facility of the Dutch Reformed Church where I was overnighing. Kashe first had to lay the two children to bed since the younger of them was not able to fall asleep without his presence. Kashe fell asleep with the sons as well. When I woke him later up to go on with our research, he never reacted in the slightest way negatively.

With every field research trip we got to know each other better. I also hiked with him and some of his kin on three occasions to Bushmanland, where he had his plot and numerous kin. Gradually, our time together ceased merely to be work and we talked very informally about many matters not directly related to my research with which both of us dealt privately, including “men’s issues”. When we were visiting Windhoek, Kashe wore either clothes I lent him or clothes I bought him, and went out, as a somehow weird couple, together.

Kashe was probably not an example of the ideal informant of whom Bernard (2002: 188) talks and who, in the course of the research, “becomes” an anthropologist or ethnographer as well. If I did not ask him about specific subjects, he would often not realise I might find them interesting. However, he was a good and sensitive observer and when I asked him about something, he would do his best to provide me with the information I needed. “Why did you not tell me this earlier?” I sometimes said, my irritation clear. “You did not ask me,” he would say. Thus, he is a mirror image of Shostak’s Nisa, who “occasionally asked for direction, (but) she led the way most of the time” (Shostak 1990: 40). But Kashe kept coming up with new crucial information. At the same time his personal mobility history was fascinating in its extreme complexity and I wanted to understand it in as much detail as possible. After all, !Xun “society” consisted of many variations of “Kashe”.

What made me and Kashe close was also the fact that we were both men and generationally close to each other. He was born in 1970, me, four and half years later in 1975. At the same time it also influenced my perspectives and the selection of information I provided in this study. It describes the lives of the !Xun from a male perspective. My informants were predominantly men of middle age, mostly working breadwinners, and also a few pensioners. I developed a close relationship with some !Xun women. However, it did not seem that it would be socially acceptable to work with them on a long-term basis. The !Xun men felt much freer to talk with me openly about their lives, which included also the question of male-female relationships. Thus, the information provided in this study is necessarily gender-biased to some extent. Given my sex, which excluded me to some degree from the world of the women, it could hardly have been any different. A certain role in this could also have been played by the fact that the !Xun were used from the farms to the communication patterns of the white farmer talking to the male work force (the foremen might play the role of intermediary) with the women staying at the homesteads and when employed in the farm household taking orders from the farmer’s wife.

My reconstruction of the mobility history of the !Xun dwelling in Grootfontein methodologically fell under oral history. The extent to which the lives of the Bushmen in the urban and for a long time also farm areas have been overlooked by researchers and administrators means oral history will remain an important source of information: we lack written sources on the Bushmen in these areas. In the case of my !Xun informants, the biggest challenge to reconstructing the events from their past, is, not surprisingly, the problem of memory. Many of the !Xun have such a rich mobility history that they can hardly remember most of the places they have lived, let alone the order they lived in each place and how long

they stayed at a particular place. What also happens is that events that happened at different places are confused. When recalling the reasons for moving from some places to another the !Xun also project their present-day explanations and the more distant the events, the more they simplify them. The !Xun's reconstruction of their mobility histories is thus extremely time-consuming and demands many approaches to dig out the memories of the interviewees.

Naturally, the oral history information is often unverifiable and positively biased towards the interviewed side, which applies also to the !Xun. Thus, for example, if a !Xun man recalled that he left a farm after fighting with someone else, he would frequently portray himself as the unjustly attacked side and that he has merely defended himself.¹⁸

Another important method was, of course, observation. Having said that, the information provided in the study can be to some extent gender-biased, it is also probably pro-!Xun biased. My main informants were !Xun and not the non-Bushmen. The !Xun had a tendency to provide me with a picture of reality where they appeared to be the victims. Not that this was always totally untrue, but it was often one-sided and concealed the complexities of the events. I tried to counterbalance this picture by challenging the versions of the events and having discussions about them. Thus, the oral histories in the text are often not just their passive recordings, but were written down during lengthy talks about the events. Again, the most effective way of not getting one-sided information was to have a close trust relationship with my informants, which could develop only when working with a few of them. As will be apparent from the study, the interactions between the !Xun and the non-!Xun, but often among the !Xun themselves, were often very complex.

As mentioned, I went with Kashe to western part of former Bushmanland three times. In the settlements there were many !Xun who were Kashe's kin. Kashe had his plot with a hut in Swart Tak village, lying immediately next to the larger Rooidag gate settlement on the veterinary cordon fence dividing the commercial farming area consisting of predominantly white fenced-off farms and the communal area of the western part of the Bushmanland. The purpose of these short visits, during which I could talk to Kashe's relatives, was to get an understanding of the mobility patterns of these !Xun, especially how they related to Grootfontein, and to get the answer to *my* question: why do many !Xun eke out a living in the township in Grootfontein, often subletting other peoples' *erven*, if they can acquire a plot in the communal area of former Bushmanland?

In both Grootfontein and Bushmanland I focused on the economic and coping strategies of the !Xun. The way people acquired their living was one of the important factors behind their mobility. However, as the study will present, it was by no means the only one and their complexity will be highlighted as well.

An important method for understanding the economic and coping strategies and the nature of the social networks of the !Xun in both Grootfontein and Bushmanland proved to be a detailed focus on material culture. Talking about things: how and why they acquired them and what they intended to do with them, could take days and gave me an invaluable insight into the aspirations, hopes and fears of a contemporary urban !Xun dwellers, especially Kashe. The study of material culture - knowing the history of the objects owned by the !Xun, may also help significantly in understanding their mobility history. When talking about the history

¹⁸ On the advantages and disadvantages of oral history to significant extent applicable also on my research see Seldon and Pappworth 1983.

of objects the !Xun own, they also recall the events happening when they acquired them and the events surrounding these things' "lives".

Primary and secondary written sources

Though the main focus was intended to be the field research, I tried to consult any relevant secondary and, to some extent, primary written sources on the !Xun in the mentioned area, the development of the Grootfontein urban settlement and the farm and communal area to its northeast, east and southeast, which would deepen the understanding of the subject. At first, the main source of secondary literature was the library of Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main. However, since I have been living in South Africa since September 2011 I have been able to base my studies on the materials of the libraries in this country, especially the excellent UNISA library in Pretoria with its archive of secondary written sources from the German colonial period. For primary sources I also started research in the National Archives in Windhoek. The most valuable materials consulted there were the records (minutes) of the town's authorities starting from the late 1920s and going up to the early 1980s; and the annual reports of the Grootfontein district authorities, starting in the 1920s and going up to the 1960s.

If the information I was provided by the !Xun was by its nature positively biased towards them, the information in the primary sources, whose authors were mostly administrators, tends to the opposite: a superficial understanding of the lives of Bushmen, including their mobility, is usually explained by rather negative stereotypes. When we counterbalance this information with oral histories gathered by the Bushmen, we inevitably occur between the Scylla and Charibdis of Bushmen's and administrators' portrayals.

In the text I will quote the primary and secondary sources in their original languages, this is in English, German and Afrikaans as is the case of similar studies as well. The information I was provided by the !Xun, mostly in Afrikaans, will however, be translated into English. When the way of expression of their thought was peculiar it will be followed by the Afrikaans wording in brackets.

Regarding the names of places and ethnic groups appearing in written sources, to avoid any confusions I will mostly use the versions that are mostly commonly in use nowadays.

Structure of the thesis

This thesis is divided into seven sections. The first introductory section seeks to contextualise the process of Bushmen urbanisation in the context of existing studies on the Bushmen, defining the focus of the study and its methodological starting points and challenges, and is followed by a section on the history of the !Xun Bushmen in the area with a focus on the Grootfontein settlement.

Initially, I will present the information on who the "Grootfontein !Xun" are and what we know about their past and present geographical spread. This will be followed by an overview of the precolonial history of the region, including the Upingtonia settlement, and then the history of Grootfontein from its very beginning until the present divided into the German colonial period, the era of South African rule until the establishment of the present township

(location) at the start of the 1960s and the period after its foundation until Namibian independence in 1990. That year marks the start of the present post-independence era.

Since the Bushmen always comprised a minority in the Grootfontein settlement and they did not constitute a problematic part of the location's population, their presence mostly evaded the attention of the town's authorities. The written sources on the history of Grootfontein I consulted were almost silent about them or mention them explicitly only in statistical data since the 1920s. However, it is apparent that Bushmen were living in the urban settlements developed on their former territories from their beginnings.

The district administrators gave most attention to the Bushmen on the border zone of the farm area. Their depredations on the farmers meant they were regarded as a threat to the stability of the white colonial settlement and economy. Once the Bushmen stopped being "wild" and became "tame" they started to disappear from the administrators' mental maps and reports or were given rather marginal space in them.

However, the description of the development of the settlement of Grootfontein and its surrounding area enables us to understand the nature of the spaces in which the "natives", including the Bushmen, were living and moving. The life and movements of the "natives" in these spaces, especially the urban space, were significantly regulated by the laws of the colonial administration and therefore they will be given appropriate attention.

This historical section block will be followed by a detailed description of the mobility history, starting in the 1930s, of a !Xun family, whose members dwelt in Grootfontein during the time of my research. It will enable us to understand what the !Xun's mobility history was before "settling" in Grootfontein, the complexities of the factors behind particular movements and the complex factors surrounding their movement into the location/township. Importantly, this particular family's move into the town was a part of a strong and until then unprecedented wave of the !Xun into Grootfontein in the first years of this century.

The detailed story of Kashe's movements starts with his birth in 1970 and gives us a specific perspective into the lives of the !Xun Bushmen in the Grootfontein area in the following period, which is, as Wallace (2011: 5, 273) highlighted, under-researched by historians and known only as a period of "polarisation between liberation and oppression, or between SWAPO and the South African administration".

The fourth section will give us an overview of the general mobility patterns and tendencies of the !Xun in the area comprising Grootfontein, other urban areas, the farm area and communal areas of former Bushmanland and Hereroland.

This will be followed by the fifth section comparing two different socio-economic spaces: the Grootfontein urban environment and the communal area of former Bushmanland, as represented by the Swart Tak settlement, where Kashe had his plot and hut. Subsequently, the mutual views on the lives in the other space will be presented by the Grootfontein and Bushmanland dwellers.

The understanding of the life and factors influencing mobility in each space will be analysed through the economic and coping strategies of the !Xun in each domain.

Then, different aspects of the life in Grootfontein and Swart Tak will be compared, also using the material culture perspective.

Bushmen in the history of Grootfontein settlement and its area

The !Xun¹⁹ of the Grootfontein area

Who „traditionally“ inhabited the area of present-day Grootfontein? According to H. Vedder, regarded in his time as the most prominent historian of modern Namibia, who worked for many years at the Rheinisch Missionary Society station in Gaub (//Gaub) west from Grootfontein at the beginning of the 20th century, it was the Hai//om (Rohmann in Vedder 1928:²⁰ 12, 15, he talks here about „die Umgegend“ of Grootfontein).²¹ Vedder recorded also the oral history of a Herero elder called Jeremias, who was a foreman on the *Werft* in Grootfontein, who also claimed, although it is rather anecdotal, that it was originally the Hai//om who lived there (Vedder 1928: 26). The Bushmen were said to call the place *Gei-/aub*,²² which means in Khoekhoegowab (Nama-Damara), a variant of which is spoken by the Hai//om, „big spring“ (Rohmann in Vedder 1928: 15).²³ Grootfontein is, thus, a literal translation of this Khoekhoegowab name into Afrikaans. The !Xun in Grootfontein call this place in their language */Xau n//áa* with the same meaning.

But where did the precolonial „border“ between the Hai//om and !Xun Bushmen in the Grootfontein area lie? The information in the older reports on the geographical distribution of the Hai//om is rather vague. Some placed them to the north, west and south of Grootfontein, others even to the north-east, east and south-east (see Dieckmann 2007: 35 - 36). Generally, Grootfontein has been somehow vaguely regarded as lying on west of the geographical spread of the Hai//om. Thus, for example, the agreement signed on the 14th October 1898 between German authorities and „Kapitän der Bushmänner, Aribib“, who „represented“ the Hai//om, stated that „die Bushmänner treten das gesamte Gebiet, auf welches dieselbe bis jetzt Anspruch zu haben glaubten, an die Deutsche Regierung ab. Es erstreckt sich dieses von der Gegend von Outjo bis in die Gegend von Grootfontein“ (Köhler 1957: 54).

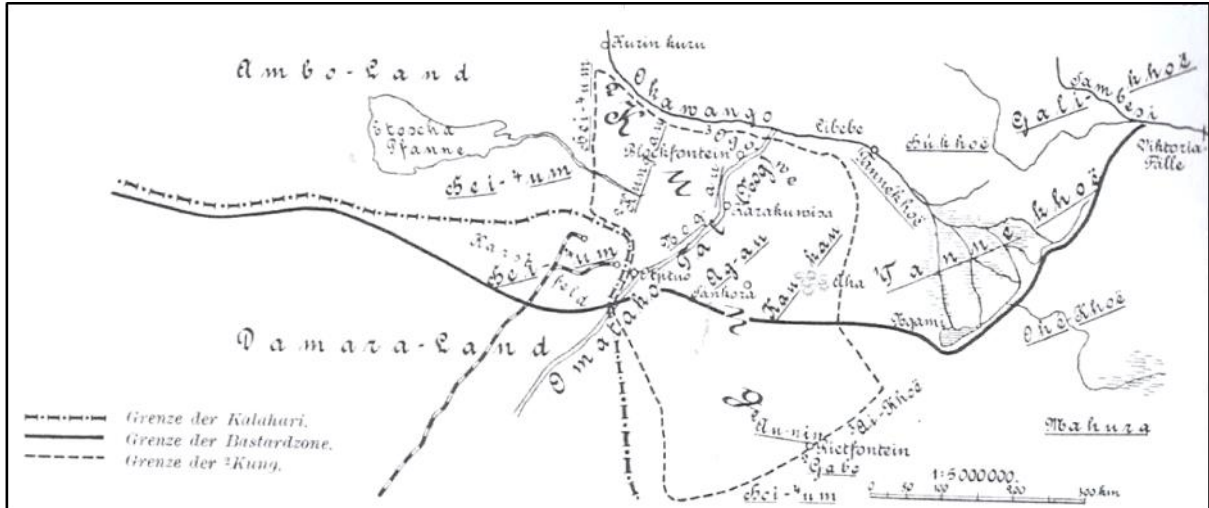
¹⁹ König and Heine define the !Xun language as follows: „!Xun is widely believed to form the Northern branch of the Khoisan family or phylum... (and) can be described as an L-complex, that is, as a cluster of speech forms that are connected by a chain of mutual intelligibility, but speakers at the extreme ends of the chain do not understand each other.“ The German linguists write that !Xun consists of a number of linguistic varieties with as yet not identified clear-cut boundaries, and they distinguish three !Xun branches: Northwestern, Central and Southeastern. The Grootfontein !Xun belong geographically to the central area. According to Heine and König this dialect seems to be „largely extinct“¹⁹ (König and Heine 2008: 2 - 3). For recent linguistic research in the area of Grootfontein see Miller, Shah, and Sands 2009 and Sands, Shah, and Miller 2009.

²⁰ The authorship of this document of a short description of the history of Grootfontein „Die Gründung und Entwicklung des Ortes Grootfontein“ remains for me unclear. In Vedder (1928) it is subtitled „Nach Erkundigungen und Aufzeichnungen des Lehrers Rohmann, die sich im Besitz des Herrn Pitkowski in Grootfontein befinden“. However, this report is almost identical with the copy of a manuscript *Entwicklung des Ortes Grootfontein* listed at the National Archives of Namibia in Windhoek as written by B. von Zastrow (its original has according to *Allgemeine Zeitung* /11.4.1997/ Deutsche Evangelische Lutherische Gemeinde in Grootfontein). The manuscript in the National Archives of Namibia has an enlarged introduction and describes the history of Grootfontein up to World War I. Since Vedder and von Zastrow knew each other very well, it is not probable Vedder would not know about the authorship of the study if it was von Zastrow's. On the copy of the manuscript, which is not dated, held by the National Archives of Namibia, is not stated any name of the author either. Therefore I conclude the author of the identical parts was rather Rohmann. I will further refer to the work as von Zastrow (n.d.) when referring to the passages contained in the beginning and at the end of the manuscript in the National Archives of Namibia and Rohmann in Vedder (1928) when referring to the part same to both sources.

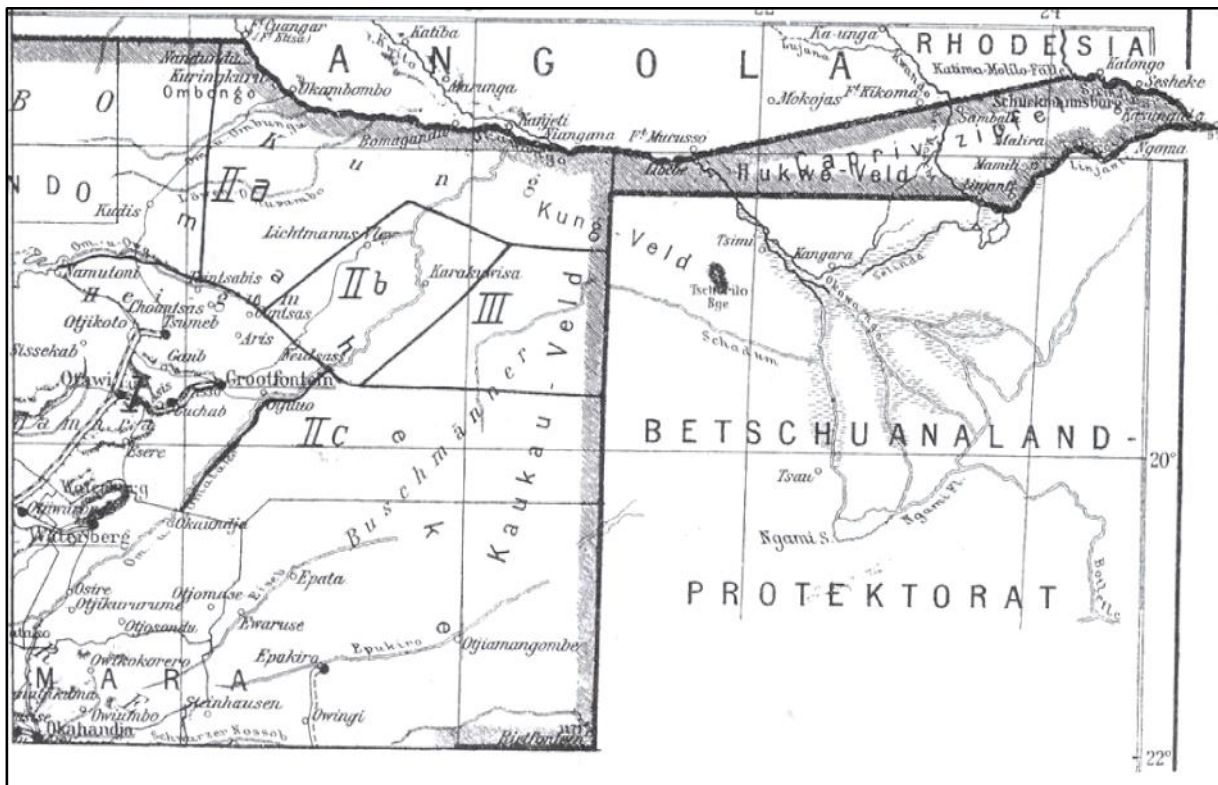
²¹ Using Vedder as a source of historical information must be with certain caution (criticism on his work expressed by Wallace (2011: 3 - 4).

²² In Haacke and Eiseb (2002: 448, 684): *kái* (big), */áú.b* (spring/fountain).

²³ Vedder (1928: 15) wrote: „Es is vermutlich richtig, dass dieser Name von den Bushmännern gegeben wurde.“



Map 1. Map of Bushmen distribution as drawn by Seiner (1913: 282). The broken line marks the frontier of the !Xun („Grenze der ²Kung“).



Map 2. Map of Bushmen distribution drawn by von Zastrow (1914: 2). Area I: Hai//om, IIa: the Kung'au, IIb: Nog'au (of Seiner's Karakuwisa group), IIc: the Nog'au (along Omuramba Omatako of Seiner's Otjituo group).

A seemingly reliable older report on the !Xun – Hai//om „border“ in this area is drawn by the Swiss traveller and botanist Franz Seiner (1912, 1913). Seiner travelled through what he called northern Omaheke, along Omuramba Omatako, between 1910 and 1912 and drew a map (1913: 282; see map No. 1), in which he depicted the western border of the spread of the !Xun, which reflected their distribution probably quite well. It corresponds with the information I found in other written sources and also with what I was told by my !Xun informants. It runs from the area south-east of Grootfontein, slightly on the western side of Omuramba Omatako, then between Otjituo and Grootfontein, but more to the Otjituo side,

goes slightly in a north-easterly direction and approximately at the level of Tsumeb turns to the north-west and then continues to the north. Seiner put the Hai//om - !Xun border approximately on a line between Otjituo at Omuramba Omatako and Kurinkuru at Okavango river (however the !Xun communities were certainly also westwards to Kurinkuru):²⁴ via Tsintsabis - Tsebeb, then along the Owambo Omuramba to farm Neitsas²⁵ and from Otjituo area down the Omuramba Omatako (Seiner 1913: 282 - 284, 1912: 278).²⁶ Lebzelter placed this border a little eastwards by claiming that the triangle-shaped area between Koblenz – Keitsas – Duwib and Omuramba Ovambo and Omuramba Omatako used to be a !Xun area, but it was later occupied by white farmers (Lebzelter /1934/ 1996: 83).

Seiner also published the first detailed classification of the !Xun in the Grootfontein area. Almost up to that time only a difference was drawn between the Hai//om (for various spellings of this name used in the past see Dieckmann 2007: 35 - 36) and the !Xun (Kung) known during German era often as *Sandfeldbuschleute* or *Kalaharibuschleute*. Seiner divided the !Xun into:

- **²Kung-au:**²⁷ Seiner puts as the western border of their spread on the Kurinkuru - Tsitschib²⁸ - Tsebeb, than Omuramba Owambo in the south and Blockfontein (²Atam) - Nuruchas line in the east (Seiner 1912: 278, 1913: 302). This ethnonym, which was often used in the beginning of the last century, but went later out of use, may have gained some prominence for some time especially due to its use by von Zastrow. Concerning ²Kung-au, Seiner referred to von Zastrow in both of the studies. Seiner himself wrote that „die westliche Gruppe.., die nach Meinung des Bezirksamtes ... von den übrigen Bushleuten ²Kung-au (d.h. ²Kungleute) genannt wird“ (Seiner (1913: 302). It remains also uncertain if they were in fact !Xun or Hai//om. According to Köhler, the *Kumg'au* „lived north and north-east of the Police Station Choantsas (Xoantsas), east of the present Station Tsintsabis“ and he thought that „the Kumg'au were most likely Hei-//um“. Köhler suggested that the name of their infamous, early 20th century leader Nama-Gurub, was linguistically Nama, thus Hai//om. According to him the *Kumg'au* (in von Zastrow's spelling) might in fact be the *Xom-khoin* to which Vedder referred (Köhler 1957: 58, 1959b: 18), which is apparently not true, since the latter were Hai//om of the Etosha region (see below). Gordon notes that Köhler may have wrongfully „assumed that Bushmen groups should somehow be 'pure'“ (Gordon and Douglas 2000: 277). The west of the area occupied by the ²Kung-au must have been actually the !Xun-Hai//om contact area. My !Xun informants in Grootfontein regarded the farms towards Tsintsabis during the time of my research as an area, where the Hai//om and !Xun intermarry.²⁹

- **Nog-au:** Seiner writes that *Nog-au* means Omuramba People (Omurambaleute), since *Nog* means Omuramba. Seiner divided them into two groups: *Karakuwisa group* and *Otjituo group*. The area occupied by the former bordered in the west on the ²Kung-au. Seiner

²⁴ On the distribution of !Xun language see also Brenzinger n.d.

²⁵ According to J. W. Wilhelm before the German - Herero war 1904 - 5 there was a !Xun Bushmen captain at Neitsas /Neitseis/, i.e. a powerful man holding power over several bands (Wilhelm /1954/ in Guenther 2005: 149).

²⁶ Seiner listed northeast of Grootfontein as subtribe (Unterstamm) of the Hei³um (Hai//om) the ²Haiwe, east of the settlement the ²Gase and southeast of it the Sárië (Seiner 1912: 285 - 7). See similarly sounding name of the Sarisa !Xun below.

²⁷ Index ² is meant for a click.

²⁸ Oberleutnant Fischer put the Hai//om - !Xun border as running from northwest to southeast through Tschitschib (Fischer 1910: 48)

²⁹ It is striking, how von Zastrow and Vedder, both regarded as knowledgeable about the Bushmen, spread the notion of the !Xun as being ethnically „pure“ (rein).

observed that the *Karakuwisa group* lived in the dry, winter season in the Omuramba Omatako valley between Kararuwisa and Blockfontein and in the rainy season these !Xun spread also 100 to 150 kilometres west and east of the Omuramba and went as far as Kanovley (Kanovlei).³⁰ Seiner classified the !Xun living at the Omuramba Omatako south of the *Karakuwisa group* as belonging to the *Otjituuo group*. They lived along the Omuramba and nearly up to Osondema (Seiner 1913: 256, 302), which is a place close to Koblenz. *No-gau* is a term, which was used, also for example, by von Zastrow³¹ and Lebzelter, but later stopped being utilised. The distribution of the !Xun populations in the area along Omuramba Omatako must have been determined by the availability of water. The area between Karakuwisa and Kanovlei was regarded as waterless and drought-sticken (wasserlose Durststrecke) and was highly probably the least populated region. According to the information gathered by Seiner, there was only one permanent source of water on the Omuramba Omatako, which the whites called Eriksons-Pütz, the Hereros called it Karuwapa (the Herero name of the hunter Erikson, who made this place a headquarters for his elephant hunting expeditions) and by the Bushmen, ³Numgá.³² The surface rain water in shallow water holes and small ponds did not last longer than until the end of June. Seiner recorded that in 1912 there was water flowing in Omuramba Omatako in Otjituuo for five weeks with the water level reaching 1 - 1,5 metres. This was, however, rather an exceptional year with abundant water. The water stream usually did not last for longer than a few days before leaving behind marshes and shallow water holes (Seiner: 1913: 227, 257 - 263). Köhler used the term No-kao in his study from 1959 (Köhler 1959b: 18). L. Marshall mentioned the term N//o!gau also in her monograph about the Nyae Nyae !Xun (1976: 21).

- **Gam ('Gam):** According to the information, which Seiner was apparently provided with by other people, the Gam lived (hausen angeblich) west of Omuramba Omatako from Okanakasewa to Omambonde: „an einem schmalen Randstreifen des Karstfeldes westlich der Otjituogruppe“ (Seiner 1912: 280, 1913: 302). Okanakasewa is now a farm lying southwest of Otjituuo. By Omambonde is meant the area around Omuramba Omambonde, which joins Omuramba Omatako near Koblenz.

According to Marshall (1976: 21), who did her research among the Ju/'hoansi in the Nyae Nyae area between 1951 - 1961, west of it was an inhabited country 100 to 150 miles wide, which the !Xun (!Kung) she studied would occasionally cross during the rainy season.³³

Von Zastrow presented a similar map to Seiner's (von Zastrow 1914; see map No. 2) on which he drew the Hai//om-!Xun border as following Omuramba Omatako further down the stream. But since Seiner did his field research in the Omuramba Omatako area, his data seem

³⁰ The movements of the Karakuwisa !Xun group after the rainy season down the Omuramba Omatako and into KauKau veld (Kaukaveld) observed also J. H. Wilhelm. It lead to clashes with the Otjituuo !Xun (Wilhelm /1954/ in Günther 2005: 150). It is worth mentioning that Seiner observed that during the rain season thousands of trees of the *Trockenwald*, which he came across 23 kilometres northeast of Kanovlei, contained in their holes water, which enabled the Bushmen to stay in these areas for two months after the rains stopped, thus till the end of June. According to him the holes could contain up to 60 liters of water. The roots containing water (Wasserwurzeln) could still the thirst of the Bushmen for only few days (Seiner 1913: 293 - 4).

³¹ Von Zastrow and Vedder (1930: 408) use also the term !Nō//aon.

³² Hauptmann Müller (1912 in Günther 2005: 191) and Deutsche Kolonialzeitung (1904: 41) described as „Durststrecke“ the whole area between Otjituuo and Karakuwisa. However, according to the German travellers water could be found there through diggings.

³³ Marshall (1976: 21), who visited between 1952 - 3 Nurugas, Karakuwisa and Khadum (Chaudum) observed that the Nyae Nyae !Kung kept contact with few !Kung in the the white commercial farms and that three !Kung families from the west married into Nyae Nyae.

to be quite trustworthy. Interestingly, von Zastrow, although he is often cited when the ²Kung-au are referred to, was also apparently not very sure about them („Der nördliche Stamm, der sich, wie ich glaube /underlined by R. N./, Kung'au nennt"). For the purpose of this study it is also relevant that he drew a line dividing the Hai//om and the !Xun from Tsintsabis to farm Güntsas and farm Neitsas (von Zastrow 1914: 3 - 4), thus fairly close to Seiner's.

V. Lebzelter, who visited South West Africa between 1926 - 7 listed as the farms of the northern farm border with which the !Xun had a „good relationship“ as Duwib, Keitsas, Keibeb, Kuntsas (probably Güntsas), Neitsas, Foxhof and as a farm belonging to their area mentioned also Bushchfeld (Lebzelter 1934: 16, 18, 83).³⁴ The group of the !Xun with whom I conducted most of my research moved to the town of Grootfontein from farms around 50 - 60 kilometres north-east of Grootfontein such as Elandslaagte, Jagterslust, Klippan, Jumkaub, Begus, Welgemoet, Asanib, Wackies, and Olifantsput and claimed that, of all the Bushmen groups, there were always only !Xun in this area and no Hai//om. This also roughly corresponds with the information in the older reports. According to Kashe, my main !Xun informant, the „frontier“ between them and the Hai//om northwards of Grootfontein during the time of my research and in the past as well ran in an approximately north-eastern direction along the Grootfontein - Rundu road before running west of the road. The outlined northeastern Hai//om - !Xun „frontier“ roughly corresponds also with the distribution of Hai//om farm workers depicted on a map drafted by Dieckmann (2007: 205) based on the data compiled by Marais (1984). In the chapter describing the movements of Kashe's family, more farms occupied by that time by the !Xun will be listed and also the ethnic composition of the farm workers.

Pater J.Schulte (1912), the missionary of the Oblates of Maria Immaculate, wrote that the missionaries spread God's words among the Hai//om at farm Chusib (Khusib), which lay around 22 kilometres north-east of Grootfontein. They worked with the Bushmen (apparently Hai//om) at farms Otjihaenena (south-east of Grootfontein), Strehtfontein (Strydfontein, next to Grootfontein on the Rundu road) and Auuns (next to farm Keibeb, where the !Xun used to work, see below) as well. Auuns and Keibeb indeed lay on the Hai//om - !Xun “frontier”.

It was difficult to obtain reliable information from the !Xun about the inhabitants of the immediate Grootfontein area before the establishment of the town at the end of the 19th century I encountered during my research. The oldest of them were born in the 1930s and 1940s and all of them were born already at the farms.

Importantly, the few old !Xun I interviewed during my research in Grootfontein gave me as the places of birth of their parents and grandparents, who were born approximately between the end of the 19th and in the first quarter of the 20th century, places other than modern Grootfontein. On the one hand, this could be caused by the fact that they all belong to a rather recent migration wave to the town. Equally, on the other hand, it could be a further hint that the !Xun were not the original inhabitants of the immediate area around present-day Grootfontein. The !Xun elders in Grootfontein mentioned three areas where their parents and grandparents came from:

- 1) Former Hereroland, precisely the part that used to be Otjituo Reserve (established in 1923).

³⁴ Doke used as an informant a Hai//om man from farm Auuns West bordering Keibeb (1925a: 164).

- 2) The area of former western Bushmanland. They talked also about their forbearers coming from the area of Karakuwisa. This area lay on the Omuramba Omatako and it appears that some of the !Xun moved there from the north of the country, possibly along the seasonal river stream.
- 3) The Tsintsabis area. The !Xun in this area were regarded by my informants as the most „mixed“ with the Hai//om and who often lost their language to “Damara” (Khoekhoegowab) speakers.³⁵

It is apparent that the fourth (4) area through which the !Xun moved into the Grootfontein farming region was the Kavango region. This was the case of Kashe’s father’s father. These !Xun did not seem to move to the immediate Grootfontein area and the town in significant numbers. Kashe’s father did not have many “family” people in the town during the period of my field research.

However, I came across a few !Xun (three in total) dwelling in Grootfontein, all of whom were outspoken, active informants with an interest in the life of the !Xun in the area, who claimed, based on the information of their late relatives, that Grootfontein used to be a !Xun area. One was Petrus, who was regarded as one of the informal !Xun „foremen“ in the town. According to him the „shy“ Bushmen fled from the whites encroaching the region, but - in his narratives - were later on wooed by the white farmers to look after their cattle by being given tobacco and food and went to their farms. Similar information came from Jakob (according to his ID, born in 1947), a very distant relative of Kashe, about his „grandfather“. Interestingly, he also emphasised the role of tobacco in establishing the Bushmen-whites relationship: „The Germans tamed the Bushmen with tobacco.“ Paul, another of Kashe’s relatives, was told by his „grandfather“ that the !Xun were pushed away from this area by the expansionist Hereros as far as what is now the area of Maroelaboom (see below Lebzelter’s information on the !Xun being pushed eastwards). Petrus even claimed, that it was the !Xun and not the Hai//om who extracted and traded copper in the area with the Ovambos in the precolonial period. The information provided by these !Xun was rather anecdotal, and, although it may not truly reflect the reality of the past (Grootfontein itself was, as mentioned, probably an Hai//om area), it might reflect the way the !Xun construct past events. Both the information about the !Xun being the original occupants of Grootfontein and the information about the !Xun copper miners seem to have been to some extent politicized and reflecting the striving of some !Xun in this area to assert their rights over it, for instance, their effort at establishing their traditional authority in Grootfontein. On the other hand, it may also reflect that the !Xun area were close to Grootfontein and some !Xun moved soon further westwards when drawn to the farms as workers.³⁶

Generally, we should avoid regarding geographical distribution of the !Xun outlined above as reflecting a static precolonial state. The area this study is concerned with was increasingly affected by the consequences of white hunters’ and traders’ influence from the second half of the 19th century. Von Zastrow, Seiner and Lebzelter, of course, made their observations at a time when the colonisation of the present-day Namibia was to various degrees already well-advanced. The encroachment of white settlers and the establishment of farms must have had

³⁵ Reversely, ≠Akhoe Khoekhoegowab variant has „apparently strong“ !Xun influence (Widlok 1999: 37).

³⁶ Interestingly, although I cannot comment on the trustfulness of the claim, according to another Kashe’s old relative Andris (born allegedly 1939), whose mother was born in the Tsintsabis area, his older relatives told him that in the old time in Grootfontein lived the Hai//om and „Damaras“ and that the !Xun came to drink there only when being in this area on a hunting trip without staying there for longer time. If von Zastrow or Vedder were right about the strict territoriality of the Bushmen groups, the !Xun could hardly use Hai//om springs.

an impact on the spatial distribution of the Bushmen. In the first phase of settling in the area the white farmers occupied natural waterholes. In this respect Jaeger and Waibel listed, for example, the farms Hairabib II., Havelberg, Bruhnkathen and Okapukua, all lying south-east of Grootfontein (Jaeger and Waibel 1920: 68). It is apparent that these natural waterholes were also used by the Bushmen, who, if not employed by the farmer, which often happened, had to leave the farm. The relationship between the particular farmers and Bushmen could apparently have many forms, ranging from mutually beneficial to acrimonious and violent.

Any possible displacement of the !Xun might, of course, not have been directly associated with the arrival of the whites alone. Thus, Lebzelter wrote, although probably not totally accurately:

Früher sassen die !Kung zweifelloshne viel weiter nach Süden and Westen. Es is nicht unwarscheinlich, dass sie erst unter dem Drucke der Hei//om, die ihrerseits vor den Herero das Mittelland räumen müssten, die Grootfonteiner Ebene und die Otawiberge verlassen haben.³⁷ (Lebzelter 1934 in 1996: 17).

The „borders“ between various Bushmen “groups” or bands might have shifted for various reasons. Von Zastrow, although probably with some bias, wrote about the frequent fights of the Bushmen “tribes” for better territories.³⁸ The relationship between the !Xun and Hai//om was generally observed as that of enemies or as severed (Oberleutnant Fischer 1910: 48, Lebzelter 1934 in 1996: 18), with possible intermarriages only in the contact area, whereas the !Xun were in difference to “mit Negerblut durchsetzt(en)” Hai//om “klein und schlank von Statur und von heller, gelber Hautfarbe, sind sie für den Kenner leicht von den anderen Buschleuten zu unterscheiden” (von Zastrow 1914: 2 - 3). If von Zastrow’s information about the strained relations among various Bushmen groups (“Stämme”) is at least to some extent true, we may also speculate that one of the reasons for the alleged strained relations was the pushing out of the Bushmen from the farming area and the subsequent increase in competition for resources in other areas. According to Lebzelter, the fact that the !Xun had to move eastwards the farm area led to conflicts with the !Xun east of the river bed (Lebzelter 1934 in 1996: 17 - 18).

Similarly, we could ask what role the use of guns may have played in these processes. Guns started to proliferate in the area with the coming of white hunters in the second half of the 19th century. These weapons must have changed the power relationship between those who possessed them and those who did not. Furthermore, populations might have been changing their territories in consequence of environmental factors such as droughts.

³⁷ In this case it should be noted, that the Otavi area is in the literature associated with the Hai//om and I have not come across any sources suggesting that the !Xun used to live there.

³⁸ „Verschiebungen grösserer oder kleinerer Art kommen bei der Feindschaft, die unter den einzelnen (Bushman) Stämmen herrscht, dauern vor, und wenn wir auch von den Kämpfen, die sie untereinander ausfechten, wenig erfahren, so kommen sie doch häufig vor. Sehr oft handelt es sich dabei um Eroberung eines Gebietes mit guter Feldkost, aus dem der schwächere Stamm weichen muss” (von Zastrow 1914: 1). About the Bushmen territoriality see also von Zastrow and Vedder, they use the term “Sippengebiet” around a certain waterhole and entitlement to its bushfood and wild animals; when a farmer occupied it, it was for the Bushmen tantamount to a “Kriegserklärung”. As they put it: “Wo sein (of the Bushman – note R.N.) Sippengebiet aufhört, hört für ihn die Heimat auf” (von Zastrow and Vedder 1930: 425 - 428). Similar observations made in the Otjituo area farmer Wilhelm. He recalled that once he wanted a Bushman to deliver a letter from Otjomikambo farm next to Otjituo to about 70 kilometres distant farm Neitsas, but that the Bushman refused to go there, since he was afraid of being killed (Wilhelm 1954 in Günther 2005: 152, 154). Otjomikambo lay in the area of the Otjituuo No-gau/!Xunig!u/Sarisa !Xun and Neitsas in the area of the !U !Xun.

Linguists refer to the dialect of the !Xun, on which collected H. Vedder some linguistic data (Vedder 1910 - 11). It is well known, that Vedder also hosted the !Xun at the Rheinisch Mission Society farm Gaub west of Grootfontein. This could indicate that the !Xun were spread even west of Grootfontein at the beginning of the 20st century. The dialect Vedder recorded at Gaub has been regarded as belonging to the Central !Xun branch (König and Heine 2008: 2 - 3). However, according to my !Xun informants, the !Xun have never occupied the western part of the Grootfontein area and it is clear that the !Xun at Gaub were from another area and moved there for the mission wanted, among others, to uplift them culturally and religiously through work. Vedder himself wrote that in 1911 there were 32 Herero, Bergdama, Nama and Baster men participating in the Gaub seminar, and it was the idea of *Bezirkshauptmann* von Zastrow, to send there some !Xun, who would learn German at the mission. He could thereby use them as interpreters during the frequent trials in Grootfontein of the Bushmen trespassing laws imposed by the German administration.

Bezirkshauptmann von Zastrow, der in Grootfontein residierte, kam oft und inspizierte die Schule (in Gaub - note R.N). Er erwirkte es, dass die Landesregierung jährlich zweihundert Mark für den Unterhalt des Seminars beisteuerte. Er was es auch, der auf den Gedanken kam, einige Kungmänner zur Ausbildung in der deutschen Sprache nach Gaub zu schicken. Im Bezirk Grootfontein befanden sich nämlich zahlreiche Niederlassungen der Kung-Buschmänner. Da diese das Vieh der Farmer gar zu wenig respektierten, hatte die Polizei viel zu tun, um Viehdiebe zu fangen und sie zur Bestrafung vor den Bezirksamtman in Grootfontein zu bringen. Dieser aber geriet dauernd in Verlegenheit, wenn er über die Uebeltäter zu Gericht sitzen musste. Er verfügte nämlich über keinen Dolmetscher, der die Kung-Sprache verstand. Wie soll ein Richter ein gerechtes Urteil sprechen, wenn er den Angeklagten nicht ausfragen noch dessen Rechtfertigung verstehen kann? Ich erklärte mich gern bereit, einige Bushmänner aufzunehmen und sie womöglich als Dolmetscher auszubilden. (Vedder 1953: 74 - 75)

The Gaub farm was for them “gänzlich fremde Gegend, wenn sie auch nur 70 km von der Heimat (of the Bushmen - note R.N.) entfernt lag” (Vedder and von Zastrow 1930: 434),³⁹ which was I surmise was probably Otjituo area.

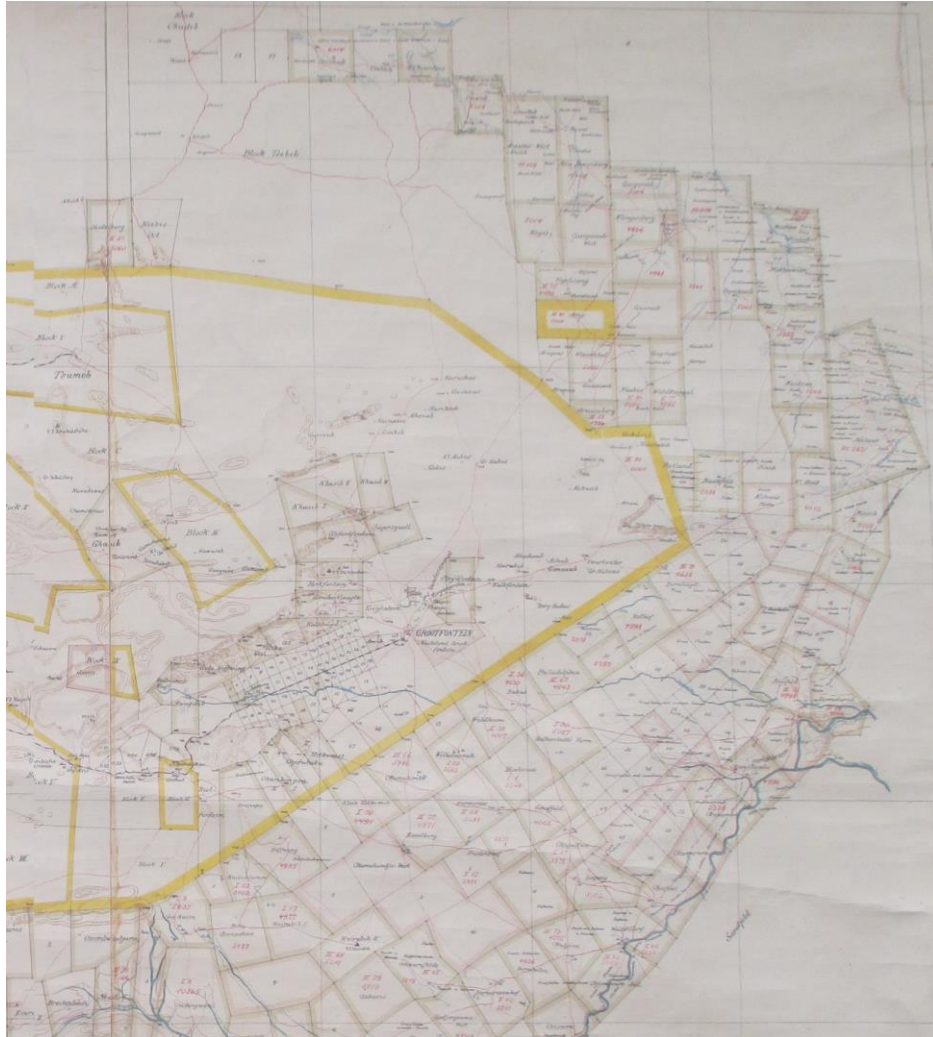
J. H. Wilhelm recalled that on “several occasions missionary Vedder had some Bushmen from Otjitua” (Otjituo). Wilhelm also observed that a shirt a Bushman received in Gaub “made its way” from Gaub via Otjituo to further east to Noma (Nhoma) (Wilhem 1954 in Guenther 2005: 140). This may have happened through the traditional !Xun exchange system (note by M. Guenther, *ibid*). According to Vedder, initially four !Xun men came to Gaub, one of whom was Nani (!Nani was also a typical name among my !Xun informants in Grootfontein). The Bushmen left Gaub when the rainy season started to visit relatives (Vedder 1953: 74 - 76)⁴⁰. Vedder called these !Xun „Kalaharibushmänner“ (Vedder 1934 in 1973: 78), Gaub lay in what was called in the German colonial area *Otavibergland*. Interestingly, the !Xun returned to the Gaub farm with their relatives (there were in total at least 15) and after they left for the second time, they came back as a group of 62 people including women and children.⁴¹ The Gaub seminar was, however, dissolved with the beginning of the World War

³⁹ Elsewhere Vedder says, that to the home area, „sie mussten mehrere hundert Kilometer zu Fuss gehen“, which appears to be a big exaggeration (Vedder 1953: 76).

⁴⁰ According to Vedder the Bushmen regularly left this place after the rains started, because they wanted to eat grilled caterpillars which became abundant that time: “Als wieder die Raupenzeit kam, begannen wieder die Buschmannferien.” Of course it does seem improbable as being the main reason for leaving Gaub. At the same time Vedder mentions that he got this information by “one Bergdamara” (Vedder 1953: 75 - 77).

⁴¹ In Köhler (1957: 60, reference to Beilage zum „Evang.-lutherischem Gemeindeblatt“, Elberfeld, vom 20 Februar 1914) is Vedder reported to state that in //Gaub *Schulwerf* were 21 „Kung-Bushmänner, Frauen und Kinder“.

I., when the German administration could no longer afford to allocate finances for its running (Vedder 1953: 79; Vedder and von Zastrow 1930: 432 - 435).⁴² Then, the !Xun moved back to *Sandveld*.⁴³ In 1918 it was reported that there were people of many ethnic groups living at Gaub, but of the Bushmen only the Hai//om (Jaeger and Waibel 1921: 41). Thus, the !Xun dialect/lect of the Ghaub area, which may have puzzled the linguists, high probably never existed.⁴⁴



Map 3. This map from 1912 provides a good picture of development of farms next to the almost unfarmed land of the South West Africa Company. The farms encroached on to !Xun territory. (NAN map No. 60)

To my knowledge, in the 20st century there have been no studies or reports on Bushmen living between Grootfontein and Omuramba Omatako except for the research of the South African linguist Clement Doke (Doke 1925a, 1925b) conducted mostly at the farm Neitsas in 1925. I believe the most important reason for this was that the mentioned area between Grootfontein and Omuramba Omatako became increasingly occupied by white farmers and

⁴² The information about the Bushmen moving from far to Gaub might have been quite known among the settlers. Interestingly, also Diri, the Aukwe hero of the book of B. Voigt, came in the book also to Gaub to become „Lieblingsschüler“ of H. Vedder (Voigt 1943: 132 - 163).

⁴³ Vedder met Nani 30 years later, when he found out while meeting one farmer in Grootfontein, that the !Xun man was living on his farm and the farmer than drove Nani to the town to meet with him.

⁴⁴ For his linguistic study (Vedder 1910 - 1911) he used informants which acquired for him by the German-authority appointed *Bushmannkapitän* of this area, Johannes Krüger, himself a “Baster” (Vedder 1910: 6).

the Bushmen farm workers were, for those interested in the Bushmen (whether academics or “amateur” observers), of no scientific value. It is striking that virtually all of the older reports about the studied area that have some scientific ambition focused on the „wild“ Bushmen outside the Police Zone. This applies to von Zastrow, Seiner and Lebzelter as well reports of the farmer J. H. Wilhelm or Hauptmann Müller (in Guenther 2005). Interestingly, with the increasing density of the farm settlements the Bushmen also disappeared from the colonial maps. Thus, for example, on the maps in Jaeger and Waibel (1920) the *Nog-au* were located east of Omuramba Omatako and the Hei-gum (Hai//om) only in the Namutoni-Tsintsabis-Choantas area. The land westward to Omuramba Omatako became part of “Ackerbaugebiet des Grootfonteiner Bezirks”. It is at the same time possible that because of the employment of the !Xun at the farms west of Omuramba Omatako, there may have been at that time more of them than before the colonisation of the region. Since the area of the *Grootfonteiner Fläche* became one of the most farmed areas in the northeast of the territory (Jaeger and Waibel: 1921: 20, 72), the Bushmen, be they !Xun or Hai//om, disappeared fastest from the colonial maps there.

For Doke, it is important to note, that farm Neitsas lay between Grootfontein and Omuramba Omatako (although closer to the latter), but was at that time already on the border of the Police Zone and he deliberately made Neitsas his headquarters from which to explore the Omuramba Omatako area. Doke himself regarded the Neitsas farm !Xun as good material for his philological research, but not for ethnological research.

The settlers in the district, German, English and Dutch, divide the Bushmen under two heads, the wild Bushmen whom they only see when starvation drives them out of Kalahari, and the tame Bushmen who come and work in the lands and with the cattle for periods. For ethnological work one needs to be with the Bushman in the ‘wilds’ but for philological work I found abundant material near at hand.../at Neitsas farm - note R. N/”. (Doke 1925b: 41)

How did the !Xun I met in Grootfontein classify the !Xun in the area around a century after von Zastrow, Seiner and Lebzelter? My !Xun informants in Grootfontein claimed to belong to four different sub-groups living in the broader Grootfontein region, with only minor differences in pronunciation and lexicon, which were no barrier for communication and seemed to be of little importance as regards the components of their identity.

They gave me the following ethnonyms of the !Xun in the Grootfontein area, where *!Xun* can be replaced by *kxao*, meaning people:

- *!Xunig!u !Xun* (Makalani people) – East and southeast of Grootfontein, towards Otjitu. They seemed to be the most numerous !Xun in Grootfontein. This term is used also as an autonym. This area appears in its eastern part to overlap with the area of the No-gau of the Otjitu group. Part of this area is *Makalanivlak* (Afrikaans), in the German-era called *Palmenzone*. We can speculate how many !Xun lived in this area in the precolonial time and to what extent they were drawn there by the opportunity to work at white farms.⁴⁵

- *!U !Xun* (Dune people) - The farms northeast of Grootfontein, !Xun living along Omuramba Omatako and the adjacent farms with sandy ground near the Red Line. They are regarded by some !Xun as the „purest“ Bushmen in the Grootfontein area. The older reports also place there the No-gau. This is the area where Doke conducted his research.

⁴⁵ According to an Hai//om elder Elias Soroseb in the area of Grootfontein were living /Uni (Makazani - missprint of Makalani?) Hai//om (Pickering and Longden 2006: 10).

- *Kxabin!a !Xun* (Tamboti people) - called also *Tsintsabis !Xun* or (in translation) „People of the stony ground“ - The area between Grootfontein and Tsintsabis, to the north and northwest of Grootfontein. They are regarded by the !U !Xun as being “mixed” with the „Damaras“. When talking in Afrikaans the !Xun in Grootfontein use the term „Damaras“ somehow vaguely for Nama/Damara-speaking people, in other words also the Hai//om. The older reports do not mention these !Xun. The ethnonyms “!Xúnig!u !Xun” and “Kxabin!angkxao” are also mentioned by Hohmann (2004: 24) as ethnonyms of the !Xun subgroups living in former western Bushmanland, who have moved there from the farm areas west of Omuramba Omatako.

- *Sarisa !Xun* - The region west and southwest of the Makalani !Xun. According to some informants, these !Xun live particularly in the area southeastwards from Kombat and Rietfontein and also farms of the Omuramba Omambonde area bordering on the communal area. The location of these !Xun in the Omambonde area seems to correspond somewhat with the Gam !Xun mentioned by Seiner. “Saresab” was, according to Andersson (1861 in 1968), the “Hottentot” (Khoekhoegowab) name for the Omambondè area. Galton (1953: 156, 160) says “Sareesab” is a Bushmen name and Omambonde (apparently in Otjiherero) means camel-thorn trees. The head of the South West Africa Company in this area, G. Hartmann, mentions in his manuscript on the history of the region “Sarisab”.⁴⁶

It was not clear to me whether these names were used more as exonyms than autonyms. The names characterise the particular environmental features of an area - makalani and tamboti trees or the sandy and stony surface of the area. Labelling people by landscape characteristics is typical for Khoesan peoples, including the neighbouring Hai//om (Widlok 1999: 81 - 82).

My !Xun informants have not heard of the No-gau Bushmen mentioned in the older reports as a name for the !Xun living along the Omuramba Omatako. I think it is probable the term was an exonym applied at that time by !Xun from other areas. The Grootfontein !Xun use the word *n//óo* for omuramba. According to Kashe, even now the !Xun in the area toward Tsintsabis allegedly call the Dune !Xun *N//óo kxao*.

That the term was an exonym in the past supports also the information provided by J. Wilhelm, who between 1914 - 1919 ran a farm near Otjituo employing many !Xun Bushmen:

Their (the !Xun's along Omuramba Omatako - note R.N.) own self-designation is !Kung. The Bushmen who live in the veld between Otjituo and Kanvley were called No-aun by my Bushmen (that is Omuramaba Bushmen, No-au = Omuramaba Omatao). (Wilhelm 1954 in Guenther 2005: 107 - 108)

The problem may have lain in communication. It is necessary to realize that the white observers had to rely on interpreters they took to the observed area from elsewhere and therefore, they may have tended to provide their master with the exonyms they normally used. Lebzelter also talks about the No-gau in the Epukiro area. According to him, they called themselves by this name and they called omuramba ≠nō. He located them in the area of the northern part of Omuramba Epukiro (Lebzelter 1934 in 1996: 65 - 66). Again, it seems that this term may have been applied by the !Xun to any Bushmen people living at an omuramba.

The few older !Xun men of the former western Bushmanland who I interviewed call themselves !Xun and not No-gau. The Austrian explorer Hans Schinz, who visited the

⁴⁶ ZBU: U.IV.g.1,Band 1, South West Africa Company Limited - generalia (1892 - 1898), fol. 277 - 286, p. 286 of Hartmanns manuscripts.

Omuramba Omatako area in 1886, wrote that “die uns hier besuchenden Leute *nannten sich* (emphasis by R.N.) !Kun San“ (Schinz 1891: 357), which would support the opinion that No-gau was a corrupted exonym.⁴⁷

It is also apparent that the classification of the !Xun in the studied area might be to some extent a result of possible cultural bias on behalf of the observers. In this view of the social organisation in the area the !Xun must have been organised into „groups“, a kind of whole representing from each other independent entities.⁴⁸ In fact the „group“ boundaries may have been rather flexible and fluid. This might be well the case of the Kung’au and No-gau as well. The notion of group may have appeared the more logical for the observers, if a strong leader operated in the area, which seemed to be for example Nama-gorup, the alleged leader of the Kung’au. The observers, not having mastered the !Xun language, had to rely on the information provided by interpreters from other area, who could refer to the people of other areas by exonyms. As is very well known, the peoples of Namibia and elsewhere still refer to each other by exonyms to the present day.

We also cannot entirely rule out that that the difference in classification of the !Xun by those authors a century ago and the modern !Xun might also be a result of changing group identities, emerging identities and changing exonyms.

Importantly, the !Xun I met in Grootfontein during my research did not classify themselves as Grootfontein !Xun, but by one or other of the four ethnonyms/exonyms. When asked who they were, they said just !Xun. Some of them would call themselves for example Dune !Xun or Tamboti !Xun only when asked from which area they originated. There was not an ethnonym “Grootfontein !Xun”, which may indicate there was not a(ny) !Xun population in the immediate area of the present-day town in the past.

Precolonial area

It is apparent that around the middle of the 19th century the broader area of present-day Grootfontein was inhabited by Bushmen. The whole area between the lands occupied by the Herero and the Bantu peoples in the north of the territory was known for being inhabited “only” by Bushmen and Bergdamaras (Damaras).

The Bergdamaras were reported to live in the area of the Otavi Mountains (Köhler 1959b: 15, 18⁴⁹). They were known by the whites as *Honigkaffern* because they allegedly supplied the

⁴⁷ However, Schinz also had to rely on interpreters. He was accompanied on his journey by two Ovambos, one Bergdamara (Damara) and a „Baster“ (he stayed with a Baster, whose father was white tradesman and mother a Bushman) living that time by Grootfontein (Schinz 1891: 354), who probably worked for him as interpreters and provided him with the latter information. Schinz noted that they could not understand the !Xun at Omuramba Omatako. It is quite improbable that the Bushmen in the Omatako Omuramba would call themselves San, which is a Khokhoegowab word with derogatory connotation.

⁴⁸ It is striking that on one side in the discourse from the German area the Bushmen were sometimes in a contradictory way portrayed as constituting larger groups and sometimes just as living in small vagrant family bands without permanent place to stay. Both could be situationally utilised. The former for example for justifying harsh indiscriminate approach against Bushmen of certain area classified as belonging to one group, the latter for justifying their land expropriation.

⁴⁹ Köhler based his information on the „notes“ of the the South West Africa Company Representative G. Hartmann from 1895, this manuskript is at the National Archives of Namibia in Windhoek (ZBU: U.IV.g.1, Band 1, South West Africa Company Limited - generalia (1892 - 1898), fol. 277 - 286). Köhler (1959: 20) writes rightly that Harrmann’s notes „call for some critical comments and requirfe further investigation“.

Bushmen and Hereros with honey or *Klipkaffern*, because of their click language and closer physical appearance to black people than to the Bushmen. Vedder claimed that in the past the Hai//om (he called them Saan) in the area of Tsumeb, Grootfontein, Gaub and Korab were in a kind of master-servant relationship with the Bergdama (Damaras) and the latter were according to him “Knechte der Saan” (Vedder 1928: 12, 127 - 128, Vedder 1973: 78; Lebzelter 1928: 296, though he seems to repeat Vedder’s information).

Although sparsely populated, it was not an ahistorically static area before the establishment of the first settlements here by the Boer trekkers and then German colonization. The Hereros called the site of present-day Grootfontein *Otjivanda tjongue*, meanings Leopard’s hill, because of a leopard(s) killing there their goats and calfs. According to the Herero Jeremias, who was interviewed by Vedder, the place where the town was later to be built was called *Otjimunikirako* by the Hereros. According to Vedder, this came from the verb *okumunika* meaning „come into appearance“ (in Erscheinung treten), because there was a good view over the landscape (Vedder 1928: 15, 27). This is due to its position on the slope of the elevated *Grootfonteiner Terrasse*, from which the vastness of the *Grootfonteiner Fläche* to its northeast, east and southeast could be observed.

However, the Herero pastoralists seemed to enter the immediate Grootfontein area only in rather small isolated groups (Vedder 1934 in 1973: 140, 178, 309). The traveller Galton reported in 1851 the northernmost Herero post in Okamabuti (Okamambuti), but its occupant Chapupa (Tjapupa) recognised the superiority of the Ovambo chief Nangoro (Galton 1853: 168 - 169). Okamambuti lay near (east of) the present-day Grootfontein and Schinz identified it as Swartwater (Schinz 1891: 355). Köhler, quoting Hartmann, calls Swartwater “Nutsas” (Köhler 1959b: 15). Nutsas and Swartwater are the names of two neighbouring farms in the present, evidently corresponding to the historic Okamambuti. Between the lands occupied by the Hereros and Ovambos there was according to Galton (1853: 1690) “a Bushmen track of considerable breadth”.

Grootfontein was apparently also known by the Ovambos, but their permanent settlements were north of Etosha.⁵⁰ Galton reported the Ovambos sent a caravan twice a year to Chapupa and that they exchanged cattle beads, shells, assegais, wood-choppers, and such like things with the Hereros. The Ovambos obtained some of these products from “half-caste Portuguese traders” frequenting their northern frontiers (Galton 1853: 172). The Rheinisch missionaries H. Hahn and J. Rath and the hunter and trader F. Green met a group of Ovambos who were carrying copper ore from the Otavi valley at the foot of the Otjijika Mountains east of Grootfontein (Söhnge 1966: 12). In chief Kambazembi’s time Herero cattle posts were reported in Otjituuo and Okatjoruu (Köhler 1959b: 32) and also southwards in Omambonde (Jaeger and Weibel 1921: 76), the area of the Sarisa !Xun.

According to Hartmann, the Hereros, pressed by the Khoi people, moved northwards, but were defeated at Grootfontein and Nutsas by the Ndonga chief Nongoro, who acted as a protector of the Bushmen, in retaliation for killing some of Bushmen in the Waterberg area. The Hereros were then pushed south beyond Waterberg (Köhler 1959b: 15). The Ovambos were famously in mutually beneficial and vivid trade contacts with the Bushmen in the 19th

⁵⁰ Herero Jeremias from Grootfontein Werft said to Vedder that at the time of the first Hereros coming to the Grootfontein area, Ovambos lived up to Namutoni. He narrated how the Ovambos killed the first Herero, who came in the area of Grootfontein, called Katauu kahejuva. Katauu initially traded with the Ovambos, but later a dispute developed between them resulting in the killing. Jeremias told Vedder, that Katauu was buried at the place in Grootfontein, where was later built the building of the South West Africa Company (Vedder 1928: 25).

century. Apparently these Bushmen were Hai//om in the Otavi area, where the Bushmen were extracting copper (Dieckmann 2007: 44 - 48, Gordon 2000: 25 - 28).

In the second half of the 19th century the Grootfontein area attracted white hunters, traders, prospectors and adventurers, and was at that time exceptionally rich in wildlife. The elephant hunters and tradesmen A. Eriksson and F. Green had their hunting headquarters (Standlager) in modern Grootfontein in the 1860s (Rohmann in Vedder 1928: 16, Vedder 1934 in 1973: 531). Omuramba Omatako was used during the dry periods as a trade route to the northern or eastern territories and became popular and frequented by the hunters benefiting from the demand for ivory. Karakuwisa, lying at the omuramba, became a hunting base as well (Gordon 1984: 199 - 200).

According to Hartmann, during this period „Damaras (used at that time as a designation for Hereros - note R.N.) only came to the Bushman country as casual labourers for the Europeans during the hunting season“. The advance of the Hereros northwards was hindered by the Bushmen, apparently Hai//om under chief Aribib, and the Hereros „therefore waged war against the Bushmen in the south from Waterberg to Grootfontein and Nutsas (Swartwater)“ (Köhler 1959b: 16 - 17). As the Deutsche Kolonialzeitung similarly reported in 1886 of the precolonial Bushmen - Herero relationship:

Zu den Herero haben jene Buschmänner und Bergdamara von jeher nur eine feindliche Stellung eingenommen, daher erstere, wenigstens seit Menschengedenken, es nie gewagt haben, jene gute Weideland nur zu betreten, geschweige zu besetzen; sie wurden infolge der Gelüste jener zu viel von ihrem Weidevieh verlieren. Über Waterberg hinaus haben sich nur dann und wann starke Jagdparteien von Herero gewagt, die dann jedoch von dem geheimen, daher gefährlichen Nachstellungen der Buschmänner öfter fliehen mussten mit Verlusten an Menschen und Jagdbeute. (Deutsche Kolonialzeitung 1886, p. 403)

It has been argued that the Bantu people did not infringe on the Bushmen area in the northeast until the former acquired firearms, „a variable that would dramatically affect the balance of power“ (Gordon 1984: 199).

The !Xun of Omuramba Omatako, even though hunters and gatherers, did not, in all probability, live in any kind of splendid ethnic isolation even before the whites started to frequent this area. The farmer J. H. Wilhem described the trade relations of the Bushmen to the Bantu people of Okavango river area and “brisk trade relations also among the Bushmen” (Wilhelm 1954 in Guenther 2005: 137 - 140). These relations, which included traditional, non-European items, must have existed for far longer.

The hunters often used the services of the Bushmen with whom they had generally mutually beneficial relations. The latter were reported to be „very helpful and would do anything for a small gift of tobacco“. Gordon in his essay from 1984 notes that:

The picture of the Bushmen that emerges is complex and changing. The old notion of these people as passive victims of European invasion and Bantu expansion is challenged. Bushmen emerge as one of many indigenous people in a mobile landscape and forming and shifting their political and economic alliances to take advantage of circumstances as they perceived them. Instead of toppling helplessly from foraging to begging, they emerge as hotshot traders in mercantile world market for ivory and skins. Rather than being victims of pastoralists and traders who depleted game, they appear as one of many willing agents of this commercial depletion, operating as brokers between competing forces as hired shots. (Gordon 1984: 203, 196)

We may add that this does not contradict the apparent fact that most of the Bushmen of that period still relied on the foraging economic mode and their material culture was, to a significant extent, “traditional”. See, for example, the observation made in 1923 of the “wild” !Xun in the Omuramba Omatako area east of farm Neitsas, long time after the nearby farm settlement was established (Doke 1925).

Furthermore, white or coloured hunters and tradesmen were accompanied during their expeditions often by native servants, who were also foreigners in these areas. Inevitably, with the movement and contact of peoples there must have gone hand in hand a mutual exchange information, ideas and material culture objects and establishment of relationships among people of different ethnic backgrounds and geographical areas.

Upingtonia

Since it has been argued that the Republic of Upingtonia with Grootfontein as its headquarters collapsed following a “First Namibian War of Liberation” in which Bushmen played a crucial role (Gordon and Douglas 2000), I will dedicate a fair amount of space to these. Who were the Bushmen who were causing so much trouble to the settlers?

The beginnings of the present-day town Grootfontein are associated with the *Trekboer* families (*dorstlandtrekkers*) who moved from South African Republic (Transvaal) to Humpata in the south of Portuguese Angola in the second half of the 1870s. Dissatisfied with life in that area, they were finally persuaded by William Worthington Jordan, a Coloured tradesman, to move in 1885 to the area of present-day Grootfontein. Jordan had received land as a concession from the Ndonga king Kampingana and his son, Kambonde. Interestingly, the contract was signed on the 21st of April 1885 in two copies - in English and Oshindonga, with the translation into the latter being prepared by Finish missionaries.⁵¹ In 1885 the Boers declared this vast area the Republic of Upingtonia, which Jordan named after the then Cape prime minister hoping to secure his support; and the settlers agreed on the new republic’s constitution. The establishing document was signed by 46 people, including traders operating in the area. Famously, Jordan bought the area for 300 pounds worth of material objects: 25 muskets, a “salted” (i.e. immunised) horse and a cask of brandy. He parcelled out to the farmers small farms and till March 1887 43 of them were allocated. Jordan retained, however, mineral and trading right to the area. Behind his acquisition of these rights was, apparently, the strategic objective of controlling the Otavi copper fields as the Tsumeb mineral deposits were not discovered at that time yet. The republic was, however, to be short-lived.

There were several reasons that brought about the collapse of the republic. The existence of Upingtonia was accompanied from the beginning with uncertainty about its viability and the prospect of military conflict with the Bantu natives. The Afrikaners certainly lacked enough men, weapons and horses for any large-scale conflict. Importantly, the Herero chief Maherero

⁵¹ Regarding the borders of the Upingtonia land Burger wrote: „Die grond wat Jordan van die Ovambo gekoop het, het die volgende plekke (meestal fonteine) ingesluit: Noolongo, Okahanaka, Okaukuejo, Ombika, Ondjombo omuhomba, Nudaus, Okasima K Oambale, Oshihekaberg, Omeja ongendji en Omutse u ondjamba. Die noordgrens van die gebied was die Etoshapan en sy uitloop Onzila. In die weste en suide het die grens net suid en wes van bogenoemde plekke geloop, terwyl die streek na die ooste onbegrens was. Jordan het aan die Duitse kommissaris verklaar dat sy gebied tussen 18° tot 20° S.B. en 15° tot 20° O.L. geleë was en sowat 957 vk. myl beslaan.“ Burger N. A. (1978: 346). If the latter data were true, the land would stretch in the east close to nowadays Tsumkwe and include the area of present Tsumkwe District West, former western Bushmanland.

claimed this area as his on the grounds that the Hereros used to pasture their cattle there. However, according to Schinz, who arrived in Grootfontein on 3 April, 1886, this claim laid by the Hereros seemed to be motivated more by their anxiety about Jordan's plans and the Boers than on historical facts. According to Schinz, who based his arguments on the descriptions of Galton and Andersson, the Herero herders may have been present in part of the Grootfontein region (in Okamambuti), but they withdrew to the south shortly after the travellers Galton and Andersson left: "Seit einigen Jahren wagt sich kein Omuhherero mehr weiter als bis zum Sandsteinwall von Otjozondjupa." The Bushmen, including those living around Okamambuti (Schinz 1991: 351), who traded „seit undenklichen Zeiten“ copper with the Ovambos, recognised the Ovambo king Kambonde as their ruler (Herrscher).

The Upingtonia Boers precarious situation was exacerbated when, in the middle of 1886, Jordan was killed in Owambo. The *Trekboers* were few in number and knew that that the natives had firearms. With the death of Jordan, they lost a strong personality to further their interest in the diplomatic field among the various stakeholders such as the Hereros, Ovambos and the German and British colonial authorities. Those of the Afrikaner settlers who still remained in the area were subsequently promised German protection, but since the German authorities were at that time too weak to provide substantial assistance, this did little to ease their uncertain situation. Additionally, the settlers were decimated by malaria, which was rife in the Grootfontein marshes. Among the Boer settlers there were also many disagreements about how to deal with these problems. The last Afrikaner settlers left the area in May 1887 (Burger 1978: 345 – 381; Dieckmann 2007: 48 – 49; Gordon and Douglas 2000: 40 – 42; Köhler 1959b: 19 – 20; Moltke 1974: 68, Mouton 1995: 48 – 49; Prinsloo and Gauche 1933: 149; Schinz 1891: 347 – 353; NAN, Schoenfelder n.d.: 18 – 19; Vedder 1934 in 1973: 178, 532).

Gordon and Douglas (2000) based the portrayal of the Upingtonia events largely on the information in Burger (1978) and Prinsloo and Gauche (1933). My understanding of the information in these sources (and the sources used by Burger) is that Bushmen depredations probably played one of several, although significant, co-roles in bringing about the collapse of Upingtonia. In this respect it is conspicuous that Schinz, who came to Grootfontein in April 1886, did not mention any Bushmen attacks in the area in his book of 1891.⁵² Elsewhere he wrote that "am Waterberg, am Etjo, in Otjavanda tjongue, in Okamambuti finden wir sprudelnde Quellen, in Hülle und Fülle, herrlichen Humusboden, eine friedsame Bevölkerung, Bergdamara und Bushmänner." (Deutsche Kolonialzeitung 1891: 8). This suggests that the Bushmen depredations must have started later.

In Prinsloo and Gauche (1933), a dorstlandtrekker recalled:

In ons omgewing was Boesmans volop. Hulle lewenswyse is verskillend van die van alle ander nasies. Hulle het geen vaste verblyfplek, hulle ploeg of saai nie, en hou ook geen vee aan nie. Hulle lewe van gesteelde vee, wild wat hulle skiet, en wilde uintjies wat hulle uitgrawe... Ons het enkeles van hulle makgemaak (underlined by R. N., elsewhere in the book the term "maak Boesman" is used), dog vertrou kan mens hulle nooit. Hoe goed en getrou so 'n Boesman ook mag lyk, sodra hy die kans kry, sal hy jou kul, en self om die lewe bring. Ons het hulle maar meestal gebruik om met ons saam te gaan op jag. Soas jaghonde draf hulle dan voor die perde, want agter jou rug kan jy hulle nie vertrou nie; en hulle kan op 'n jagtog minstens net soveel werd wees as die beste jaghond. (Prinsloo and Gauche 1933: 151 - 152, 160).

⁵² Schinz was merely mentioning that he he could not find among Grootfontein's Baster dwellers anybody to accompany him to Lake Ngami, since there were afraid of „im Felde zerstreute Bushmänner“ (Schinz 1891: 345).

Even though the Upingtonia settlers regarded some of the Bushmen, apparently those working for them, as “tamed” /maak/ (“drie makke Boesjemannen” mentions also Postma 1897: 186), it is apparent that the general attitude towards them was full of suspicion and mistrust. There were also raiding bands (moorden roofbende) of “Hottentots” and Bushmen, but the situation was the more confusing that a Bushmen band could be lead by the “Hottentot-kaptein” (Prinsloo and Gauche 1933: 152 - 4).⁵³ Prinsloo and Gauche mention captain Swartbooi, which probably refers to Petrus Swartbooi (Zwartbooi). In one instance he was reported to have ordered some Bushmen to steal cattle from Upingtonia settlers (Postma 1897: 178 - 182, 188). The operation area of the “Hottentots” was, however, apparently west and south-west of Grootfontein, not the region on the other side of Grootfontein on which this study focuses. Any possible Hottentot (Swartboois) - Hai//om interaction and collaboration may also have been facilitated due to the closeness of their mother tongues.

Even though we know about cases of Bushmen attacking Upingtonia settlers, including the killing of Rudolph du Toit⁵⁴, the death toll on the side of the Bushmen was incomparably higher. Two armed expeditions against the marauding Bushmen bands are described in Prinsloo and Gauche (1933). In one expedition a few (“’n paar”) Bushmen were shot dead, in the other, eight. We may certainly assume that the instances of killing the Bushmen were generally under-reported. The *Trekboers* were, however, also afraid any retaliatory actions by the Bushmen (Mouton 1995: 54).

Burger writes that the Boers had to cope with their depredations and cattle stealing almost daily (N. A. Burger, 1978: 314). However, in the memoirs of Brigadier I. Bouwer to which he was referring⁵⁵, there is no such an explicit statement. Bouwer, however, also recalled that the Upingtonia settlers had difficult relations with both the Bushmen and Hottentots. An incident is recounted in which Bouwer’s father was ambushed by a group of Bushmen who were armed with muzzle loaders, but apparently they did not know how much gunpowder they were supposed to use. Thus, they apparently often either overloaded or underloaded it. One bullet that was not supported by enough gunpowder stopped before penetrating his vital organs. “By means of superior marksmanship and a little manoeuvring on his horse, he was enabled to dispose of this little assassination party of seven or eight before proceeding on his way” (Le Riche 1980: 21).

Further, Bouwer recalled that two Upingtonia settlers were killed on their way from Walvis Bay to Upingtonia within a day’s trek of Grootfontein. One of them was du Toit, obviously the same du Toit as mentioned above.⁵⁶ In Prinsloo and Gauche (1933: 157 - 8) the assaulters were portrayed as Bushmen. Bouwer, however, labels them Hottentots. Being aware of the confusion concerning the names given to the original inhabitants of the modern Western Cape

⁵³ Interestingly, the mentioned dorstlandtrekker noted about the „Berg-Damaras“, that „hierdie nasie is glad nie vyandig gesind nie en is half onnosel.“ (Prinsloo and Gauche 1933: 156)

⁵⁴ Regarding the killing of du Toit, according to Postma it happened at his farm Asfontein, which was south-west of Grootfontein and probably quite far from this settlement („eene plaats, ten zuid-westen van Grootfontein gelegen naar den kant van Waterberg“). From the information provided by Postma it seems that the killers might have been Hottentots (Postma 1897: 183 - 5). Giving the geographical position of Asfontein the Bushmen living there were high probably Hai//om. This is evident also from the report of von Moltke (1940: 38) according to who du Toit settled at Okamukandi and was killed by his own „tame“ Bushmen, who acted on the orders of the Swartboois („ronswerwende Boesmans, wat hulself as die onderhoriges van Petrus Swartbooi beskou het“).

⁵⁵ Burger referred to the article by Le Riche, *Memoirs of Brigadier I. Bouwer*, which was published in the newspaper *The Star*, 11. 5. 1934. The memoirs were then published in 1980 in a book *Memoirs of General Ben Bouwer* of the same author. Bouwer based the information he provided to Le Riche on his diary notes.

⁵⁶ The circumstances of the murdering of du Toit might vary in different sources.

area by the white observers in the past centuries, we have to assume that the Upingtonia trekkers could also have confused sometimes the “Bushmen” and “Hottentots”. Furthermore, confusion may also be caused when descriptions of the events from the Upingtonia period are based, as is often the case, on oral history sources.

Dieckmann identifies the Bushmen causing troubles to the Upingtonians as Hai//om. (Dieckmann 2007: 49) However, it is probable that the eastern part of the farm settlement suffered from the reprisals of the !Xun. A Boer commando organised by Jordan went to the area of Omuramba Omatako to recover cattle stolen by the Bushmen (Mouton 1995: 54). As pointed out the area along this omuramba has „traditionally“ been inhabited by the !Xun.

The trekboers got to know the region well during their hunting expeditions and regarded the area of Grootfontein as the most suitable for settling.

Grootfontein lê an die voet van 'n berg wat loop van suidwes na noordoos. Uit 'n bank ann die voet van die berg kom 'n pragtige stroom water uit, wat ons nuwe dorpie sal voorsien. Al langs die hange van hierdie berg lê nog baie mooi plekke vir plase, wat ook hulle water kry van die uitsyferings uit die berg. (Prinsloo and Gauche: 1933: 147 - 8)

Schinz wrote that even though the Afrikaners were awarded farms:

„von einer wirklichen Bestellung dieser Farmen konnte (initially - note R.N.) von der hand noch keine Rede sein; die sämtlichen Emigranten blieben, in dem sie die unfern Okamambuti⁵⁷ Wasserstelle Otjavanda tjongue als Kristallisationspunkt wählten, für die erste Zeit zussammen und begnügten sich, kleinere Bodenparzellen mit dem für den Lebensunterhalt notwendigen Korn and Mais zu bepflanzen. (Schinz 1896: 349)

An important source of income for the settlers was the hunting of giraffes, which were very common in this area, and the selling of their skins.

According to Hartmann, referred to in Köhler (1959b: 20), these Afrikaners were the first to build stone houses in Grootfontein. However other sources talk about simple *hartebeesthuises* (Burger 1978: 360). Most of the houses had just two rooms with only two or three very small windows, through which it was possible to put only one's head and which were closed with a plank. Some Grootfontein dwellers slept on their ox-waggons. There was also a school with 30 pupils of all ages. It was built from tamboti tree poles, the roof and walls were from common reef, the walls were also made with clay (von Moltke 1945).

The targets of the Bushmen depredation were the isolated farms and life in the main Grootfontein settlement was little affected. Its former resident Labuschagne, referred to by Moltke, called the settlement “dorpie”. According to the Labuschagne, “die lewe in ons dorpie was baie aangenaam an gelukkig”. He recalled a German tradesman Sichel who used to transport goods there from Walvis Bay twice a year. At that time, 15 families were living in Grootfontein. Importantly, Labuschagne mentioned that there were also “Kafferpondokke”, or natives' dwellings, also called “lokasitjie” - small native location, where the Upingtonia residents' servants must have lived. Labuschagne mentions the servant of Bêrend Bouwer: “To ou Bouwer (in the morning) wakker word, hy het op sy Kaffer geroep vir koffie” (Ibid). Schinz, who visited Grootfontein in 1886, writes that „Bastards etc“ also lived in Grootfontein (Schinz 1891: 345) The Boers were accompanied during their *dorstalantrek* also by non-Afrikaner helpers, who had come with them on the trek from Transvaal. There were 50 servants with the 270 Boers who made their way to Angolan Humpata in 1881.

⁵⁷ Okamambuti became in the 1890s a Boer farm (Mouton 1995: 117).

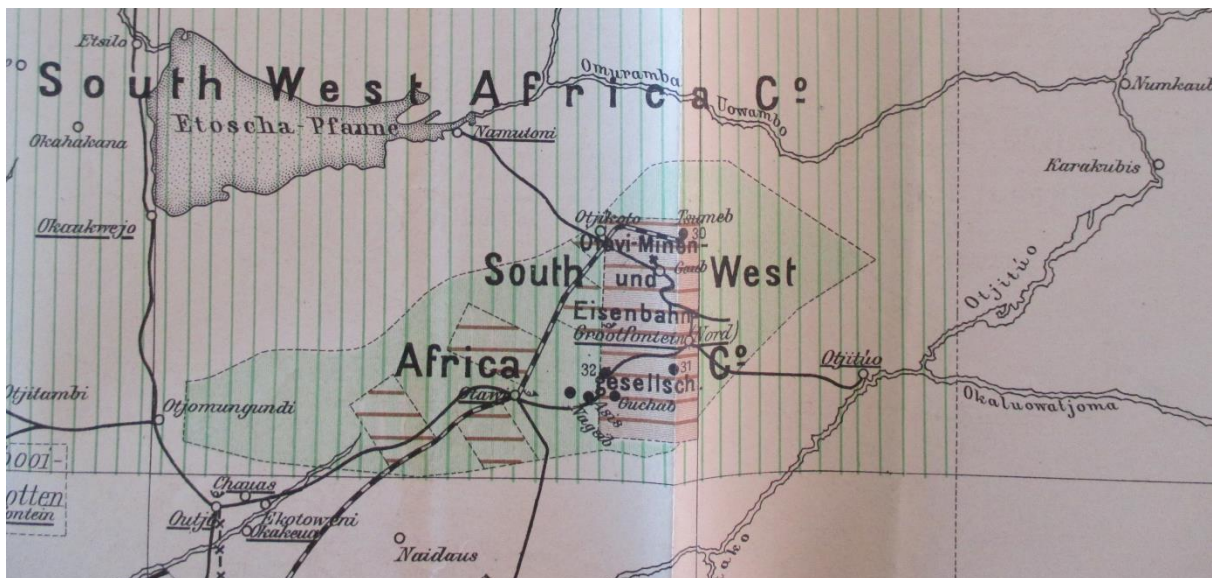
(Mouton (1985: 47). We may assume that they must have accompanied their masters to Grootfontein as well. With the establishment of the farms came small settlements made up of the local workers and their families, whose ethnic composition must have varied along the lines of the composition of local population. Postma mentions that at the farm Palmfontein near to Grootfontein, which was owned by the white tradesman Gertsen, there were Bushmen, Damaras and Hottentots in 1885 (Postma 1897: 178).

Even though this first Grootfontein settlement is known as a part of the republic of the *Trekboers*, the ethnicity of the settlers made it a more diverse place. Moltke (1974: 68) pointed out that among those signing the Upingtonia agreement were Englishmen from the Cape, Swedes and Germans: „Grootfontein erhielt dadurch internationalen Charakter.“ The non-Afrikaners were apparently mostly tradesman operating in the area.

Several years after the settlers left Grootfontein the settlement virtually physically disappeared as is apparent from Köhler's (1959: 20) quotation of Hartmann's notes: „Of their (Boers - note R. N.) brief occupation of Grootfontein only a few ruined buildings bore witness at the time the first expedition of the South West Africa Company visited the district in 1893.“

“Herrenloses Land”: South West Africa Company, establishment of German rule and Grootfontein locations hidden in the bush

On 15 September 1892 Deutsches Kolonialblatt announced the extension of the German Schutzherrschaft over “die herrenlose, zwischen Herero- und Ovamboland innerhalb der deutschen Interessensphäre gelegene Gebiet” corresponding to the area of the former Upingtonia republic. Deutsche Kolonialzeitung, covering this development from its front page, highlighted that in this instance Schutzherrschaft was not established on the usual basis of “Schutz- und Freundschaftsvertrag’ mit einem eingeborenem Häuptling”, but it was “die Begründung unmittelbarer Herrschaft” (Deutsche Kolonialzeitung 1892: 11). Strikingly, even earlier in the German colonial discourse was it stated that the land between Ovambo- and Hereroland was “Niemandland”, “herrenlos”, “eigentumlos” and “geschichtslos”, because it was inhabited only by the allegedly few (“vereinzelt”) Bushmen and Bergdamaras.⁵⁸ Thus, according to the Deutsche Kolonialzeitung, there were three possibilities concerning the acknowledgement of legal entitlement to the land available for the German authorities: to acknowledge 1) the entitlements of the Ovambos, 2) Hereros or 3) proclaim it “Niemandes Land” (Deutsche Kolonialzeitung, 1896, p. 405 - 6). The option of acknowledging the Bushmen entitlements was not considered.



Map 4. In green is the land owned by the South West Africa Company. On its northeast side it roughly corresponds with the Hai//om - !Xun spatial distribution. The area to the east the company land soon became one of the most farmed areas in South West Africa. (NAN BGR L4a (Landgesellschaften Allgemeines))

As Köhler put it the appropriation of the land occupied by the Bushmen was brought about (partly) because of a total disrespect of the latter’s way of life.

Während die Völker der zuerst genannten Wirtschaftsformen (agriculturists and herders - note R.N.) als ein Konkretum erschienen, dass man in seiner lokalen Fassbarkeit beachten und gegebenenfalls respektieren konnte, waren herumschweifende Wildbeuter und Sammler in den Augen der Sesshaften von jeher ‚Menschen ohne Land‘. Und da sie sich weder als Bodenbearbeiter als auf dem Land ‚sitzend‘ aufwiesen noch auf Grund Ihrer Lebensform ein

⁵⁸ Similarly the colonial official Rohrbach wrote during his stay in the area of Grootfontein in 1903, that, it is „bis heute eine im Grunde Menschenleere, nie genutzte Wildniss... - denn die wenigen Dutzend oder hundert vagierender Bushmansfamilien, die sie durchziehen, sind keine ‚Bevölkerung‘ in dem Sinn, den das Wort sonst verdient“ (Rohrbach 1909: 35).

Recht auf Boden und Land beanspruchten konnten, und da sie ferner weder Kleinvieh noch Grossvieh ‚besassen‘, wurden sie von Feldbauern und Hirten gering geschätzt oder kaum als Menschen geachtet. ... Von der hohen Warte des Europäertums ... erblickte man im Bushmann einen Anarchisten von Natur, einen Wilderer aus Leidenschaft und einen Arbeitsscheuen aus moralischem Tiefstand. Köhler (1957: 52 - 53).

The same 1892 edition of *Amtliche Kolonialblatt* also discussed the provision of Damaraland-Konzession to the London-based South West Africa Company Limited.⁵⁹ This was followed by predictably negative reactions from the nationalistic German pro-colonial circles. The concession included the mining rights in the Otavi area and the building of a railway from the sea coast into the northern interior, with land of 10 kilometres on each side of the railway set aside for the company, and, importantly, also the grant of 13 000 square kilometres in the area, which included the present town Grootfontein, to be sold or rented to farmers, with preference to be given to German settlers (*Deutsche Kolonialzeitung* 1892: 11, Söhnge 1967: 17).⁶⁰ The eastern border of this area (see map No. 4) appears to correspond roughly to the Hai//om - !Xun border.

The South West Africa Company's representative, Hartmann, chose Grootfontein as its headquarters, but the establishment of the new settlement there is connected to another Boer trek to this area, this time led by J. M. Lombard, who moved to Grootfontein in 1894 via what was later to become the Otjituo Reserve. None of these Afrikaners was a former Upingtonia settler (Köhler 1959: 20 - 21). According to Rohmann (in Vedder 1928: 17 - 18), about 15 Boer families came to the Grootfontein area with Lombard, Rafalski (1930: 134) writes about 25 families, and Mouton (1995: 102) about 98 people in total with 29 men.⁶¹ Following an agreement between the Afrikaners, Landeshauptmann Leutwein and the South West Africa Company in 1895, the German authorities allowed at the most 40 families to settle in the Grootfontein area. The Afrikaners were given farms on the concession land of the South West Africa Company (Köhler 1959b: 20 - 21, Mouton 1995: 107 - 108), which lay approximately on Hai//om territory.

At first, these dwellers in Grootfontein lived here in tents, on ox-wagons and some built hartebeesthuises, as had the Upingtonia Grootfontein dwellers. These Boers, however, left after several years to the farms and their houses became ruins like those of the first dorstlandtrekkers (Rohmann in Vedder 1928: 18). Landeshauptmann Leutwein described Grootfontein during his visit to the settlement in 1895 as „freundliches Burendorf“ (Mouton 1995: 107).

In 1896 Grootfontein district (Distrikt in German) was established and Grootfontein became the seat of a military administration subordinated to Outjo (seat of newly established *Nordbezirk*) and more than 30 members of Schutztruppe moved there and started building a

⁵⁹ The German government preferred that the colonisation in the territory was instead by the state, driven by private concession companies. „Bismarck war der Meinung, dass die Entwicklung der Kolonie durch private Gesellschaften erfolgen sollte, und dass der Soldat und Beamte dem Kaufmann folgen sollte“ (von Weber 1969: 39, 41).

⁶⁰ In 1903 South West Africa Company ceded the rights for building the railway and the land next to it to Otavi Minen und Eisenbahn Gessellschaft, however the Otavi - Grootfontein part of the railway was still to be built by South West Africa Company (Söhnge 1967: 28).

⁶¹ From the point of view of the German administration of German South West Africa allowing the Trekboers to settle in the land was a sensitive issue. On one side, due to their expertise in cattle farming, they could help to build up the area's economy. On the other side, opposite to the Germans, who came often as single men they moved in with the whole families and there was a threat they would numerically outweigh the former (von Weber 1958: 109).

fortress (Rafalski 1930: 134). Von Zastrow gives as the main reason for this the need to control the whole Grootfontein area militarily, specifically the Bushmen and Hereros, and the Boers, whose aims were „der Förderung des Deutschtums wenig dienlich“ (von Zastrow n.d.: 9 - 10). Already by 1896 a line of 12 military posts with 5 - 12 men was established in the district. Initially, the main aim of these posts was to prevent the spread of foot-and-mouth epidemics, but later they became military posts. Among them were posts in Otjituo, Guntsas and Neitsas and in 1912 the line was extended further eastwards to Nurugas (Rafalski 1930: 136 - 138); all these places were regarded by my !Xun informants as traditional !Xun areas.⁶² In 1906 Grootfontein area was elevated to a *Bezirk* and gained a civil administration (Köhler 1959b: 21, von Zastrow n.d.: 18).

The Boer farmers had lived in the Grootfontein area with the insecurity that they would have to leave their farms to make room for the Germans, who wanted to prohibit the establishment of an ethnically homogenous Afrikaner area. Another problem was that in the sparsely populated area there was almost no market for agricultural products and agriculture was also affected by periods of insufficient rains. The German authorities also effectively ended the era of the *Trekboers* in the territory by ordering them to buy or lease a farm by July 1899. However, in the absence of cash, the Afrikaners did not have the means to pay for the leases. The settlers also suffered from malaria, especially a dire epidemic was in 1896/97, and the rinderpest epidemic that decimated their cattle. For this reason Grootfontein had among the settler community reputation of a „Fiebernest“ (Rohmann in Vedder 1928: 12 - 13)⁶³ and many Afrikaners moved out of the region.

With the stationing of the Schutztruppe in Grootfontein and its effort to drain the marshes, the incidence of malaria was reduced in Grootfontein. This led many Afrikaners who had lived in the Grootfontein area to return (Schoenfelder n.d.: 29 - 30, Trümpelmann 1946). This time they were settled on government land and not that of the South West Africa Company (Burger 1978: 397), thus, apparently, also on the !Xun territories. In January 1895 89 Afrikaners lived in Grootfontein and surrounding farms, but four years later it was only 12. However, by January 1902 126 Afrikaners lived in the district, a year later the number had risen to 153. (Trümpelmann 1946: 153, 157)

According to Rohmann (in Vedder 1928), the foundation site of Grootfontein is regarded as two stone „Häuschen“ built by the two German representatives of the South West Africa Company, Kläwe and Nitze. „Da die Buren bald aufs Farmen zogen, sind Kläwe und Nitze als die ersten deutschen ständigen Einwohner einzusehen.“⁶⁴ The houses were made from

⁶² The earliest source where I found that some Hai//om were living in the Omuramba Omatako area (specifically Karakuwisa) was the magistrate report for 1954 (LGR 3/3/3, Jaarverslag 1954: Naturellesake. Grootfontein), which mentioned that „in die omgewing van Karakuwisa is enkele Heikum“ Bushmen. I tend to believe that, if the information is true, they must have migrated there.

⁶³ The water of the springs stood in the area and Rohmann described the consequences for the Grootfontein dwellers in the following way: „Die Malaria begann erschreckend zu wüten, da es zuletzt mangels Zufuhr an jeglichen Bekämpfung- und Stärkungsmitteln fehlte. Die meisten Buren mit familien lagen darnieder, die Truppe so vollständig, dass tagelang kein Mann zum Kochen zur Verfügung war. Auch der einzige Sanitätsunterofficier war krank, aller hatte sich eine gänzliche Apathie bemächtigt, wer sich bewegen konnte, half sich so gut es ging selbst“ (von Zastrow n.d.: 12 - 13). However, getting rid of malaria took also some time, during the Herero uprising in 1904 suffered from the disease up to 50 % of the whites who withdrew that time to Grootfontein (Mouton 1995: 160).

⁶⁴ The symbol of the town for Rohmann, which was probably shared also by many of his German contemporaries, was a stony house. Rohmann's feelings towards the Germans are apparent, when he speaks about the Boers, who came to Grootfontein in the 1880s, as „mehr oder weniger zweifelhafte Elemente, unstätte

„Backstein“ stones. Kläwe und Nitze also started a shop, which in 1897 was acquired by Damara und Namaqua Handelsgesellschaft from Hamburg and became known as „alte Damara“, Rohmann calls it „Patriarch unter der Gebäuden Grootfonteins“. The shop of the South West Africa Company sold goods for the whites and bartered with the natives, who did not have money. Grootfontein became „zur ersten grösseren europäischen Siedlung des Nordostens, und als solches zog der Ort bald die Aufmerksamkeit der Regierung in Windhoek auf sich“ (von Zastrow n.d. 7 - 8, Rohmann in Vedder 1928: 18 - 21).

The urban sites in the Grootfontein area - Grootfontein, Tsumeb and Otavi - arose to a significant extent as a result of the activities of companies prospecting for minerals. In 1900 South West Africa Company called this copper district as „den bedeutendsten der ganzen Welt“ for its economic potential (Windhoeker Anzeiger 1900: 19).

The difference between Grootfontein and the other two sites was that Otavi and Tsumeb became mining centres with rapidly booming populations. Therefore, in contrast to Grootfontein, in Otavi and Grootfontein the number of native dwellers rose quickly.

Using somewhat poetic language, von Zastrow divided the bigger settlements (grössere Binnensiedlungen für Europäer) in German South West Africa at the beginning of the 20th century into two categories. Representative of the first was Tsumeb, a fast-developing mining centre with a population that was mushrooming. The second was exemplified by Grootfontein, which became slowly, but steadily, the administrative and commercial centre for the vast surrounding area:

Orte der einen Klasse: ... Wir errarten unschwer, dass es sich z. B. um Mineorte handelt. Oft sind sie Eintagsfliegen, oft haben sie eine Jahrzehnte lange Blüteperiode, um dann ebenso rasch wieder zu vergehen, wie sie gekommen oder, als ruhiges, unbedeutendes Dörfchen weiterzuvegetieren. Der Entdeckung eines Erzlagers, edler Steine oder eines anderen gewinnbringenden Naturproduktes verdanken sie ihre Entstehung. Ob die Mine sumpfigen Urwald, in dürrer Wüste, im dichten Busch oder wilden Gebirgen liegt, Hunderte von Kilometern abseits von aller Kultur, der Menschenstrom wird dorthin fluten. Das Pochen der Stampfwerke, das Rattern der Maschinen ist der Pulsschlag, der das Lebenstempo und Lebensdauer dieser Orte angibt. Mit dem Stillstehen der Erzhämmer, dem Erkalten der Kessel, die eine Erschöpfung der Erzlager andeuten, erkaltet auch der Lebensstrom. Der Ort Tsumeb in unserem Bezirke ist ein Vertreter dieser Kategorie.

Orte der zweiten Klasse: Für ihre Gründung sind gerade die günstigen natürlichen Eigenschaften der Lage, die im ersteren Falle ganz oder teilweise fehlen können, Bedingung. Dafür pflegen sie keinen sprunghaften, dafür einen, der Gesamtentwicklung des Landes angepassten, Fortschritt zu nehmen. Hier handelt es sich nicht um die zufällige Entdeckung eines mehr oder weniger verborgenen Schatzes auf einem beschränkten Gebiete, sondern ein grosses Territorium muss vorhanden sein, das sichtbar an der Oberfläche eine dem Charakter des Landes entsprechende, intensive und zusammenhängende Ausnützung garantiert. Möglichst inmitten der schon vorhandenen oder noch kommenden Einzelniederlassungen - hier der Farmen - wird sich der Ort bilden, der berufen ist, die behördliche, geistige-Handelszentrale pp. des Kulturgebietes zu werden, während eine der unter I (Orte der ersten Klasse - note R.N) beschriebenen Siedlungen als Enklave weitab von der Besiedlungszone liegen kann. Ferner müssen hier ... von Natur aus günstige Zufahrtswege und Tracen für eine etwaige Bahn und schliesslich Wasser in hinreichender Menge vorhanden sein. Diese Orte der zweiten Klasse nehmen im allgemeinen einen langsamen, dafür aber soliden und gesunden Entwicklungsgang und werden zu dauernden Kulturstätten der Kolonie. Der Ort Grootfontein ist ein Vertreter der letzteren Art. (von Zastrow n.d.: 1 - 3)

Menschen mit einem ausgesprochenem Hang zum Nomadenleben.“ It is worth mentioning, that in a very similar way speak both the German and Afrikaner farmers up to now about the Bushmen.

For the further development of the town it was crucial that the Otavi railway reached Grootfontein in March 1908 (the distance from Otavi to Grootfontein is 91 kilometres) connecting the region with the capital Windhoek and coastal Swakopmund. The construction of the railway, even if temporarily, brought many workers to Grootfontein.

Der Ort Grootfontein entwickelt sich in erfreuerlicherweise. Einige sehr hübsche Gebäude sind entstanden, neue Stores eingerichtet und verschiedene andere Niederlassungen. Wege und Strassen sind angelegt. ... Natürlich sagt schon ein Mancher wieder, es wird ja doch nicht viel werden, es geht sehr langsam von statten. Rom ist auch nicht an einem Tag erbaut worden und an einem Flecken in der Kolonie Deutsch-Südwestafrika, der bisher aus drei oder vier Häusern bestand, kann man unmöglich über Nacht eine Stadt machen. (Deutsch-Südwestafrikanische Zeitung 1908: 48)



Map 5. Map of Grootfontein from 1920. In the upper part of the settlement several native locations can be seen. NAN map No. 1944.

The South West Africa Company often became a target of the German pro-colonial circles, which accused it of delaying the selling of their land to German farmers since it was waiting for the prices of the land to go up after building the railway leading into its land (Rohrbach 1909: 49; Deutsch-Südwestafrikanische Zeitung 1906: 87; Deutsch-Südwestafrikanische Zeitung 1907: 14). Similar objections towards the South West Africa Company were also expressed much later by the German researchers Jaeger and Weibel. According to them, a paradoxical situation arose because of this policy when the land owned by the company next to the railway, which should logically be farmed first, lay unused and the farmers were purchasing land from the government in the more remote areas in the *Grootfonteiner Fläche*. Thus, they observed that most of the *Karstveld* (inhabited by the Hai//om) was “totally untouched” by the farms, but the *Grootfonteiner Fläche*, which was, as noted above, closer to the Omuramba Omatako, a !Xun territory, was densely occupied with farms and became one of the most developed parts of the colony (Jaeger and Weibel 1921: 20, 41, 72). Rohrbach (1909: 48) had already observed in 1903 that in the *Palmengebiet* (the area inhabited probably partly by the Makalani !Xun) between Grootfontein and Omuramba Omatako all places with open water (Pützen) was already occupied by Boer farmers.

However, connecting Grootfontein to the railway resulted in the rapid development of the town and the district. According to Jaeger and Weibel (1921: 72), none of the border farms of the *Sandfeld* was further than 75 kilometres from the railway. The agricultural products of the farms could now be more easily transported and so gain access to a wider market. Alongside the development of the farm area, this effected the development of the Grootfontein settlement as a service, administrative and trade centre.⁶⁵ Grootfontein district became a cattle farming area and, in contrast to other commercial farming regions, it was possible to focus on crop production, especially maize production, thanks to sufficient rainfall (von Zastrow 1924: 101). In 1912 it started to host an agriculture fair on a new show ground, which served especially for the display of cattle and livestock (Mouton 1995: 187). New houses were built in Grootfontein, „wenn auch noch lange neben stattlichen massiven Gebäuden primitive Wellblech und Holzbuden weiterbestanden“ (von Zastrow n.d.: 20).

According to Rafalski, there were in 1897 36 Europeans except for the members of Schutztruppe in Grootfontein, of whom 27 were Boers, 6 Germans (former Schutztruppe members), one Portuguese and two other Europeans. Interestingly, Rafalski mentions that there was also a relatively large Baster settlement at Grootfontein:

Ausser den Buren befand sich noch eine etwa siebzig Seelen zählende Bastardniederlassung in Grootfontein. Die Bastards waren wie die Buren erst vor wenigen Jahren zugewandert. Sie waren wie jene auch keine Siedler and Ackerbauer. Ihren Lebensunterhalt erwarben sie als Frachtfahrer; daneben trieben sie Gross- und Kleinviehzucht in verhältnissmässig grossem Umfange. (Rafalski 1930: 134)

Even though I have not found it in any written record from the German colonial period, there must have also been natives living in the settlement and working for the whites. At the beginning of colonial urbanisation every settlement had several *Werften*, which were often distinguished ethnically. They “usually took the form of a grouping of shacks and hovels around the larger employers such as government, police, military, breweries and hotels” (Hartmann 2007: 47). From later records, we know that during the German era *Werften* were developing in the north of the settlement. According to Jaeger and Weibel, who spent the period between 1914 - 1919 in the territory, the natives lived in various *Werften* “hidden in the bush of the Terrasse /Grootfonteiner Terrasse - note R. N./” (see map No. 5). They stated that the number of natives was several times higher than that of the whites (Jaeger and Weibel 1921: 77). However, in contrast to nearby Tsumeb,⁶⁶ the less numerous Grootfontein natives did not seem to attract much attention from the administration. Unfortunately, I was not able to find any data on the ethnic composition of the Grootfontein *Werften* during this period. Without any doubt some of the inhabitants must have been also local Bushmen. In a South West Africa Company photo album in the National Archives of Namibia (Accession A.791, Album 1) were two pictures of a “Buschmannwerft” in Grootfontein from the German period (see pictures No. 1-2). We also know that in January 1904 almost 300 natives were staying in

⁶⁵ Regarding the highest amount of money paid for goods the traders in Grootfontein imported in 1913 it was the ploughing machinery, rice, flour, coffee, sugar, tee, tobacco, building material, cloths and textiles (von Zastrow 1924: 106).

⁶⁶ Tsumeb was first significantly populated in 1900 with more than 30 white employers of the Otavi Minen- und Eisenbahn-Gesellschaft and local workforce. In several years, the local population increased to 1500 - 2000, most of them being Ovambos, followed by the Hereros, both groups living in their own „Wellblechkaserne“. The white population was, however, similiary less numerous as in Grootfontein. Tsumeb started also soon suffer from high criminality. Külz described Tsumeb as „nichts als eine Anlage der Gesellschaft“, i.e. South West Africa Company, with “hart an das Rowdytum grenzender Verkehrston” (Külz 1909: 120, Rafalski 1930: 142). Grootfontein was even later on described as a quite place, in which the arrival of a train was the event of the week (Jaeger and Weibel 1921: 77).

Grootfontein (Rohrbach 1909: 93)⁶⁷ and we know that the number of natives in the settlement and its surroundings was steadily growing.

Zur Überwachung der zahlreichen Eingeborenenbevölkerung und Aufrechterhaltung der Ordnung auf den Werften in und um Grootfontein hatte der Distriktchef Oberleutnant Volkmann 15 junge Hereros aus angesehenen Familien zur Eingeborenen-Polizisten gemacht. (Rafalski 1930: 137)



Picture 1. "Buschmannswerft. Grootfontein" in a South West Africa Company photo album in the National Archives of Namibia (Accession A.791, Album 1). This picture (and the next one) is from the German period and gives us a notion about the beginning of Bushman "urbanisation" in South West Africa. Notice the brick houses in the background.

Some Bushmen were employed at Tsumeb mines during the German colonial period (Köhler 1957: 57; Vedder 1912⁶⁸; Jaeger and Weibel 1921: 19). Given the fact that Tsumeb lay in the Hai//om traditional area, those who worked there belonged probably to this group. Hereros and Ovambos were the most preferred workers at the Tsumeb mines (Söhnge 1966: 49) and the employment in high numbers of Bushmen there does not seem ever to have been considered.

From the point of view of German administration, Grootfontein was a white man's place, one associated with white people's culture and way of living. It became, as did other towns, a symbol and centre of *Deutschtum* (on the meaning of this see Wallace 2011: 196), contrasted with the culture of the non-Germans, be they of Boer or African origin. Looking at the photographs of Grootfontein from the German period in the National Archives of Windhoek it

⁶⁷ Since it was during the Herero war, it's possible that some natives were looking in the settlement, similarly as the white population, a refuge.

⁶⁸ Vedder mentions that some Bushmen were employed also at the railway.

is striking that they mostly depict stony buildings - the most dominant being the fortress. The settlement in the photographs seems to be rather lifeless with no, or very few, people visible. If the goal was to take pictures of people, they were white, non-whites rarely appear other than in the background.



Picture 2. Notice the combination of traditional leather and modern clothes, the three-legged pot, the table with two cans and the wooden chest.

Grootfontein was a place of intensive social life of the white settlers' community. As regards the Germans they developed there after 1907, when the German population of Grootfontein increased, a vivid *Vereinsleben*. Generally, because of the distances between the farms and the social isolation of the farmers an ethos of mutual support and hospitality developed among the whites. There was however, a certain distance between the Germans and Boers. Interestingly, von Zastrow mentioned that before 1907 *Vereinsleben* could not develop „wegen der verschieden Nationalitäten (meant among the whites - note R.N.), die besonders zur Zeit des Bahnbaus vertreten waren.“

Es ist klar, dass in einem Lande mit so dünner weisser Bevölkerung, wie sie in der Erstlingszeit Südwest und besonders der Norden aufwies, das Gefühl der Zusammengehörigkeit ein viel innigeres war, so dass man trotz der grossen Entfernungen gewissermassen von einer einzigen grossen Familie sprechen konnte. Einer half dem anderem wo es zu helfen gab, teilte seine Leiden und Freunden - kurz nahm den regsten Anteil am Schicksale des Nachbarn. In Grootfontein liefen die Fäden dieses Freundschaftnetzes zusammen. Ein Geburtstag, ein Tauf- oder Hochzeitsfeier erstreckten sich soweit über die nächst beteiligten Kreise, dass sie zu allgemeinen Festen wurden, an denen der gerade von draussen Ankommende ganz selbstverständlich teilnahm. Häufig, namentlich, wenn das Eintreffen der Post und der Storefrachten die Auswärtigen nach

Grootfontein lief, arrangierten sich ganz von selbst kleine Vergnügen, die Vorläufer der späteren Farmentage (von Zastrow n.d 16).

Table 1: White population of Grootfontein 1897 - 1913 (unless other sources are quoted von Zastrow n.d.: 29)					
	dwellers	M	W	Ch	occupation/ethnicity/notes
1902	73				(Külz 1909: 119)
1906	82	80	1	1	73 soldiers, 2 Boers, 2 manufacturers, 2 tradesmen, 1 settler, one woman, one child
1907	cca 200				mostly railway construction workers; after the withdrawal of the soldiers there were only 22 permanent inhabitants
1.1.1908	74	53	9	12	14 officials, 1 soldier, 7 technicians, 19 manufacturers, 11 tradesmen, 1 doctor, 9 women, 12 children
31.5.1908	125	98	12	15	
1909	120				
1912	105	61	19	25	10 officials, 3 priests, 5 farmers, 3 technicians, 27 manufacturers, 10 tradesmen, 3 others, 19 women, 25 children
1913	97	56	26	15	12 officials, 4 priests, 1 farmer, 17 manufacturers, 4 technicians, 15 tradesmen, 1 doctor, 2 others, 26 women, 15 children

Thus, during the Herero war in 1904 Grootfontein became a refuge for the white farmers in the surrounding area. In August 1904 around 300 whites gathered at the fort (Deutsch-Südwestafrikanische Zeitung 1904: 34). During this chaotic period, armed patrols were sent from Grootfontein to drive away Bushmen who used the farmers' retreat to Grootfontein to steal from their vacant farms. Some Bushmen, including some in the area of Omuramba Omatako, were also shot death (Rohrbach 1909: 102 - 133).

The following words of Rafalski provide a description of the situation at the farms and at the same time they mirror the biases and feelings of superiority and contempt of the Germans toward both the natives and the Boers. The latter were regarded as much less civilised than the Germans and put by them in some aspects at the level of the natives.

Allerdings fehlte es an den für landwirtschaftliche Arbeiten geeigneten Arbeitskräften. Die Zahl der in Distrikt Grootfontein nomadenhaft lebenden Eingeborenen schätzte der Distriktchef im Jahre 1897 auf etwa 1000 Seelen. In der Mehrzahl waren es Buschleute, die ausschliesslich von der Jagt lebten. Nur ein kleiner Bruchteil, die Bergdamara, bauten in oder an den Rivieren Tabak, verschiedene Melonensorten und Mais. Auch der Gartenbau der Bastards war ganz unbedeutend; augenscheinlich hatten sie gar kein Verhältnis dafür. Der Ansiedler musste sich seine Arbeiter erst mit zeitraubender Mühe erziehen und anlernen. Den derartige Arbeiten waren den Eingeborenen damals noch völlig fremd. Von den Buren hatten sie in dieser Beziehung noch nichts gelernt. Die landwirtschaftliche Tätigkeit der wenigen Burenfarmer erstreckte sich in der Hauptsache auf Viehzucht. Die machte am wenigsten Arbeit. Gartenbau wurde nur in geringem Umfange getrieben, Ackerbau fast gar nicht. (Rafalski 1930: 135)

The settlers in the Grootfontein area suffered from the very beginning from a lack of native workers. The lack of a workforce was solved by the recruitment of Ovambo workers from the north and the mining companies sent recruiters to the north (Ibid: 144 - 145).

Among the white settler population and administrators there soon developed, albeit to varying extents, a hierarchy and classification of workers according to their perceived ability to work

and disposition for particular employment. The Bushmen, even though needed and used by many farmers, stood at the very bottom of this hierarchy.

Es wird ferner betont, dass man von dem 'physisch wenig leistungsfähigem Buschmann' nur leichte Arbeiten verlangen könne. 'Vom Buschmann darf keine Dauerarbeit, sondern nur temporäre Arbeitsleistungen verlangt werden, die eine Zeitdauer von drei Monaten nicht übersteigen dürfen. Nach dieser Zeit soll man ihn ruhig ziehen lassen. (Köhler 1957: 63)⁶⁹

Vedder wrote that "zu Arbeitern zog man die schwächlich aussehenden 'Geschöpfe' nicht heran" (Vedder 1912). The Bushmen were also refused for engaging in contact work since they were not considered "as sufficiently advanced to understand the obligations of an ordinary contract" (Gordon 1984: 210 - 11). As Vedder put it: "Buschmänner hält man gewöhnlich für dumme Leute, die nur Interesse für Essbares und Rauchbares haben" (Vedder 1953: 77). It was mostly Ovambos who were used for the construction of the railways from Otavi to Grootfontein, for which it was very difficult to recruit enough local labour force (Deutsch-Südwestafrikanische Zeitung 1907: 79).⁷⁰ I have never come across a report in which it is stated that Bushmen were considered suitable for working in the town. The Bushmen were mostly used as farm workers in their traditional territories. However, not all judgements about them were negative. Von Zastrow was sympathetic to them, even though his view might not be representative of most of the settlers:

Wohl die Hälfte aller Farmer (in *Bezirk* Grootfontein – note R.N.) könnten ihren Betrieb nicht aufrecht erhalten, sollte die Arbeitskraft der Buschleute fehlen. Wenn allgemein die Ansicht verbreitet ist, dass die Buschleute als Arbeiter unbrauchbar sind, weil sie auf einer Farm nicht aushalten und zu schwach sind, so ist dies nur bedingt richtig... Is es auffallend, was die Buschleute als Farmarbeiter leisten. Sie lernen selbständig pflügen, den Tabak bearbeiten, mit Ochsen umzugehen und was sonst der Arbeiten mehr sind. Jahrelang bleiben manche auf den Farmen und werden dadurch so brauchbare Hilfskräfte, dass der Farmer ihr nicht entbehren kann. (von Zastrow 1914: 5)

Wirtschaftlicher Verein Grootfontein on its meeting in December 1904 complained about the drastic lack of workers and called for the introduction of the pass system (Passzwang).

Da der Passzwang im Lande zum Teil durchgeführt ist, beantragen wir ergebenst denselben auch im hiesigen Distrikt durchzuführen and gestattet sich der Verein Arbeitszwang von mindestens 6 Monaten vorzuschlagen. Es dürfte kein Ansiedler Arbeiter ohne Arbeitsnachweis in Dienst nehmen, sonder müssten solche an die (Police - R.N) Station abgeliefert werden." (Deutsch-Südwestafrikanische Zeitung 1904: 51)

In February 1905 the pass system was introduced in Grootfontein district (Deutsch-Südwestafrikanische Zeitung 1905: 26).

The Germans enacted legislation to make the natives in the locations live apart from the whites and away from the white areas, but they probably did not set limits on the number of natives, who could settle in the towns (Wallace 2011: 192). I was unable to find out how exactly this policy was applied in Grootfontein.

In October 1907 three ordinances (Verordnungen) for controlling the natives came into power, namely concerning 1) "Massregeln zur Kontrolle der Eingeborenen", 2) "Passpflicht der Eingeborenen" and 3) "Dienst- und Arbeitsverträge mit Eingeborenen". The ordinances used for the dwelling sites of the natives the term *Werft*. The natives were to be registered in

⁶⁹ It is apparently a quotation from a letter of the Distriktamt Gobabis of 20 September 1913.

⁷⁰ The railway to Tsumeb could be finished because of the lack of the labour force only thanks to the use of the Herero detainees from the previous war (Deutsch-Südwestafrikanische Zeitung 1906: 44).

the native register (Eingeborenen-Register), carry a metallic pass token (Passmarke) with a registration number and the name of their Bezirk/Distrikt⁷¹ and if leaving its borders had to be issued a passport (Reisepass) by the police stating where the person was going and which route he or she would be taking. The ordinance concerning “Passpflicht der Eingeborenen” stated that “jeder passpflichtige Eingeborene kann von jedem Weissen eingehalten und wenn er ohne gültigem Pass betroffen wird, dem nächsten Polizeibeamten übergeben werden”. The ordinance concerning “Massregeln zur Kontrolle der Eingeborenen” also sought to prevent the concentration of natives by limiting their numbers to a maximum of ten families at a farm. When attention was turned to the *Werften* next to bigger settlements (Ortschaften) the state authorities needed to decide where they could be established and how many families could dwell there. Die Deutsch-Südwestafrikanische Zeitung, however, immediately doubted how effectively the control system would work since the natives were illiterate. It argued that the population could be checked better in urban areas (geschlossene Ortschaften) than in the farming area /plattes Land/ (Deutsch-Südwestafrikanische Zeitung 1907: 73).

Given the limited numbers in the labour force, it was in the interest of the German administration to ensure the workers’ effective distribution and avoid unnecessary concentration in urban areas.

Eine nicht unbeträchtliche Zahl von Arbeitskräften kann dadurch verfügbar gemacht werden, dass der unnötigen Anhäufung der Eingeborenen an einzelnen Stellen wirksam begegnet wird. Der faule Eingeborene hat sehr oft die Allüren eines modernen Tagediebs insofern, als er den Gang zur Grosstadt besitzt, in der ja ein Faulenzer viel eher als solcher unbemerkt bleiben kann als anderwärts. (Deutsche Kolonialzeitung 1911: 17).

Importantly, in the period 1912 - 1915 German South West Africa, and prominently Grootfontein district, experienced a period, which Gordon described as the „forgotten Bushman genocide“, when the German administration, manipulating the legal ideology of the *Rechtsstaat*, sanctioned a virtually genocidal approach, including killing, towards the Bushmen. Gordon states that „ironically, the Bushmen themselves do not recall this genocide“ (Gordon 2009). The few older !Xun I talked to about this period remembered it from the narratives of their older relatives as a time when the Bushmen were killing the farmer’s livestock and that they were pursued by the German soldiers. One informant dwelling in Grootfontein told me that the German farmers killed some of his forebears for killing their cattle. Few older !Xun I talked to recalled that the very harsh approach towards the Bushmen ended with the defeat of the Germans in 1915 and the establishment of the South African administration.

The aim of several German administration ordinances introduced since 1907 was to forcibly incorporate the natives, including the Bushmen, into the settler-controlled economy. Between 1911 - 13 Grootfontein district saw the most rapid growth in the territory. The number of farms in the district expanded from 25 in 1904 to 173 in 1913. The Bushmen became increasingly encroached by the settler society and were exposed to ecological pressure brought about by several consecutive seasons of low rainfall and reacted with increased attacks on the settlers, stealing the farmer’s cattle and attacks on Bantu contract workers moving to and from the Police Zone. (Gordon 2009: 33 - 34).

The attacks mostly affected the farmers in the farm border area, especially the area from Otjitjika Mountains⁷² to Naragas (Nurugas), where the owner of farm Klein Huis was

⁷¹ The measure of wearing the brass token around the neck were not successful (Gordon 2009: 35).

⁷² East of Grootfontein, close to erstwhile Okamambuti (see map in Mouton 1995: 57)

murdered (poisoned) by the Bushmen, described in the German press as “nomadisierendes Gesindel”, (Deutsch-Südwestafrikanische Zeitung 1913: 104; Deutsche Kolonialzeitung 1913: 41)⁷³, who were probably !Xun given the location. There seems to be a correlation between the fact that the Nurugas area became one of the most densely occupied by the farms in the Grootfontein Bezirk and the intensity of the attacks (Köhler 1957: 58). In the border farm area the German administration was most concerned with the Kung-au and No-gau, since they controlled the important routes to the north from which contract workers were recruited, the Kung-au, the route via Tschitschib and the No-gau, along Omuramba Omatako. No-gau got already in 1910 the reputation of the worst cattle stealers (von Zastrow 1914: 4).⁷⁴ “Es liegt in der Natur der Sache, dass es bei diesen Buschleuten bei dem steten Vordringen der deutschen Kultur zu schweren Zusammenstößen kommen musste,” wrote Deutsche Kolonialzeitung in 1913 referring to the results of the research in this area of F. Seiner (Deutsche Kolonialzeitung 1913: 45).

As a result of the Germans’ effort to curb the problems with the Bushmen, more Bushmen than ever before “dwelled” in the Grootfontein settlement in this period, apparently both Hai//om and !Xun. This was not, however, as common dwellers, but as prisoners and detainees in custody. Köhler referred to a letter of May 1, 1913 addressed probably by the police to the district authorities that stated that „in Grootfontein selbst sind im Laufe des letzten Jahres ca. 250 Bushleute, teils als Strafgefangene, teils als Untersuchungsgefangene, interniert gewesen“ (Köhler 1957: 59).⁷⁵ Many Bushmen were sent to the cold coastal urban areas of Swakopmund and Lüderitzbucht to work in the diamond mines, where some died. Those who were found guilty of (probably) lesser crimes were sent to the mines of Tsumeb (Gordon 2009: 33, Köhler 1957: 57). Life on both the coast and at Tsumeb resembled forced labour compounds.

As a result of the armed operations against the Bushmen during the German colonial period, some of the orphaned children were distributed to the farmers. Seiner reported:

Bereits jetzt schon stehen zahlreiche Buschmänner, die als Kinder in die Hände der Weissen kamen, bei Behörden und Farmern also Dolmetscher, Trompeter, Aufsichtsorgane, Arbeiter und sogenannte Bambusen (Hausdiener) in Verwendung; sie erweisen sich als intelligent sowie sehr brauchbar und sind dem wilden, entbehrensreichen und gefährvollen Leben im Busche völlig entwöhnt. (Seiner 1913: 304)

According to von Zastrow, the practice of containment of unlawful Bushmen mobility within the Police Zone was:

Wer herumstreifend innerhalb der Polizeizone aufgegriffen wird, wird einem Farmer überwiesen, bei wiederholtem Umherstreifen bestraft. Ebenfalls wird bestraft, wer widerrechtlich den Dienst des Farmers verlässt oder Vieh und Veldfrüchte stiehlt. Bei wiederholter Verurteilung oder besonders schweren Fällen tritt Abtransport nach Swakopmund ein. (von Zastrow 1914: 7)⁷⁶

⁷³ The same edition of Deutsche Kolonialzeitung called following the Bushmen depredations „zur Stiftung von Ruhe und Frieden in unserem Lande“ (put in bold by R.N.).

⁷⁴ Within the farm zone between Otavi railway, Omuramba Omatako and Waterberg inhabited by the Hai//om cattle theft also occurred (Seiner 1913: 301).

⁷⁵ Interestingly, Seiner made his physical measurements among !Xun women who worked and were provided food at the police station in Nurugas, where they lived with Bergdamara men, while their men were in the prison in Grootfontein: „Bastarde aus solchen Verbindungen ergeben brauchbare Farmarbeiter“ (Seiner 1912: 283).

⁷⁶ A more „enlighted“ approach was to secure the labour force not be threatening measures, but let them freely move to and out the farm as the Bushmen wished (von Zastrow and Vedder 1930: 433).

Gordon claims that the violence towards the Bushmen, which was „both action and attitude“, was also a result of demographic factors. The white population of German South West Africa at that time was a strikingly male society with a very high percentage of soldiers and single men (Gordon 2009). As a result of the colonial wars between 1904 - 1907 17 000 soldiers arrived in the colony in successive waves (Hartmann 2007: 49). The lack of German women in the colony influenced the choice of partner and sexual behavior of the men. Settlement Commissioner Paul Rohrbach, who inspected Grootfontein district in January 1904, observed the normalcy of concubinage relationships between white farmers, soldiers and traders and native women. As he observed at the farm Otjomikambo at Omuramba Omatako, close to Otjituo:

Wie alle unverheirateten Ansiedler hat er (the farmer – note R. N.) natürlich sein Hereroweib als Tisch- und Bettgenossin. Das is hier so selbstverständlich wie Essen und Trinken; die weissen Wanderhändler machen es ebenso, die Soldaten auf den grossen und kleinem Stationen nicht minder... Die schwarze und gelbe Weiberwirtschaft demoralisiert die Leute furchtbar, namentlich die Ansiedler. (Rohrbach: 1909: 65)

We do not have any precise statistical data, but there seem to be frequent instances of German men having relationships with Bushwomen, apparently in some cases of a coercive nature (Gordon 2009). The fact that many farmers had Bushmen concubines was also in some cases resented by Bushmen men (Gordon and Douglas 2000: 82- 3). Interestingly, in the few instances when I came across Bushmen informants with white forbearers, these were mostly German from the time of German colonisation.⁷⁷

In the second half of 1920s Lebzelter reported cases of German farmers with !Xun women as sexual partners and often these relationships bore children. Lebzelter observed, for example:

Familie S. ... Vater is ein norddeutscher Edelmann, nordischer Rasse, von athletischem Typus mit weiser Haut, starken Sommersprossen, blauen Augen und roten Haaren. Mit einer Buschfrau namens "Sara" hatte er zwei Kinder; dann nahm er ein anderes Buschmädchen, das er "Anna" nannte. Dieser gebar ihm ein Mädchen und starb dabei. Nachher lebte er mit einer Buschfrau namens "Katiti", von der er wieder zwei Kinder hatte. Nach Kriegsschluss kehrte er nach Europa zurück und übergab die Kinder der katholischen Mission in Klein-Windhuk." All of his three concubines were !Xun (Lebzelter 1934 in 1996: 214).

The statistical data for Grootfontein settlement in table No. 1 show clearly that the white population of Grootfontein of the German era was a conspicuously male society and the town itself resembled a German garrison. By 1907 Grootfontein hosted the largest police contingent in South West Africa (Gordon 2009: 34). After its withdrawal the ratio of men to women slowly changed, but the men continued to constitute a majority. Prostitution among local women also apparently flourished in the Grootfontein of the time (Hartmann 2007: 63 - 4).

After the beginning of the World War I., when the menfolk of Grootfontein were called to fight against the South African Army „war das Leben in Grootfontein wie ausgestorben“. In April 1915 the German South West Africa administration temporarily withdrew to Grootfontein, fleeing from the approaching South African forces (von Zastrow n.d.: 26 - 27). Military duty for the German farmers during World War I had the side-effect of loosening control over the Bushmen in the farm area and attacks by armed Bushmen on the remaining farmers, their native workers and cattle theft increased. German soldiers reacted with

⁷⁷ The Afrikaners applied in comparison to the Germans a strict endogamous practise (Hartmann 2007: 67) with interracial sex being outlawed by the Immorality Proclamation in 1934. This was verified during my research, when the instances of the !Xun I came across in Grootfontein having among the parents or grandparents an Afrikaner were extremely rare.

shockingly brutal patrols shooting Bushmen indiscriminately on sight (Gordon and Douglas 2000: 78). The actions of these killing patrols are described in the diary of the soldier Günter Walbaum. He operated in the area of farms Sus, Wiesenthal and Noabis, where some of my !Xun informants were to work later on and which lies approximately on the Hai//om - !Xun "border".⁷⁸ Walbaum, who called the Bushmen "diese viehischen gelben Kerle mit ihren frechen Gesichtern", wrote that the Bushmen, who were constantly on the run from the troops hiding in areas of impassably dense bush or in waterless areas where they would not be followed and they lived on roots containing water, and during the rain season on the water from tree holes (NAN, Walbaum n.d.: 39 - 41, 54).

What happened with the Bushmen in the area of concern of this study that was occupied by the farmers? We know that the first farmers built their farms around natural waterholes, which must also have been important to the Bushmen bands with their territories around them. It must have lead to a complicated process of the Bushmen being incorporated into the settlers' economy (becoming "tame") and, alongside this, conflict situations. The Bushmen infringing German laws in the frontier area could find refuge in the area beyond the Police Zone as Seiner observed (1913), but with the increasing density of the white farms on their former territories deeper inside the Police Zone, those, who did not want to stay at a farm, had less and less space available for free movement, whether this was unallocated land or allocated but unused farms.⁷⁹ The reports from the German period always emphasise the strict territorial behaviour of the Bushmen groups and the alleged deep animosities among them. Thus, for example, Vedder (1912) wrote that: "Das Jagdgebiet der Stämme war genau abgegrenzt, und noch heute wird kein Bushmann ohne Lebensgefahr in dem Jagdgebiet eines anderen Stammes Wild erlegen oder sich auch nur hineinwagen." The establishing of white settler society on lands formerly occupied by the Bushmen destroyed these territorial structures. The farmers controlled to significant degree the movement of people on their farms and often employed natives of different ethnic backgrounds. "Heute sind die Stammesverbände der Eingeborenen aufgelöst, sie leben als Lohnarbeiter bei den Weissen, oftmals angehörige der verschiedensten Stämme friedlich nebeneinander," wrote about *Otavibergland* Jaeger and Weibel (1921: 41). Certain territorial behaviour might endure, however, for some time. Thus, Lebzelter found in the second half of the 1920s that a !Xun Bushmen messenger coming to a farm in an area of a different clan (Sippe) would not dare to leave the road, which served as a "neutral zone". "Aller, was nicht zur eigenen Sippe gehört, wird als fremd, eventuell feindlich angesehen, es sei den, dass gemeinsame Verfolgung ein Solidaritätsempfinden unter allen Verfolgten keimen last," the Austrian observed (Lebzelter 1934 in 1996: 21). However, one might still have certain doubts if the supposed strict territoriality of the Bushmen does not reflect the biases of their observers to some extent.⁸⁰

The mobility and migration patterns of the !Xun in the area may have been, however, quite complex. Although some Bushmen may have left because of the harsh treatment of the Germans, according to my informants, many Bushmen came to the farms because they wanted to work there and apparently found life on the farms less strenuous than living in the

⁷⁸ The most famous gang operating in this area was led by a Bushmen Hans, who was Hai//om (Gordon and Douglas 2000: 81 - 85)

⁷⁹ Külz (1909: 117) wrote that out of the 85 existing farms in Bezirk Grootfontein 67 were run by its owner, four by a farmer's representative and 14 were not used agriculturally at all.

⁸⁰ See for example Marshall and Ritchie (1984: 82 - 4) stating that the Ju//hoan „n!ores were open, not defended": „A n!ore is primarily an idea, a collection of rights that a person carries in his mind. What the 'khei kxaosi' (owners - note R. N.) of a n!ore really own is the right to drink at waterhole and gather in the country around it.“

bush. My oldest informants (aged 60 and above), recalling stories from their parents, claimed that the Bushmen were paid by the farmers only in kind. But as one elder, who lived in the Grashoek settlement in former western Bushmanland, put it, getting mealie meal, mahangu, sugar and tea was more convenient than having to forage and moving from one place to another. Importantly, almost all the !Xun elders who dwelled in Grootfontein during my research that I spoke to claimed that their parents came to the Grootfontein farm area from outside the Police Zone. Interestingly, some !Xun from former Bushmanland allegedly fled to the farm area since they could enjoy more protection there. The Bushmen would often kill German farmers' cows (one older informant smilingly claimed the Bushmen hold them for "slow kudas") and for this reason were pursued by the farmers and police patrols. Some !Xun then rather fled to the farms. Similarly, some !Xun living in areas inhabited also by Hereros purportedly went to the farms to flee from the latter, with whom they had at some periods violent conflicts that resulted in the killings of the Bushmen.

As we know many Bushmen moved to the farms in the dry winter period when there was little water and not sufficient *veldkos* in their territories and often left the farms with the onset of the rainy season. The farmers attributed this behaviour, which was in fact a dual subsistence strategy, to Bushmen's innate nomadism. However they did not realize that the San might leave their farms for the same reason as they were deserting in the dry season the *veld*: to flee the farm's marginal conditions, where they were poorly paid and had to endure farmer's violent behaviour (Sylvain 1999: 205 - 6).

South African rule: life in the Old location and the disappearance of “wild” Bushmen

This chapter deals with the period after the occupation of German South West Africa in 1915 and its award to South Africa as a League of Nations mandate in 1919 until the beginning of the 1960s when the natives were moved to the new location away from the area in which whites resided in line with South African segregationist policy. First, it will show life in the location in some detail. Fortunately, there are some primary sources with statistical data concerning the Bushmen dwelling in Grootfontein in the form of magistrate and police reports from the Grootfontein district, and, of a secondary nature, Köhler’s study of the district from 1959. These data are supported to some extent by oral histories I gathered from my !Xun informants. I will refer frequently to the information I was provided by my three older !Xun informants: the brothers Andris and Jakob, who were relatives of Kashe, and Petrus. All of them lived in Grootfontein during the time of my research.

Groups	male adults	female adults	male minors	female minors	total
Ovambo	1600	262	139	105	2106
Herero	510	327	193	155	1185
Klipp Kafir (Damara)	415	252	246	129	1042
Bushmen	171	161	93	103	528
Zambezi	201				201
Bastard	32	21	7	6	66
Hottentot	18	11	14	20	63
Coloured	17	5	7	16	45

The Natives (Urban Areas) Proclamation from 1924 was decisive in setting the general parameters of life for the natives in the urban areas of the territory including Grootfontein,⁸² demanding that all natives reside in the “location” or in the case of single workers in the “natives hostels”. A site for a dwelling could only be leased and not owned. Coloureds dwelling in

the location could stay there “until adequate and suitable accommodation is available” for them. Exemption from staying in the location or hostel could be granted to bona fide domestic workers staying at the house of its owner or for company employees accommodated by the employers such as the railways. Persons living “an idle, dissolute, disorderly or immoral life” were to be brought before the magistrate and if they failed to satisfactorily explain their situation they had to leave the urban area.⁸³

Taking the Windhoek location regulations from 1925 as a model (Köhler 1959b: 60), Government Notice No. 189/1933 defined the regulations for Grootfontein’s location.⁸⁴ It defined the conditions under which it was possible to stay there. Persons older than 18 who wanted to reside in the location and erect a dwelling there had to apply to the location

⁸¹ LGR 3/1/16 17/15/2, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1926, Magistrate Grootfontein.

⁸² The German legislation on regulating the urban life of the natives was repealed by proclamation No. 22 of 1920 (Report of Commission of Inquiry into South West Africa Affairs 1962 - 1963. 1964: 115). The Urban Areas Proclamation extended to South West Africa the same Act from South Africa from 1923 (Wallace 1998b: 80). Together with the native reserves policy it reflected the direct application to the territory of the South African segregation policy, however the latter was extended to South West Africa to lesser extent and the segregation was practised often rather informally. At the same time the administrative regulations of the 1920s and 1930s for controlling the urbanisation in the urban areas were often not strictly adhered to (Silvester, Wallace and Hayes 1998: 22, 35 - 36).

⁸³ Official Gazette of South West Africa, 2.1.1925.

⁸⁴ Sections of The Natives (Urban Areas) Proclamation from 1924 have been applied to Grootfontein by Government Notices 186 - 189 of 1933 (Official Gazette of South West Africa, 1.12.1933).

superintendent for a site permit. If anybody wanted to stay in a dwelling erected by the Grootfontein urban authority that person had to acquire a residential permit from the superintendent. Neither permit was transferable nor could the sites be sublet unless this was authorised in writing by the superintendent. Wives, children under eighteen and unmarried daughters could stay with the site or residence permit holder.⁸⁵

Year	Bushmen Men	Bushmen women	Bushmen Children	Urban Bushmen Total	Urban natives total
1935 ⁸⁶	11	7	10	28	
1936 ⁸⁷	11	6	8	25	
1937 ⁸⁸	5/15	12/21	11/12	28 (or 48)	496
1938 ⁸⁹	8	17	6	31	448
1941 ⁹⁰				70	
1944 ⁹¹	23	15	27	65	618
1945 ⁹²	22	15	30	67	678
1946 ⁹³	21	16	33	70	780
1947	22	15	30	67	700
1948	22	15	32	69	731
1949	18	26	41	85	825
1950	18	19	12	49	956
1951	16	16	19	51	984
1952	13	15	9	37	879
1953	13	31	36	80	940
1954	24	34	34	92	1114
1955	17	22	22	61	1073
1956 ⁹⁴	16	30	16	62	1092
1958 ⁹⁵	27	23	22	72	1313 ⁹⁶

Others had to apply for a lodger's permit. Any visitor who wanted to remain in the location for longer than three hours had to report to the superintendent, who would decide whether to issue a temporary permit for a specific period. The superintendent would keep a register of all permit holders stating name, sex, race and occupation. Every registered occupier had to pay the rent for water, sanitary, health and other services in advance. Failure to pay could lead to a fine and, technically, also to imprisonment for up to one month (although I

⁸⁵ Official Gazette of South West Africa, 1.12.1933.

⁸⁶ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/2, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1935, Tsumeb, Office of the Station Commander, 3.1.1936.

⁸⁷ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/2, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1936, Magistrate Grootfontein.

⁸⁸ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/2, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1937, Magistrate Grootfontein, 11.1.1938; Annual Report on Native Affairs 1937, Office of the Station Commander, Grootfontein, 3.12.1937.

⁸⁹ MGR 1/3/16, 1/1/1, Report on Management, Sanitation and Health of the Grootfontein Native Location for 1938.

⁹⁰ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/2, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1941, Magistrate Grootfontein, 14.1.1942.

⁹¹ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/8, Report of the Village Management Board Secretary on the Magistrate, Grootfontein, Annual Report on Native Affairs, i.e. non-Europeans 1945, Grootfontein Native Location, 11.12.1945.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/9, Secretary of the Village Management Board, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1946, Grootfontein Native Location.

⁹⁴ Data for the years 1947 - 1956 are from Köhler 1959b: 58 - 59.

⁹⁵ LGR 3/3/3, Jaarverslag oor Naturellesake: Distrikt Grootfontein: 1958, Naturellesakekommissaris.

⁹⁶ The statistics on the Bushmen living in urban areas in the Grootfontein district include the location in Grootfontein, Otavi and up to 1952, when the Tsumeb district separated from Grootfontein district also Tsumeb urban area. It is worth mentioning that there was also not negligible number of Bushmen (apparently mostly Hai//om) in Otjiwarongo, e.g. in 1955 it was 86 (with the men-women-children ratio 19:33:34) and in 1956 already 97 (20/41/36). "There are many Bushmen, who have infiltrated from the north. They are Nama-speaking and largely integrated" (Köhler 1959c: 70-71, 78). In smaller numbers the Bushmen (//Kxau-//en) were dwelling also in the Gobabis location, e.g. in 1949 it was 49 of them (Köhler 1959a: 48, 90).

did not come across such cases) or subsequent removal from the location. Without permission no other person could stay in the location between 9 p.m. and sunrise. Also registered were all domestic animals belonging to the natives including dogs. Importantly, no European could enter the location without authorisation. This did not, however, apply to clergymen and other officials exercising their duty, including medical officials.⁹⁷ From the point of view of the local white urban authorities, the location was a potential breeding place for dangerous diseases whose spread had to be curtailed. Hence, the medical officer was authorised to enter any dwelling at any time and examine all the persons there. Those appearing to suffer from an infection could be detained until regarded as free from infection.⁹⁸

The annual report of the Grootfontein magistrate for 1924 stated that „native dwellings are scattered about and the so-called locations are dirty und unsanitary. As long as all the ground belongs to South West Africa Company it is difficult to see how there can be any proper order.“⁹⁹ In 1934 - 35 the natives from the locations¹⁰⁰ north of the town were moved to the southwest of Grootfontein. The aim was to relocate them in one central site and to get the natives out of the part inhabited by the whites. The natives built their own huts on the new site.¹⁰¹ The annual report of the magistrate for 1935 stated that „at Grootfontein the situation is greatly improved and the segregation of all natives in one central location has worked wonderfully well.“ That time there were only two taxes to be paid, one for site fees and one for lodger's fees.¹⁰² The location was divided into three ethnically different residential sections: the Damara, Ovambo and Herero section, which were inhabited predominantly by these people. For the Coloureds, a specific space within the location was identified and persons occupying this site had to erect brick houses.¹⁰³ However, not entirely all natives lived in the location, for example, in 1940 the railway employees had their huts erected on railway ground.¹⁰⁴ In 1937 the superintendent of the Grootfontein location reported that:

there are 443 natives of all tribes and sexes in the Location. The majority are in the employ of the South West Africa Company. The natives are friendly toward the government and give little trouble except on occasions when beer has been imbibed in. They pay their taxes regularly. There are no unemployed except 25 females, mostly young, who state that they cannot find employment.¹⁰⁵

Kashe's father Willem remembered the !Xun from the nearby plots and farms used to go to the location to drink *tombo* made by the Ovambos, who had to hide the alcohol in aluminium barrels under the ground, and the !Xun had to be careful not to be caught drunk in the street by

⁹⁷ Official Gazette of South West Africa, 1.12.1933.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ LGR 3/1/16 17/15/2, Annual Report 1924, Magistrate Grootfontein.

¹⁰⁰ Most of the natives lived in two locations near the Venereal Diseases compound in the north of Grootfontein, MGR 3/1/16 1/1/1, Letter of the Secretary of the Village Management Board, Re Native Hospital Grootfontein, 18.2.1937.

¹⁰¹ MGR 3/1/16 1/1/1 Minutes of the Village Management Board Meeting, 8.6.1937; in May 1934 it was reported that the natives were building their huts in the central location (MGR 1/3/16, 1/1/1, Minutes of the Village Management Board Meeting, 29.5.1934). In November 1934 the location was still awaiting the opening (MGR 1/3/16, 1/1/1, Minutes of the Village Management Board Meeting, 29.11.1934). The Village Management Board decided that the system of site and lodger's taxes had to be operational from 1st February 1935 (MGR 1/3/16, 1/1/1, Minutes of the Village Management Board Meeting, 31.1.1935).

¹⁰² LGR 3/1/7 2/20/2, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1935, Magistrate Grootfontein, 17.1.1936.

¹⁰³ MGR 1/3/16, 1/1/1, Minutes of the Village Management Board Meeting, 28.3.1935.

¹⁰⁴ MGR 1/3/16, 1/1/1, Minutes of the Village Management Board Meeting, 15.8.1940.

¹⁰⁵ MGR 1/3/16, 1/1/1, Superintendent of the Grootfontein Native Location, Report on Management, Sanitation and Health of the Grootfontein Native Location for the period ending the 31st March 1937.

the police.¹⁰⁶ Andris remembered that the natives were not allowed to buy bottled alcohol at that time and that during raids looking for the illegal home-brewed beer the policemen would hit the ground in the houses with sticks to check for drums.



Picture 3. Aerial view of Grootfontein in the 1930s (NAN, picture No. 13872).

According to Köhler, who observed the location in the 1950s, it had a „generally pleasant appearance“ with many trees and flowering shrubs, some flowers and wide streets and widely-spaced houses.¹⁰⁷ Most houses had walls made from mud and a corrugated iron roof and some dwellers had even built limestone houses. „Tin shacks of the worst type... are few,“ observed Köhler. The best looking houses were in the Herero and Ovambo section. However, some houses, especially in the Damara section were clustered together as additional dwellings were built between them (Köhler 1959b: 68).¹⁰⁸ Jakob recalled that the !Xun in the Old location lived in houses with walls made of wooden poles and mud but also in houses with ceilings from flattened discarded oil drums. The roofs were often made with grass.

The first statistical data regarding urban Bushmen dwellers in the Grootfontein district I know about are from the Native Affairs Annual Report of the Magistrate Grootfontein for 1926 (see Table No. 2). They state that in that year there were 528 Bushmen living in the urban areas of the district without specifying a division between Grootfontein, Tsumeb and Otavi. The most numerous urban dwellers were Ovambos (2106), followed by Hereros

¹⁰⁶ Apparently, the !Xun from the farms and plots, who used to go to the locations at the weekends to drink *tombo*, were approximately up to the time of independence mostly men (Sylvain 1999: 122 - 3).

¹⁰⁷ There were, however, apparently periods when the location was kept more clean than during others. Thus in one another report from 1958 we read that „Die lokasie is oorbewoon, sonder beheer, en een vrot en vuil plek. Gedurende die jare het walle van vullis tussen die huise ontwikkel (HEA 19, H. 1/16/79, Gesondheidsverslag: Munisipaliteit Grootfontein, 13.1.1958).

¹⁰⁸ For the native shacks, shanties and huts in the urban area was sometimes used also the term *pondok(s)* in English texts, *pondok(ke)* in Afrikaans.

(1185), „Klip Kaffirs“, i.e. Damaras (1042), behind the Bushmen were „Zambezi“ (201), Bastards (66), Hottentots (63) and Coloureds (48).

According to the 1926 report, the Bushmen were in ratio terms the least „urbanised“ group with 30 % of them living in the urban area and 70 % in the rural area. 100% of Basters lived in urban areas, for the Coloureds the ratio was 79:21, Damaras 53:47, for the Ovambos and Hottentots 52:48 and Hereros 41:59.¹⁰⁹

Given the geographical position of Grootfontein, the majority of these Bushmen dwellers must have been Hai//om and the !Xun must have been in a minority. The latter probably lived mostly or only in Grootfontein. In Otavi and in Tsumeb were probably only Hai//om. The statistics might, of course, be far from precise. It is especially doubtful if the Bushmen were counted correctly in the farm area. However, if these statistics do reflect the reality in urban areas, they are remarkable since, except for the period after the independence of Namibia, I have not come across statistics stating that there were so many Bushmen dwellers living in urban areas. If the data are correct, it appears that, when the mentioned urban centres had existed for only for a quarter of century, the urban places had drawn a significant number of Bushmen, who were highly probably the original occupiers of the territories on which the towns were established.

Then, its Bushmen dwellers may have been replaced by Bantu peoples or Damaras, who asserted themselves better in occupying the urban spaces. They also must have better fulfilled the legally determined criteria for occupying urban spaces: this means above all that they were regarded as more employable in the towns.

Ethnic groups	Towns/settlements	farms/mines	reserves
Nama	3 242	12 877	3 364
Basters/Coloureds	1 643	6 211	336
Hereros	4 387	6 754	12 474
Ovambos	4 093	3 576	73
Damaras	7 954	13 564	2 812
Bushmen	349	5 078	-
Others	1593	1 641	641
Total	23 261	49 692	19 700

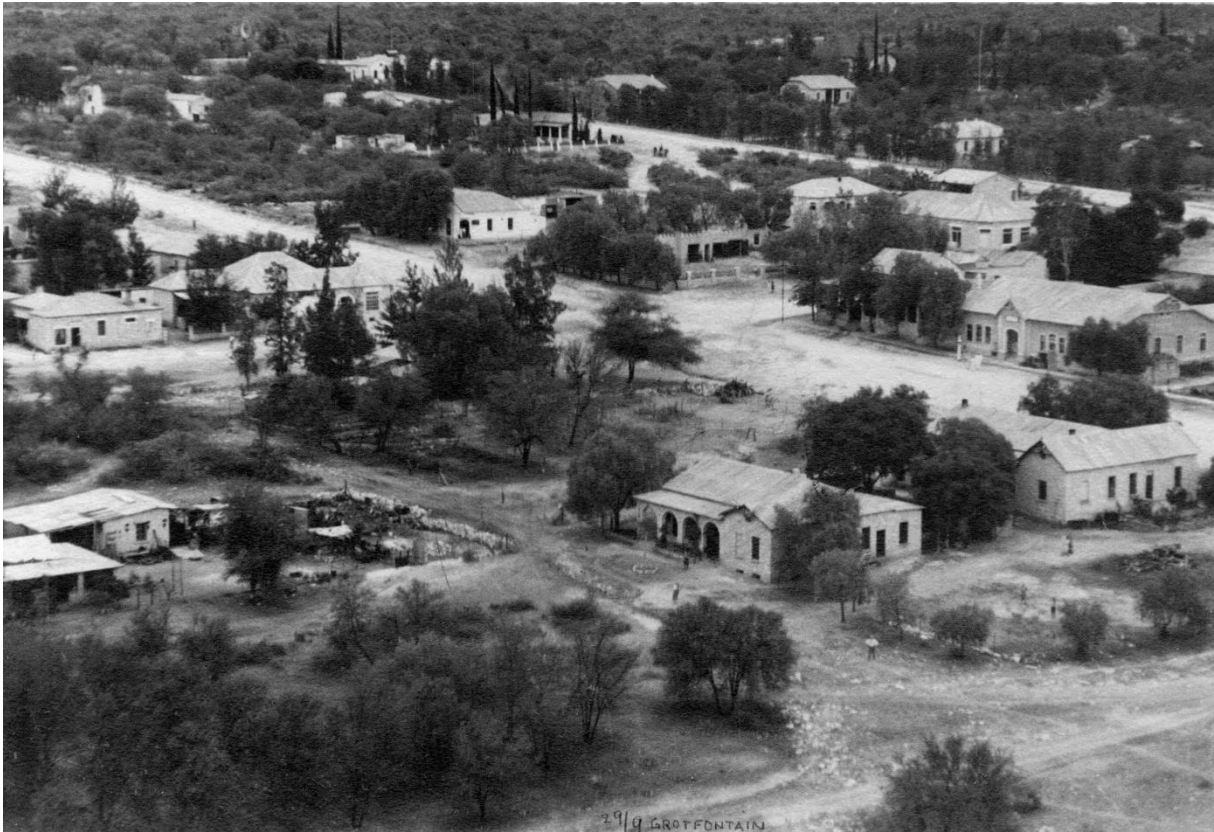
In the following years, according to the official statistics, the number of the Bushmen in the urban areas within the whole Police Zone were the following: 1928: 189, 1929: 208,¹¹⁰ 1931: 349,¹¹¹ 1935: 190, 1936: 184.¹¹² In 1960, when mobility into the urban space, at least in Grootfontein, seemed to strictly controlled, the ratio of the Bushmen in the urban areas and farms was 190:8 156. Thus, the total number of the Bushmen in the area had increased, but the number of the Bushmen in the town was similar to what it had been in the 1930s.

¹⁰⁹ LGR 3/1/16 17/15/2, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1926, Magistrate Grootfontein.

¹¹⁰ Report to the Council of the League of Nations for 1929 (1930: 56)

¹¹¹ Blumhagen 1934: 27

¹¹² Report to the Council of the League of Nations for 1936 (1937: 94)



Picture 4. Aerial view of Grootfontein in the 1930s (NAN, picture No. 1450).

In 1937 it was reported that in the Grootfontein urban area there were 28 (or 38) Bushmen of its 496 inhabitants, in Tsumeb urban area 39 Bushmen (out of 405 dwellers) and in Otavi urban area 41 out of 122 inhabitants. Since in the same year there were a reported 3 311 Bushmen in the Grootfontein District, the 118 Bushmen living in the three urban areas comprised only 3,6 percent of the Bushman population.¹¹³

In 1945 there were 163 Bushmen living in the urban areas of Grootfontein district. The urban-rural percentage ratio among the Bushmen was 3:97, for the Ovambos and Kavangos 14:86, the Damaras 11:89. In the whole district 10 % of the population lived in the urban areas.¹¹⁴ A year later, in 1947, there were 215 Bushmen living in the district's urban areas (Grootfontein: 67, Tsumeb: 118, Otavi: 30)¹¹⁵ In contrast to the urban areas, where the Bushmen constituted a tiny minority, they were far more numerous in the farm areas. In 1947 there were in total 4 232 natives living in the district's rural area of whom were 1 461 Bushmen, making them the most numerous group after the Ovambos and Kavangos (1708), who were, however, mostly contract workers. Beyond the Police Zone, it was estimated that there were 4181 Bushmen.¹¹⁶

Looking on the data from table 3, we can see that in the 1930s and 1950s there were always dozens of Bushmen living in the urban area of Grootfontein, their numbers oscillating

¹¹³ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/2, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1937, Magistrate Grootfontein, 11.1.1938; Annual Report on Native Affairs 1937, Office of the Station Commander, Grootfontein.

¹¹⁴ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/8,, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1945, Magistrate, Grootfontein, 5.1.1946.

¹¹⁵ Köhler 1959b: 58; LGR 3/1/7 2/20/10, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1947, Station Commander, Tsumeb 17.12.1947; Annual Report on Native Affairs 1947, Station Commander, Otavi.

¹¹⁶ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/10, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1947, Station Commander, Grootfontein, 23.12.1947.

between 25 and 92. Percentage-wise in 1944 they comprised 10,5 percent of Grootfontein urban dwellers. In other years the percentage was lower.

We know also that Bushmen were also born and passed away in the urban areas in the district. In 1926 15 Bushmen were born there six passed away.¹¹⁷ In the location in Grootfontein in 1938 one Bushmen was born and another passed away there.¹¹⁸ In 1945 one Bushmen died in the town, in 1946 three,¹¹⁹ in 1954 three and in 1955 two.¹²⁰

ethnic groups	urban areas	rural areas	homelands
Nama	8 998	19 379	6 229
Basters/ Coloureds	10 154	4 020	9 782
Hereros	9 192	10 606	15 556
Ovambos Kavangos	8 185	612	176 (Ovambos)
Damaras	18 499	20 260	5 285
Bushmen	190	8 156	1 138
Others	3 855	5 301	482
Whites	53 680	19 426	-
Total	112 753	87 760	38 648

It is also important to mention that in 1927 the Northern Labour Organisation was established in Grootfontein and in 1943 it amalgamated with the Southern Labours Organisation (Consolidated Diamonds Mines) to form the South West African Labour Organisation (SWANLA) with its headquarters in Grootfontein. SWANLA ran the employment of all contract workers in the Police Zone. Its accommodation compounds in the town served Ovambo and Kavango contract workers. This was, however only a transit place (Köhler 1959b: 22, 26, Wallace 2011: 235). It was there that the workers were medically examined and classified for different types of work such as mining or farming. In the 1950s the workers stayed there usually only for only two to three days.¹²¹

Up to 1970 the white population of the town was always less numerous than the natives. However, the number of the latter was never double that of the white population. Thus, for example, the white population in Grootfontein grew between 1947 and 1955 from 490 to 837 and the number of natives increased in the same period from 700 to 1092 (Köhler 1959b: 58 - 9).

The memory of my oldest !Xun informants reached to the second half of the 1940s and the 1950s when there were three numerically strong ethnic non-white groups: the Damaras, Hereros and Ovambos. In 1950 their numbers in the urban area were 259:276:300 respectively.¹²² Residential segregation was observed and people were assigned site permits according to their ethnicity. This was not, however, applied in the case of intermarriage or for lodgers (Köhler 1959b: 58, 62 - 3) According to my old !Xun informants, at that time most of the non-white inhabitants in the Old location were „Damaras“, some stated that the Hereros were also to be found in great numbers and the other ethnic groups such as Ovambos, Kavangos and Hai//om or !Xun were significantly less numerous.

¹¹⁷ LGR 3/1/16 17/15/2, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1926, Magistrate Grootfontein.

¹¹⁸ MGR 1/3/16, 1/1/1, Report on Management, Sanitation and Health of the Grootfontein Native Location for 1938.

¹¹⁹ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/10, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1946, Magistrate, Grootfontein, 7.1.1947.

¹²⁰ LGR 3/3/3, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1955, Town Clerk.

¹²¹ BAO, 3/2231, A6/6/2/G36 - A6/6/2/G43, letter 1103/313, Windhoek: compound for S.W.A.N.L.A. recruited natives

¹²² Interestingly, in Otavi location there were no ethnical residential sections. Ovambos and Bushmen mixed there with numerically dominant Bergdamaras (Köhler 1959b: 76).

The fact that they recalled few Ovambos living in the Old location, although statistically they were quite numerous in the Grootfontein urban area, may have been because many Ovambo contract workers lived on their employer's premises in the urban area outside the location or at the compound of the South West Africa Company. Furthermore, the relatives of my informants (these informants were children that time) may have lived in the Damara section, which means they may have overlooked those living in other parts of the location. The !Xun may also have had generally greater interaction with Damara (Khoekhoegowab)-speaking people than with those who spoke Bantu languages such as Ovambos and Kavangos, languages they did not know. Furthermore, their perception might be to some extent obscured by the fact that the !Xun often rarely differentiate between the Damaras and Hai//om, since they speak the same language and so they may have regarded some of the Hai//om as Damaras.

It was puzzling for me that my !Xun informants, who remembered some !Xun living in the Old location, fell into two groups: one claiming that there were „many“ of them and the other that they were few in number.

According to Köhler, the Bushmen in the location lived „scattered among the Bergdama and Ovambo“. Given the statistical figures, they comprised after the Damaras, Hereros and Ovambos the fourth largest non-European group, although smaller by some distance. Given Köhler's claim that more of the Bushmen farm labourers in the Grootfontein district, at least in the part he seemed to know, were Hai//om than the !Xun (Ibid.: 64, 19) and that in the location of nearby Otavi it was „apparently all Hei//um“ (Ibid.: 75), the latter were probably larger in number in Grootfontein as well. Even during my research, my !Xun informants agreed that they were fewer in the town than the Hai//om and the local Hai//om claimed to have been more numerous.

Again the problem with the statistical data may lie in the categorisation of the enumerated/registered people. We may assume that there were Bushmen who were categorised under other ethnic groups, for example „Bergdama“ or „Khoi“. This might apply especially to Damara-speaking Hai//om. Generally, the number of the Bushmen in the urban environment might be bigger than was stated. If someone stated he/she was a Bushman, we cannot assume that this person was not telling the truth, since being a Bushman was always associated with some degree of contempt. Some urban dwellers, however, might for these reasons claim another ethnicity, especially if they were physically tall and darkish, or came, for example, from mixed unions, and spoke a language other than !Xun fluently.

The confusion for the enumerators/registry officials and at the same time some space for identity manoeuvring could be also increased by the frequent ethnic intermarriages/relationships of the urban dwellers and physical appearance of their offspring. According to Köhler, „about 50 % of marriages (in Grootfontein - note R.N.) are mixed marriages“¹²³ „About half or less of the women in the Ovambo section (of the Old location - note R. N.) are Bush women and Bergdama,“ writes Köhler. „Intermarriage occurs between the Ovambo men and Bush and Bergdama women, to some extent also between Bergdama men and Bushwomen.“ On another place he adds: „In the Rheinisch Mission school, the 129 pupils attending school in 1950 were asked by the Medical Inspector of Schools to state the tribe of their mother and father. No less than 41 or 31,7 % said that they were of mixed parentage... In 1956 ... it seemed that an even larger Bush element was present in the mixed parentages of the pupils.“ Köhler used the terms „hybrids“ and „halfcastes“ for the offspring

¹²³ Although in fact most of the couples, who stayed together, were not legally married.

of these inter-ethnic relationships and stated that „a contributory factor (for intermarriages - note R.N.) nowadays is the influx of Bushmen into the District and the growing number of detribalised Northern and Extraterritorial Natives.“ (Ibid.: 62 - 65)¹²⁴

„Detribalised“ northern people, that is Ovambos and Kavangos, and „extraterritorial“ men from Angola or Tswana people from present-day Botswana coming to the Grootfontein area as contract workers were those who were allowed to settle in the town. Since they came there alone they entered into relationships with local women often from different ethnic backgrounds. „These men are almost invariably married to local women.“ This was also the case of the father of one of my older informants, Andris, who was a Tswana and came for work on foot (!) allegedly from Bechuanaland Protectorate to Rundu and from there to the Grootfontein area via Karakuwisa and Maroelaboom.

Interestingly, Köhler mentions that the Hai//om had a leader in the location who must have been born out of an inter-ethnic relationship:

In former years, the spokesman and unofficial foreman of the Bushmen was a certain Noah Hendrik Tsanegab, a literate man with knowledge of some European languages. He called himself a Hei-//om though he was apparently a Khoi hybrid. After his death, the Bushmen started taking their troubles to the Location constable Eddie Naibeb (Ibid.: 64).

The statistical data in Köhler's study are revealing of the demographic profile of the Ovambos and Kavangos living in Grootfontein at that time: the Damaras, who had been living in the Grootfontein region for a long time, had relatively similar percentages of men and women in the Grootfontein urban area in the 1940s and 1950s. However, for the Ovambos the number of men often dramatically exceeded the number of women. For example, in 1956 the ratio was 240:67. In the whole district, consisting mostly of farms, it was even more striking. In 1956 the ratio was 3549:360. In the traditional !Xun area around Nurugas in 1954 there were, except for 3 Coloureds/Basters, 5 Hereros and 3 Damaras, 295 Bushmen and 292 Ovambos/Kavangos. The Bushmen men - women - children ratio was 117 - 95 - 83, while for the Ovambos/Kavangos all 292 people were men (Ibid.: 59, 24, 29)! According to my !Xun informants, single Ovambo or Kavango men often entered into relationships with San women. However, despite the mother bearing children, the men often left them, be it after their contract ended or for other reasons.¹²⁵ It must be emphasised that the region was flooded with a high number of single Bantu contract workers virtually from the beginning of the contract system until the 1970s when the state stopped controlling the mobility of the natives and the men could be joined by their families.

My older !Xun informants recalled that in the Old location there were often !Xun women living with non-!Xun men, especially Ovambos/Kavangos or „Damaras“, whether the men took the women there often after meeting them at the farm and getting work in the town.

¹²⁴ In Otavi seemed to live in the 1950s only few Hai//om, in Köhler's study are mentioned for both years 1952 - 1953 only 13 Bushmen. According to Köhler many of them intermarried with Bergdamara and had relatives at the farms.

¹²⁵ We know, that some Ovambo men, when entering the contract work in the Police Zone, left behind pregnant mothers and when they returned home „the child was already walking“ (Wallace 2011: 256), some of them, however, left behind in the Grootfontein area pregnant Bushmen women, whose children they saw never. Similar situation described Pendleton (1996: 92) in Windhoek's Katutura, where the Ovambo men could have only temporary affairs, since they were already often married in their home area in Owambo. Before the 1960s the Ovambos could remain in the town legally if they married a local woman, and from these unions and their offspring originate largely the Windhoek's Ovambo population. According to Hishongwa (1992: 88) the contract worker often ended up supporting on his small wage two families.

Thus, the women followed their non-!Xun men to the urban area. There they were mostly housewives, staying at home and looking after the children, cooking, washing and cleaning the yard. My !Xun informants recalled that many children were born of these relationships and also many !Xun I encountered in the town had a non-Bushmen parent. The alliances with black contract workers opened the Grootfontein urban space for many !Xun. If the non-!Xun father had relatives in the town, the Bushmen kin could capitalise on these network as well. All the old !Xun I came across, who had studied at the Roman Catholic mission school at Mariabronn (opened in 1926) near Groofontein in the 1950s, had a non-!Xun father. Petrus and his older sister Kun//a (according to her ID, born in 1939) had a father who was a Kavango. Both stayed at the school's hostel, but during the holidays went to the farm to their parents or lived in the location at their Kavango father's brother's house, since he was working for whites in the town as a yardworker. Petrus, who studied, according to him, at Mariabronn until 1956, recalled that there were few !Xun children at the school, the majority having been „Damaras“.

The ethnically heterogeneous urban setting was an ideal environment for inter-ethnic relationships. However, it must also be stressed that these relationships were common both in the urban and farm areas, depending on the ethnic make-up of the workforce at particular farms. In the farm area north-east of Grootfontein these inter-ethnic relationships were mostly between the !Xun and Ovambos/Kavangos, since the latter were the most numerous non-!Xun group of farm workers in the area. According to my informants, in the farm area to the north and west of Grootfontein, the !Xun often intermarried with the Hai//om, who had traditionally occupied this region. Many of Kashe's relatives were to be found in the immediate farm area of Grootfontein. Kashe described them as „Bushman-Damara“ and they were probably often !Xun-Hai//om. According to Kashe's distant relative Jakob, the !Xun living in the area between Outjo and Tsintsabis were „mixed“ with the Hai//om. His grandfather on his mother's side was also a Hai//om who went from the Outjo area to the region of Tsintsabis and married a !Xun woman from the farm area close to Duwib farm. Their daughter, Jakob's mother, then married a Tswana contract worker, his father. „But I'm always Bushman, !Xun,“ Jakob assured me.

For example, the Tsintsabis police station commander reported in 1945 that „there is a fair amount of intermarriage among Bushmen females and Ovambo, Klippkaffirs and hereros (Hereros). Most of the Ovambos, hereros (Hereros), and Klippkaffirs employed on farms are married or living with Bushmen wife. There is also a small amount of intermarriage between the Hygum (Hai//om) and the Kumbushmen (!Xun Bushmen).”¹²⁶ The district administrators claimed that there was „absorption“ of Bushmen especially into the Ovambo population. However, the very fact that Bushwomen had relationships with Bantu men did not, in fact, lead in most cases to the „absorption“ into the latter's social and cultural environment, since these unions were predominantly short-lived. This is illustrated by the magistrate of Grootfontein report from 1942: „Most of the recruited labourers have Bushmen women as wives while employed within the district. As soon as their contracts expire they leave these women and return to their homeland.”¹²⁷ It is worth highlighting that in 1956 contract workers constituted 60 percent of the total labour force in the Grootfontein district. The Grootfontein magistrate wrote in his report for 1954 that the Bushmen “mix” with the Damaras and that many children are the result of the unions of the Bushmen females and Ovambo contract workers.¹²⁸ In a report two years later he wrote: “Daar vind nog baie verbastering plaas en

¹²⁶ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/8, Annual Report 1945, Station Commander.Tsintsabis, 15.12.1945.

¹²⁷ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/2, Magistrate Grootfontein, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1941, 14.1.1942.

¹²⁸ LGR 3/3/3, Kantoor van die Stasiebevelvoerder, Grootfontein, Jaarlikse Rapport ooe Naturelle Sake: 1954.

daar word baie buite-agtelike kinders warvan Damaras, Hereros and Ovambos die vader is, gebore. Die getalle neem jaarliks toe en dit will lyk asoof die suiwer boesmanras sal verdwyn...¹²⁹

When talking about relationships between the Hereros and the !Xun in the location, Andris described a situation similar to the relations between the whites and the Bushmen. The latter worked for the former, but they did not intermarry and have children with each other. The same situation was observed by Köhler (1959a: 93) in the Gobabis location. According to my informant Andris, female Bushmen intermarried with the Damaras and Ovambos. In Gobabis they did so with Damaras and Khoi people (Köhler Ibid.) My !Xun informants agreed that if there were children from the Herero man-!Xun women relationships they were often taken to the Otjituo Reserve and integrated into Herero society and culture and were brought up speaking Otjiherero.

Petrus and Jakob recalled that there were also „pure“ !Xun families in the Old location, with both the man and his wife being !Xun. However, I have not come across a single concrete instance of a !Xun couple living in the Old location in the !Xun narratives.

Given the fact that the Bushmen in the location constituted a minority and as today regarded themselves as socially inferior to other ethnic groups, they seem to have acted towards their environment in a subservient way. Köhler (1959b: 64) quoted one Bergdama informant saying: „The Bushmen are like apes. They copy the ways of life they see around them in the Location as closely as they can.“ Generally, it was observed district-wide that in longer-term contact with the non-San the Bushmen adapt to the latter: “Boesmanne wat met lede van ’n ander stam trou aanvar die leefwyse van die ander stam.”¹³⁰ This may reflect their feelings of inferiority, but in the urban environment it was probably to some extent a general pattern for most of the ethnic groups if they appeared in an ethnically-heterogeneous environment where they constituted a small minority.¹³¹

Even though some of my elder !Xun informants claimed there were „many“ !Xun living in the Old location, all of them said that the !Xun have traditionally stayed and worked at the farms to the northeast, east and southeast of the town. „The !Xun stayed at the farms,“ claimed Petrus. Another older !Xun called Matwa expressed it this way: „The life of the Bushmen was the life of the farms.“ He recalled that the farmers employed, for example, only two black contract workers on wages and many !Xun, but that the latter were remunerated mostly in kind and received less money. Interestingly, in the same way that the !Xun regarded Grootfontein as the place of the „Damaras“ (Damara-speaking people), the latter allegedly avoided the farms in the !Xun area northeast, east and southeast of Grootfontein. „The Damaras were afraid of working on the farms“ generalised Petrus. According to the statistics in Köhler’s study, this was not true and there were many “Damaras” employed at the farms in the 1950s, although apparently in different areas. Thus, they were very numerous in their traditional Otavi region, but there were almost none in the !Xun Nurugas area. Petrus’s claim, however, revealed that both the !Xun and “Damaras” felt socially more secure in the areas where they had lived for longer and were numerous there. Petrus gave me as an example the case of when a “Damara” man went to a farm in the !Xun area, it could only be because his

¹²⁹ LGR 3/3/3, Jaarverslag vir 1956, Distrik Grootfontein, Naturellekommissaris.

¹³⁰ LGR 3/3/3, Jaarverslag oor Naturellesake: Distrikt Grootfontein: 1958, Naturellekommissaris.

¹³¹ Thus, for example Köhler (1958: 64) observed in the Karibib location, that the Hereros „being in a minority, appear readier to live in harmony with their neighbours than they do in other places where they form the majority.“

wife had started work in the farm's kitchen. This probably represented to some extent a general pattern not specific to "Damaras".

The !Xun born at farms in the Grootfontein area had very similar experiences of their first encounters with Grootfontein, be it in the Old location or in the New location. They drove there with the farmer as boys, when the former was doing some shopping or went to his house in the town. If they stayed there for a number of days, the !Xun then slept in the *buitekamer* and worked in the garden or did other chores as requested by the farmer. Andris, already around 60 year at the time of my research, recalled that during his first visit to Grootfontein, the farmer went shopping and he stayed in the car the whole time waiting until the farmer came back. He remembered the *eienaar* buying him bread. When they went there a second time, Andris went to the shop himself and bought some food, including sugar, for his relatives.

His older brother Jakob, born in 1939, used to go to the Old location in a cart pulled by a horse. The farm workers sometimes also drove cattle to Grootfontein for auction. Jakob recalled that at the time the farmer had neither a house in Grootfontein nor relatives at whose he could overnight and so paid to sleep in the "coffee house". Jakob used to sleep on the ground on an empty sack and covered with two blankets near the railway, where the SPAR supermarket now stands. Other workers used to sleep there as well. According to Andris, when the farmers started using lorries and cars instead of the ox-wagons, they parked them next to the railway station to unload their goods and the accompanying !Xun farmworkers would sleep there.

What did the !Xun living in the Old location do? According to my !Xun informants, the women were mostly housewives and dependent on their non-!Xun men, but they also sometimes worked in the kitchens of whites' houses or they did some chores for the Damaras, Ovambos and Hereros living in the location. When I asked Jakob (born in 1947) about the work the !Xun men in the town did, he gave me a similarly vague answer as the other !Xun had: „they worked under the whites.“ According to my !Xun informants, the men often worked as yardworkers and some were employed by the municipality as manual workers. According to Köhler, the majority of the employed male non-Europeans in the town were „in domestic service, in stores, garages, hotels and with the Municipality. Many men are employed with the railways, the S.W.A. company, SWANLA, and in the building trade“ while the women worked in domestic service or as washerwomen (Köhler 1959: 66). There was no apparent specialisation of any ethnic group for a certain type for work and the distribution of labour among them was „fairly equal“. Importantly, my !Xun informants highlighted that the Hereros coming to the town worked, for example, in the shops, offices and in the police force, but they did not go from Grootfontein to the farms like the !Xun.¹³² Instead of this, their movements seemed to be more bound to the Otjituo reserve.

Jakob also remembered that some Old location dwellers owned cattle and goats and there were *kraals* near the Old location. According to him, the owners were Ovambos, Hereros and Damaras and the !Xun helped them as herders. Jakob claimed that the !Xun who looked after cattle for Hereros and Damaras slept at the houses of their masters. The cattle could roam free on the urban commons, and, according to Jakob, herdsboys just had to bring the calves to the *kraal* each evening since the cows always returned to watering places. According to the data in Köhler's study, in 1956 there were 102 non-European stock owners in Grootfontein (most

¹³² Statistics in Köhler's study however show there were Hereros working at the farms as well, even though less than other ethnic groups and not northeast of Grootfontein, where used to work most of my !Xun informants.

were Hereros), who owned 270 cattle cows, 15 horses, 10 donkeys and 42 small livestock. The commons of 3 616 ha was fenced off from the urban area inhabited by the whites and the white farms (Köhler 1959: 67 - 8).¹³³ Jakob claimed the !Xun living in the town did not own any livestock. According to Köhler, some location dwellers, in particular Damaras, also had small gardens at their houses, where they grew tobacco and pumpkins among other plants (Ibid.: 68) Jakob recalled the !Xun sometimes helped at the these gardens as well.

In the 1950s the movements of people to and from the town were controlled. It was, however, probably quite difficult in practice to control short-term visits from nearby farms at nights and weekends. Thus, for example, at the Native Advisory Board meeting on 13 November 1950 a Herero member urged the town authorities to issue short-term permits of only a few hours to visitors on Saturdays and Sundays and not to allow them to stay overnight because they would drink too much and fight with others.¹³⁴

Generally, newcomers, if properly discharged by their former employer, were given seven days for finding work. If they found employment, their families could follow them (Ibid.: 60). Some of my !Xun informants recalled that the !Xun farm workers visiting the town had to have a pass. According to A. Rousseau from the Grootfontein municipality, the pass system used in the Grootfontein region was informal. The older !Xun told me that the *pass* was a piece of ordinary paper and did not have a standardised form. Jakob recalled that when visiting the town he went to the Grootfontein police station to show the *pass* there, but he was not expected to report again when returning to the farm. The older !Xun recalled that being caught by the police without a pass or with an expired pass led to detainment by the police. Although the old !Xun did not remember the precise details, they agreed that the *passes* stopped being used in the second half of the 1960s, which was also confirmed by Rousseau. My main informant Kashe, born in 1970, has never seen one.

Generally, the wages of the natives in the urban areas were better than at the farms and the natives preferred to work in the town and at the mines.¹³⁵ The mine workers were also in receipt of free accommodation, food and medical attention.¹³⁶ The mines, however, depended largely on contract workers. Thus, in 1937, about 85 % of the native employers at the Tsumeb mines were from outside the Police Zone and among the remaining 15 % percent there were some Bushmen.¹³⁷ The fact that average wages in Grootfontein were higher than at the farms did not, however, mean that life in the location was any more secure financially. Thus, the town's administration stated in 1947 that „the natives in the location are poor, the wages small. No industries are in existence. Sufficient food can be purchases in the Township (town's whites' residential area - note R.N.), but prices are too high to enable natives to purchase sufficient food for their requirements.“¹³⁸ Similarly, at the Native Advisory Board

¹³³ The earliest report I came across about the natives in the Grootfontein having livestock was from 1935. They could graze the animals at its commonage for a monthly paid fee, each person was allowed to have up to 12 large and 50 small stock (LGR 3/1/7 2/20/2, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1935, Office in Command, Police District No 4, Grootfontein, 10.1.1936). However, we can assume the natives had some livestock since the beginnings of the establishment of the settlement of Grootfontein.

¹³⁴ SWAA 2052, A445/7/1, Notule: Naturelle Adviserende Raad, 13.11.1950.

¹³⁵ LGR 3/1/16 17/15/2, Annual Report 1923, Office of the Post Commander, Grootfontein.

¹³⁶ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/2, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1935, Magistrate Grootfontein.

¹³⁷ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/2, Annual Report on Native Affairs: 1937, Officer-in-charge, Native Affairs, Tsumeb, 20.12.1937.

¹³⁸ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/10, Annual Report on Native Affairs i.e. Non-Europeans 1947, Grootfontein Native Location.

meeting in May 1951 a Herero board member complained that locations dwellers' wages were too low and asked if there was not a way to fix the wages legally.¹³⁹

road boys	£ 3-5-0d
administration (not police)	£ 3-0-0d
railway	
<i>a) Construction</i>	£ 3-10-0d
<i>b) Other</i>	£ 3-0-0d
mines	£ 3-10-0d
farms	15-0d
urban areas	
<i>a) Municipal</i>	£ 2-7-6d
<i>b) Industrial</i>	£ 2-10-0d
<i>c) Domestic</i>	£ 1-5-0d
females (domestic)	
<i>a) Urban</i>	£ 1-0-0d
<i>b) Rural</i>	10-0d

However, Köhler (1959b: 59) wrote that „very few residents leave the urban area to return to farms or to the (Otjituo – note R.N.) Reserve.“ It must have been the Hereros that moved to the reserve. I will list concrete gathered data in the section on mobility patterns of the !Xun and in this study's conclusions and these data suggest that this one way mobility from rural to urban area applied to the !Xun only to a certain extent. The staying in Grootfontein of the families of the !Xun women and non-!Xun men, often (former) Ovambo, Kavango and extra-territorial contract workers, depended on the breadwinner. If the couple broke up or the man died they had to move elsewhere, usually to their !Xun relatives to the farms.

From the point of view of the town's administration, the situation in the location was generally calm and, according to its reports, it did not have to deal with any serious disturbances, at least until the mid-1960s. One of the problems it dealt with was, as mentioned above, the issue of single adult women living in the location without any employment.

In the interwar period single black women were pathologised by the administrators as having a contaminating influence on the environment of the locations - they were supposedly spreading communicable diseases, behaving immorally and brewing beer.¹⁴¹ The minutes of Grootfontein's Management Board Meeting from May 1935 report „loose women that were congregating in the location“.¹⁴² In his annual report for 1946 the Grootfontein magistrate reported that the problem of unemployed native women residing with their relatives affected all three urban areas in the district. In addition to prostitution, the women were feared to be selling illicit liquor.¹⁴³ The situation was apparently the most alarming in Tsumeb with its hundreds of single mine workers.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁹ SWAA 2052, A445/7/1, Notule: Naturelle Adviserende Raads-vergadering, 18.5.1951

¹⁴⁰ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/9, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1946, Magistrate, Grootfontein, 7.1.1947.

¹⁴¹ Wallace (1998b: 83); compulsory medical examinations of unmarried black women were introduced in South West Africa's urban areas in 1939, Ibid.: 77. The Native Advisory Board on 15 January 1955 dealt with the issue of how to convince the local women in the Grootfontein location to let themselves examine for sexual diseases. The local natives of the board, however, said that the women were refusing it (SWAA 2052, A445/7/1, Naturelle Adviserende Raadsvergadering, 15.1.1955).

¹⁴² MGR 1/3/16, 1/1/1, Minutes of the Village Management Board Meeting, 20.5.1935.

¹⁴³ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/10, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1946, Magistrate, Grootfontein, 4.2.1947.

¹⁴⁴ „Immorality is rife. Contribution cause is the presence of many hundreds of recruited workers on the mines (i.e. Extra-Territorial and Northern Natives) to satisfy whose physical needs many women practise prostitution. Polygamy is non-existent. Natives find it difficult to support one wife and family.“ There were no unemployed men in Tsumeb in 1937, however probably many unemployed women. „However, a Government Notice has been published, which prohibits any female native from entering the Tsumeb urban area without first having obtained a certificate of approval from this office. It is hoped that in the course of time it will be possible to have all unmarried unemployed women, who do not belong to Tsumeb, removed from the Urban Area (LGR 3/1/7 2/20/2, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1937, Officer-in-charge, Tsumeb, 20.12.1937.

Due to the strict conditions attached to being allowed to live in Grootfontein, there were virtually no unemployed men there and the town administration did not have to deal significantly with evictions of men staying in the town illegally for longer periods. At the same time, although on paper were the rules regulating the conditions for staying in the town, the eviction process was, as shown in the following three examples, apparently not as smooth and fast as one could expect. Thus, for example, in March 1937 the town authorities reported that there were 25 adults, mostly young women living in the location without employment. It was only at the next Village Management Board Meeting a month later that it was stated that the women were living in the location „without any relations and visible means of support“ and that they should be warned and given two weeks to find work.¹⁴⁵ In October 1940 the Village Management Board dealt with the request of the Native Advisory Board, which consisted from its beginnings only of representatives of the Ovambo, Herero and Damara communities, and supported by the police, to expel a Damara men by the name of Leo Damaseb who had in the past several times assaulted other people and was a nuisance to the location dwellers.¹⁴⁶ The Chief Native Commissioner in Windhoek was also asked for his advice. However the Village Management Board meeting in November had to state that the board had no power to expel a native. Therefore, Damaseb, who promised to behave better, was given only a strong warning.¹⁴⁷ Similarly, not paying the site and lodgers fees did not result in immediate expulsion in practice. These persons were first warned to pay, with the threat that not doing so would see their being reported to the police.¹⁴⁸

Importantly, for the natives Grootfontein was becoming important as a place where it was possible to access there also medical treatment. Since the German period in Grootfontein had been venereal diseases compound and in around 1940 a native hospital was built in the town.¹⁴⁹ In the 1940s the workers at Tsumeb, Abenab and Berg Aukas mines were treated at on-site health facilities. Other natives could be treated at two doctors' surgeries in Grootfontein and two others in Tsumeb. However the the only place in the whole district where these natives could be hospitalised was in Grootfontein.¹⁵⁰ In the 1940s the Bushmen were, however, believed by the administration to prefer to consult with their „witchdoctors“ beyond the Police Zone.¹⁵¹ Nonetheless, in the 1950s it was reported that the farmers in the Maroelaboom (Nurugas) area, the !Xun Bushmen area, were driving their workers to Grootfontein hospital as well.¹⁵² In 1954 1 958 natives were hospitalised there and 2 404 treated as outpatients. The medical practitioner also treated 150 Bushmen in the same year.¹⁵³ However, inconsistently, and probably based rather on bias than reality, the Grootfontein police station commander claimed that the Bushmen had „ingeborene vrees ... vir die witmense se medisine en uit vrye wil sal hulle nooit 'n dokter besoek nie.“¹⁵⁴ In 1958 the number of hospitalised natives in Grootfontein rose to 3 144 and outpatients to 5 363.¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁵ MGR 1/3/16, 1/1/1, Minutes of the Village Management Board Meeting, 28.4.1937.

¹⁴⁶ MGR 1/3/16, 1/1/1, Minutes of the Village Management Board, 24.10.1940.

¹⁴⁷ MGR 1/3/16, 1/1/1, Minutes of the Village Management Board, 21.11.1940, SWAA 2051, A445/7, Letter of Administrator on Magistrate Grootfontein, 20.11.1940.

¹⁴⁸ MGR 1/3/16, 1/1/1, Minutes of the Village Management Board, 19.12.1940.

¹⁴⁹ I did not find a precise data of its opening, but according to the archival data it must have happened between 1939 and 1941.

¹⁵⁰ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/10, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1947, Magistrate, Grootfontein, 3.1.1948.

¹⁵¹ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/9, Annual Report on Native Affairs: 1946. Magistrate, Grootfontein, 7.1.1947.

¹⁵² LGR 3/3/3, Jaarlikse Rapport: Naturellesake: Maroelaboom: 1956.

¹⁵³ LGR 3/3/3, Jaarverslag 1954: Naturellesake. Grootfontein.

¹⁵⁴ LGR 3/3/3, Jaarlikse Rapport ooe Naturelle Sake: 1954, Kantoor van die Stasiebevelvoerder, Grootfontein.

¹⁵⁵ LGR 3/3/3, Jaarverslag oor Naturellesake: Distrikt Grootfontein: 1958, Naturellekommissaris.

Of similar importance in Grootfontein for the natives was the opportunity to access education. In the town there were Lutheran and Roman Catholic schools¹⁵⁶ and the latter church also had school at nearby Mariabronn. Until the opening of the native school in the New location in the 1960s education for natives in Grootfontein was provided only by these mission schools.¹⁵⁷

In the period from World War I until the 1930s we can observe in the farm area northeast, east and south-east of Grootfontein and the adjacent areas a continuous and, from the point of view of the state authorities, exhausting, but ultimately successful process of „taming“, or pacifying, of the Bushmen that made them an invisible farm labour force, an „invisible proletariat“ (Gordon 1983).¹⁵⁸ The toughest resistance the administration experienced was in the farm border areas, where the !Xun could find refuge beyond the Police Zone, especially with the !Xun in the Nurugas area. I will report below on this process in some detail, since most of the relatives of my main informant Kashe, whose family’s mobility history will be analysed in section three, are from this area.

In the 1920s workers from Okavango region were still afraid of walking into the farm area because of Bushmen attacks¹⁵⁹ and the Nurugas area continued to suffer from Bushmen stock theft, even though those convicted were sent to serve their sentence in Windhoek.¹⁶⁰ The Bushmen were reported to roam in groups of four to eight and slaughter cattle.¹⁶¹ In 1929 it was reported that the gangs of Bushmen stock thieves had been broken up. The Bushmen, in parties of seldom more than two, would go to unoccupied border farms merely for water. That year there were also no reported difficulties for Kavango workers passing through the Bushmen area. From the point of view of the administration this positive development was brought about to a significant extent by the amendment of the vagrancy laws.¹⁶² In 1930 the Grootfontein police commander reported that:

Bushmen released from gaol have no doubt given their friends full details of the prison life, and the bodily labour which they have to perform and it is evident that the impression made

¹⁵⁶ This school had by 1949 only two grades (SWAA 2052, A445/7/1, Notule van Naturelly Adviserende Raad, 10.12.1949).

¹⁵⁷ Roman Catholic Mission was founded in Grootfontein already in 1908 and Rheinische Mission two years later.

¹⁵⁸ On a long term the Bushmen’s space dwindled by the expansion of the farms. However, in the 1920s significantly less farms in the area were occupied than in the past. In 1924 there were 632 surveyed farms in the district, 220 occupied and 462 unworked, most of the latter belonging to the South West Africa Company, thus on the Hai//om traditional areas. Ten years before double the farms were occupied. Many farmers left the area because of the unhealthy conditions, lacking labour force and erratic rains. The vacant farms gave some space to move in to the Bushmen (Lebzelter 1934 in 1996: 18). Lebzelter, who saw in the second half of the 1920s the farm Kokasip owned by the Catholic mission and laying 35 kilometres northeast of Grootfontein found out that the farm business had stopped and that it was inhabited only by some Bushmen and Bergdamaras (Lebzelter 1930: 120). The mission station closed in 1922. However, farmers went in the area again in the years to come.

¹⁵⁹ LGR 3/1/16 17/15/2, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1926, Magistrate Grootfontein.

¹⁶⁰ LGR 3/1/16 17/15/4, Annual Report 1928, Grootfontein, Office of the South West Africa Police; Jaeger and Weibel (1921: 76).

¹⁶¹ LGR 3/1/16 17/15/3 Annual Report Grootfontein Station 1927, Post Commander, Grootfontein.

¹⁶² LGR 3/1/16 17/15/5, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1929, Magistrate Grootfontein; Annual Report on Post Commander, South West Africa Police: Grootfontein, 1929; The Vagrancy Proclamation No. 25 of 1920 stated that “any person found (among others by the location superintendent – note R. N.) wandering abroad and having no visible lawful means... shall be deemed and taken to be an idle and disorderly person” and could be sentenced by a Magistrate court for up to three months. (Official Gazette, 1.7.1920).

in their minds had undoubtedly had the desired effect.¹⁶³ Wandering Bushmen are seldom heard of and they appear to have trekked into the sandveld beyond the police zone.¹⁶⁴

In 1932, however, the Bushmen in the Nurugas area recommenced their operations. Stock thefts also occurred in the southeast of the Grootfontein police patrol area in the farms along Omuramba Omatako, but since the Bushmen could easily flee into the *Sandveld* it made it very difficult for the understaffed police to apprehend them.¹⁶⁵

In 1934 a slight decrease in stock thefts was reported¹⁶⁶ and a year later in the Nurugas area only six stock thefts were reported. This was put down to exceptionally heavy December rains and plentiful *veldkos* and water in the area beyond the Police Zone.¹⁶⁷ In 1936 it was reported that the stock thefts had dropped considerably and in all cases were committed by Bushmen who were working for white farmers, and not „wild“ Bushmen.¹⁶⁸ The drop was attributed to the increased provision of meat to the labourers by the farmers, who were encouraged in this by the police, and the fact that old stock thieves were (allegedly) dead.¹⁶⁹ However, the Nurugas !Xun could not be regarded as wholly pacified. Thus, the police station commander in Nurugas reported that the Bushmen in the area „are in the habit of leaving the services of their masters without the slightest cause of reason“ and they either crossed the Police Zone to join the „uncivilised“ Bushmen or squatted on unoccupied farms. Those in the Police Zone „often attack the Police with their barbarous weapons, such as bows, arrows (poisoned) and spears“. ¹⁷⁰ In 1937 it was reported that the Bushmen had not played an important role in stock theft for the previous two years¹⁷¹ and that the Bushmen were „becoming more accustomed to european ways.“¹⁷² The annual Grootfontein magistrate report for 1938 describes the district as „law-abiding“. ¹⁷³ In 1945 the Nurugas police station commander reported that „the wild bushmen are seldom seen and when entering the Police Zone will always visit those farms farthest from the police station.“¹⁷⁴ When new farms in this area were allocated to whites and they started to employ the Bushmen, it was regarded as way of taming them. The report for 1956 says that the wild Bushmen went to the police station to ask for help if there were not sufficient veldkos in the bush.¹⁷⁵ In 1956 it was reported there were very few wild Bushmen in the area and those who came „out of the bush“ went to the police station to ask for permission to look for work at the farms, where they worked as cattle and goat herders.¹⁷⁶

¹⁶³ Already in 1919 saw some Bushmen prisoners in Grootfontein Norton: „At Grootfontein, the site Jordaan’s Republic of ill fate and short life, I was privileged to interview some Kalahari Bushmen who had been committed for murder. The poor things were trembling visibly, and seemed to think I was come to execute them. When, however, they were only required to name their head, eyes, hands, feet, etc., smiles appeared. Some physical anthropologists known to Cape Town had recently visited them, but had, I was told, no interpreter, and hence perhaps inspired the terror which greeted me. I was more fortunate in the service of a Hottentot woman who partly understood their dialect...“ (Norton 1920: 454).

¹⁶⁴ LGR 3/1/16 17/15/6, Annual Report: 1930, South West Africa Police: Grootfontein.

¹⁶⁵ LGR 3/1/16 17/15/6, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1931, Magistrate Grootfontein.

¹⁶⁶ LGR 3/1/17 17/15/10, Annual Report 1934, Office of the Officer in Command, Police District No 4, 27.12.1934.

¹⁶⁷ LGR 3/1/17 17/15/11, Annual Report 1935, Magistrate Grootfontein, 11.1.1936.

¹⁶⁸ LGR 3/1/17 17/15/11, Annual Report 1935, Magistrate Grootfontein, 7.1.1937.

¹⁶⁹ LGR 3/1/17 17/15/12, Annual Report 1936, Office of the Station Commander, Grootfontein, 4.12.1936.

¹⁷⁰ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/2, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1936, Office of the Station Commander, Nurugas.

¹⁷¹ LGR 3/1/17 17/15/13, Annual Report 1937, Magistrate Grootfontein, 3.1.1938.

¹⁷² LGR 3/1/17 17/15/13, Annual Report 1937, Office of the Station Commander, Grootfontein, 24.12.1937.

¹⁷³ LGR 3/1/17 17/15/14, Annual Report 1938, Magistrate Grootfontein, 5.1.1939.

¹⁷⁴ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/8, Annual Report: Native Affairs 1945, Station Commander, Nurugas, ?.12.1945.

¹⁷⁵ LGR 3/3/3, S.A. Polisie Nurugas, Jaarlikse Rapport: Naturellesake: 1954.

¹⁷⁶ LGR 3/3/3, Jaarlikse Rapport: Naturellesake: Maroelaboom: 1956.

We may ask ourselves why the magistrate of Grootfontein often started his annual reports about the disappearing/ed „wild“ Bushmen and not on the mass of „tame“ Bushmen. It reveals the continuing obsession with the former and also how the authorities ignored and overlooked the Bushmen who had become a less problematic farm labour force, not to mention all those living in the town and complying with the strict rules that, at least on paper, operated in the urban areas.

Already by 1945 the majority of the Bushmen in the Grootfontein police patrol zone were reported as „fairly tame“. The movements of the Bushmen between the Police Zone and the area next to it stopped being so frequent, at least from the perspective of the administration.

It is a matter of infrequent occurrence that wild bushmen cross the Police Zone boundary and vice versa. When the tame bushmen cross the boundary and come in contact with the wild Bushmen they are usually done away with. It is reported as a consequence the tame Bushmen seldom cross the boundary.¹⁷⁷

The last statement does seem to correspond, however, to the reality. The !Xun living on the border area and having relatives both inside the Police Zone and behind it, certainly moved between the two spaces. It seems however, that some Bushmen, living for considerable time at the farms, became used to it and did not consider living behind the Police Zone.

Already by 1941 there were no squatters reported in the district.¹⁷⁸ The station commander of the Tsintsabis Police Zone stated that in 1936 there was very little trouble with the Bushmen in the area: „They seemed to realize that the law is to be respected.“ They were reported to live in the *Sandveld* but during the dry period they moved to Omuramba Ovambo.¹⁷⁹ In the Otavi police area it was reported that the majority of the Bushmen were working at the farms with a „few wild Bushmen“ living there and no squatters at the farms.¹⁸⁰ No squatters were reported for the Bushmen in the Nurugas area in 1946.¹⁸¹

In 1937 the magistrate of Grootfontein reported, probably quite accurately, that the Bushmen within the Police Zone could be divided into three groups: 1) Bushmen born in the district, 2) those who had settled there and become „tame“ and 3) those moving between the farms and Game Reserve No. 1.¹⁸² In 1946, almost a decade later, the magistrate reported that the majority of the Bushmen had lived in the district since birth.¹⁸³ The report for 1947 specifies, although we may doubt the accuracy of the information that the tame Bushmen had been living within the Police Zone for between 5 and 40 years.¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁷ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/8, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1945, Station Commander, Grootfontein, 14.12.1945.

¹⁷⁸ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/2, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1941, Magistrate Grootfontein, 14.1.1942.

¹⁷⁹ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/2, Annual Report 1936, Office of the Station Commader, Tsintsabis, 4.1.1937.

¹⁸⁰ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/8, Annual Reports on Native Affairs 1945, South African Police, Office of the Station Commander, Otavi, 22.12.1945.

¹⁸¹ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/8, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1946, Station Commander, Nurugas, 12.12.1946. The Bushmen from this area kept, however, in the years to come the image of those least civilised „Die lyfwyse van blankes word meestal nageboots asook die kleredrag met die uitsondering van die boesmans, insoverre dit die leefwyse betref, wat liever in die veld lewe as ’n goed geboude and beskermende woonpleke. Huwelike vind oor die algemeen volgens blankes se gewoontes plaas, met uitsondering van die boesmans wie net meide vat en met hulle saamleef, sonder enige verbintenis volgens wet.“ (LGR 3/3/3, Kantoer van die Stasiebevelvoerder, S.A. Polisie, Maroelaboom, Jaarlikse Rapport Naturellesake: Maroelaboom Polisievyk: 1958).

¹⁸² LGR 3/1/7 2/20/2, Annual Report: Native Affairs, 1937, Magistrate Grootfontein.

¹⁸³ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/9, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1947, Magistrate, Grootfontein, 7.1.1946.

¹⁸⁴ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/9, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1947, Magistrate, Grootfontein, 3.1.1948.

The Grootfontein magistrate stated in 1945 that the natives, specifically Damaras, Hottentots (Namas) or Bastards in the Police Zone did not observe any tribal system, but that the Bushmen „follow the family system“ when it comes to the movement pattern of the Bushmen within the farm area.¹⁸⁵ Thus, the Bushmen were apparently observed as living and moving in groups of relatives.

From the point of view of the Grootfontein area administrators during the South African rule, the generally rather negative picture of the Bushmen does not seem to have significantly changed. As during the German period, the administrators imposed by South Africa created their own classifications of each group of natives regarding the attitude to work. The Bushmen were one of the main sources of farm labour. The magistrate of Grootfontein wrote in his report for 1923 that „for heavy work he (a Bushman – note R.N.) is useless and it is difficult to instill any knowledge of agriculture into him“. The Bushmen were regarded as unable to “work more than a few weeks at a time” and to steal mealies.¹⁸⁶ The report of the Grootfontein police station for 1936 said:

The Herero is undoubtedly the most progressive and industrious of all the native tribes; they own large number of stock and are thrifty. Next come the Bastards, Hottentots and Klipp-kaffirs; their main object is cattle raising. The Ovambos are thrifty... A large number of Ovambos are settled in the Tsintsabis Temporary Reserve (close down in 1936 - note R.N.), and it is reported that apart from cattle they own, they are making great strides in agriculture, and are far more industrious than the Klipp-kaffirs in that Reserve... The Bushmen have no ambition; they are lazy, untrustworthy, and so long as they have full stomach, they are quite contented. They live chiefly by hunting and thieving, and after good rains have an abundant supply of ‘Veld kost’¹⁸⁷ ... during this period the majority leaves the farms for Sandveldt.¹⁸⁸

The 1936 report of the magistrate stated that „those (Bushmen) who have been taken into service by farmers have not proved a huge success“.¹⁸⁹ A year later the magistrate wrote that

the ‘tame’ Bushman is not a good labourer - his physique - is against it - while the ‘wild’ Bushmen is a nomad and lives almost exclusively on veldkos and game... Bushmen make very poor labourers and are chiefly used as herds and for light labour.¹⁹⁰

The annual report of the Commissioner for Natives Affairs for 1956 states that the Bushmen „het angeleer om a bietjie te werk“.¹⁹¹

Generally, the Bushmen were regarded as a „lower type“ of native, in contrast to the „better type“ of natives such as Hereros.¹⁹² This categorisation influenced remuneration. „Farmers found the bushmen the cheapest kind to engage as it is a know fact that most of these bushmen only works for their food and tobacco, and now and then they get a blanket or

¹⁸⁵ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/8, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1945, Magistrate, Grootfontein, 5.1.1946. That the natives within the Police Zone „no longer have a closely knit tribal organisation“ was mentioned also earlier in the Report of South West Africa Commission (1936: 22).

¹⁸⁶ LGR 3/1/16 17/15/2, Annual Report 1923, Magistrate Grootfontein.

¹⁸⁷ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/2, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1935, Office in Command, Police District No 4, Grootfontein, 10.1.1936.

¹⁸⁸ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/2, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1936, Station Commander, Grootfontein.

¹⁸⁹ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/2, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1936, Magistrate Grootfontein, 7.1.1937.

¹⁹⁰ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/2, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1937, Magistrate Grootfontein.

¹⁹¹ LGR 3/3/3, N. 1/15/6/3, Jaarverslag van 1956: Distrik Grootfontein

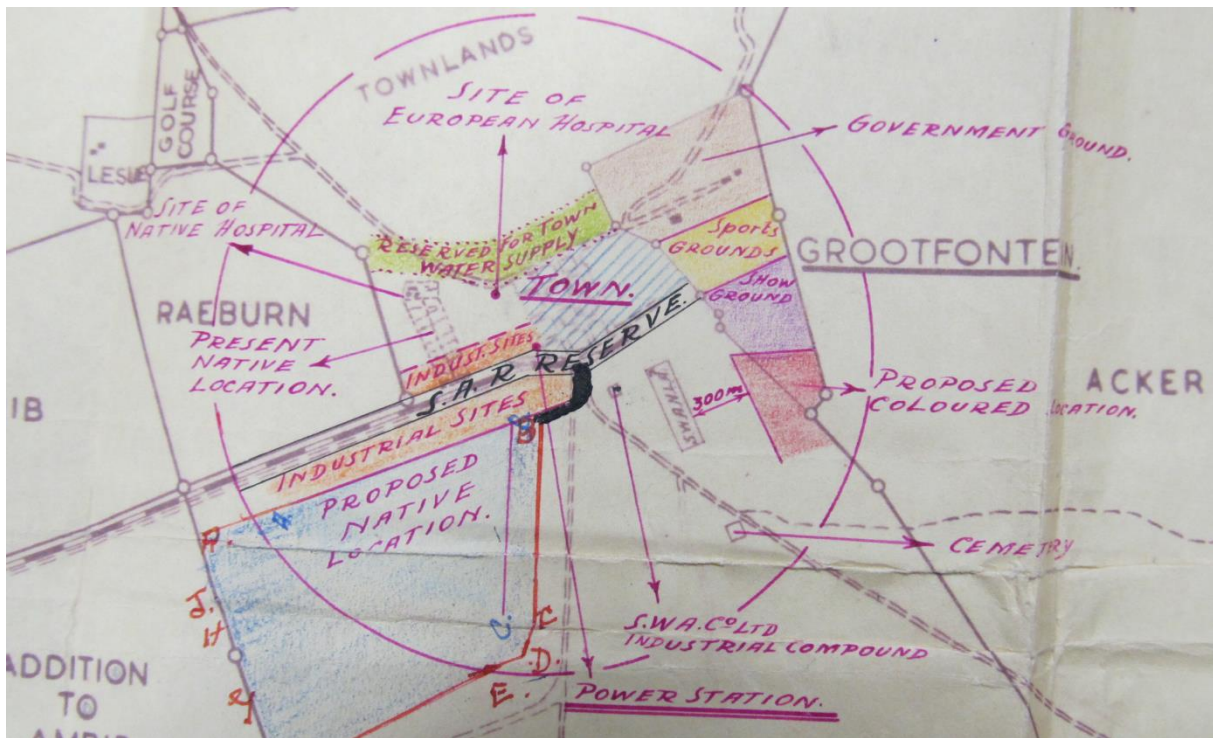
¹⁹² Station Commander, South African Police, Tsumeb, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1946, 23.12.1946

shirt“.¹⁹³ The Bushmen were told that money was of no value to them.¹⁹⁴ However, given the great demand for labour in the district, which Köhler described as „acute“, Bushmen remained an important source of farm labourers (Köhler 1959b: 28).

¹⁹³ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/2, Annual Report Native Affairs, 1936, Office of the Station Commander, Tsintsabis; similarly also LGR 3/1/7 2/20/2, Annual Report 1937, Station Commander of Grootfontein Police Patrol zone, 24.12.1937; and LGR 3/1/7 2/20/9, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1946, Magistrate, Grootfontein, 7.1.1947.

¹⁹⁴ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/10, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1947, Magistrate, Grootfontein, 3.1.1948.

New location: from segregation to losing control over urban space



Map 6. Drawing of Grootfontein with the Old location and the proposed site for the New location (current township) to which the natives were moved in the 1960s. (NASA BAO 3231)

Reflecting political developments in the South Africa, the 1950s¹⁹⁵ brought about a toughening of urban apartheid legislation. Although the laws in South Africa were not always applied to this territory and racial segregation was often practised rather informally, these changes affected South West Africa as well and the basis was laid by the Natives (Urban Areas) Proclamation No. 56/1951.¹⁹⁶ Its aim was to „create a very small African urban elite with rights to remain in the towns, while the majority of the black population were conceived as a transient proletariat“ (Wallace 2011: 251 - 2). The separate development policy was applied towards particular ethnic groups regarded as having their own traditions, habits and languages. Thus, the locations had to be divided into discrete ethnic sections, whose dwellers should be in contact with their respective ethnic homeland, or if without work, leave the urban area and return there.¹⁹⁷

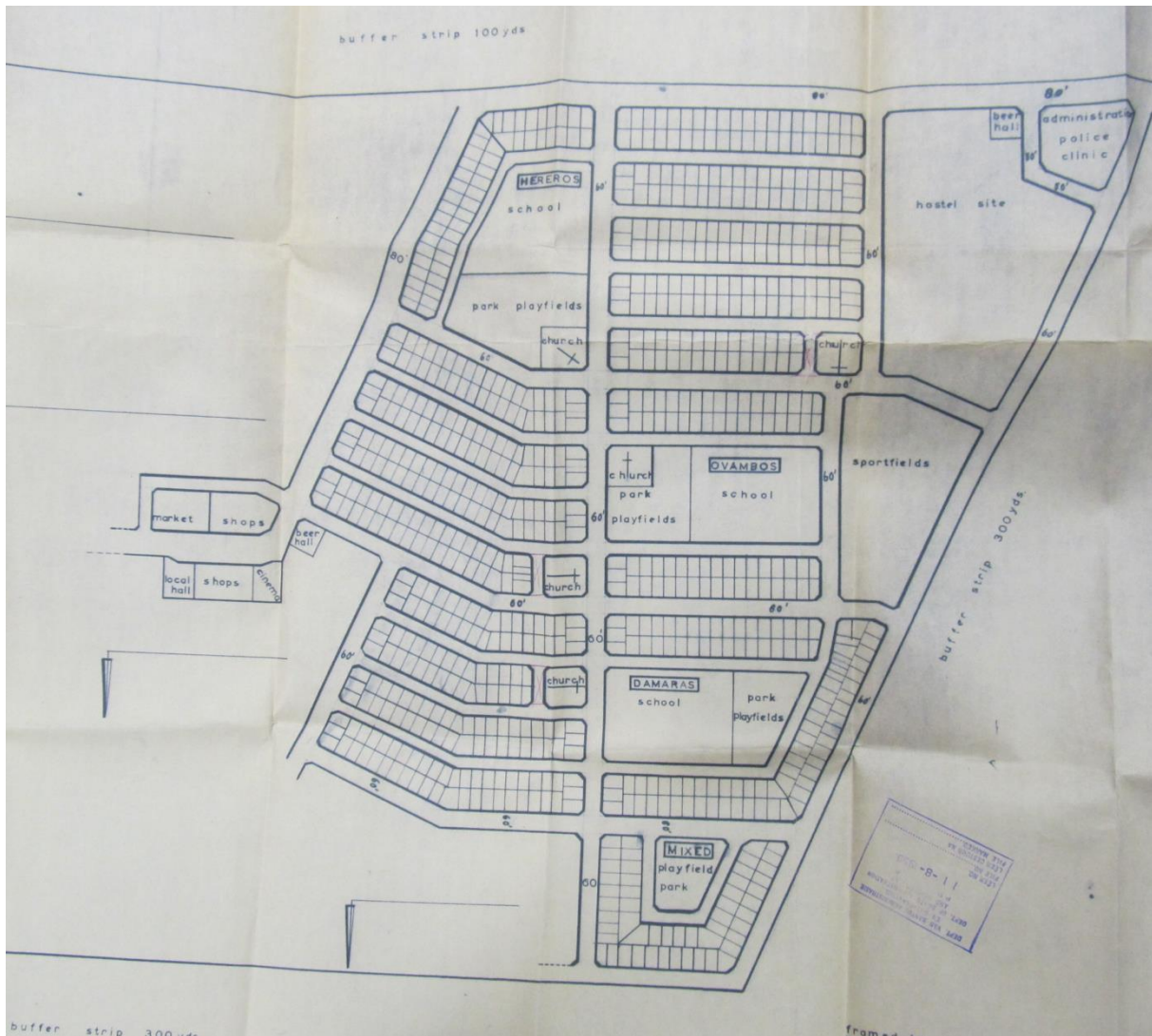
As a result of this policy, by 1977, when the process of dismantling the influx control legalisations began to show South Africa's good will to the international community,

¹⁹⁵ In 1952 Tsumeb became a separate district, according to Grootfontein Commissioner for Native Affairs except for Grootfontein and Otavi, in the Grootfontein district there was still another location in Rietfontein and mine compound in Berg Aukas. „Die drie lokasies is almal uiters primitief en vuil, en dit kan ook nie verweg word om anders te wees nie, aangesien die inwoners hul eie husies moet bou, meestal van aptelmateriaal“ (LGR 3/3/3., Jaarverslag oor Naturellesake: Distrikt Grootfontein: 1957, Naturellekommissaris).

¹⁹⁶ This proclamation was based on South Africa's Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act of 1945 (Simon 1986: 293).

¹⁹⁷ This was also discussed at the Native Advisory Board Meeting on 21 February, 1967, which was attended also by the Native Affairs Commissioner Eaton (BAO, 9414, A19/1235 – A19/1239, Notule van adviesraadsvergadering, 21.9.1967)

„Namibian urban form and structure were indistinguishable from those of South Africa“ (Simon 1986: 291).



Map 7. Proposed scheme for the New location from 1959 with marked sections for Hereros, Ovambos and Damaras surrounded by buffer zones. (NASA BAO 3/2231)

In 1964 new location regulations for Grootfontein (Government Notice No. 128/1964) were approved. In fact they literally copied the regulations for Windhoek. When it came to people's movements to and from the town and the conditions for staying there, they were very similar to the regulations from 1933. The system of site, residence, lodger and visitor permits remained. What was new was that the location dwellers could buy a house - and obtain a loan for the purpose. However, importantly, the plot on which it stayed remained the property of municipality.

The issue of moving the location to another site was, in the sources I consulted, raised for the first time at the Council Meeting of the Municipality of Grootfontein in May 1948.¹⁹⁸ At its meeting in July 1951 the main reasons for the proposed movement was the need to expand the

¹⁹⁸ MGR 1/3/16 1/1/2, Minutes of a Council, Municipality of Grootfontein, 13.5.1948, BAO, 9414, A19/1235 – A19/1239, Letter of the Town Clerk from 19.9.1962, Vergoeding eiendome ou lokasie: munisipalitaet Grootfontein.

industrial area and too close proximity of the location to the proposed new European hospital.¹⁹⁹ Later on it became clear that the area needed to be used for the expansion of the residential area for the whites.²⁰⁰ Furthermore, the location also needed space into which it could expand.²⁰¹ In April 1954 it was decided that the new location would be segregated from the whites-only designated area by the industrial area and Otavi railway line.²⁰²

Furthermore, a buffer zone of at least 500 yards was to exist between the new location and any built-up area. The barrier area had to be structure-free.²⁰³ The new location was proclaimed in 1960 (government notice No. 118/1960) and construction work commenced soon after. In January 1963 it was reported that the moving of natives to the new location had practically been realised.²⁰⁴ Umulunga, as the Ovambo people call an area with makalani palms, was chosen as the name for the location.²⁰⁵ However, In April 1964 2 422 natives were living in Grootfontein, of whom 536 were still in the old location.²⁰⁶ In March 1966 the old location was reported as completely vacated.²⁰⁷ In Grootfontein the same racial segregation that had been applied a few years earlier in Windhoek was in force. While in Grootfontein the transfer to the location went off quietly, in Windhoek the same process had been accompanied by protests and the shooting to death of eleven people by police in December 1959 (Pendleton 1996, Wallace 2011: 254).

Importantly, a school for the natives was opened in the new location in Grootfontein.²⁰⁸ In 1965 it had 10 class rooms, nine teachers and 456 pupils. Most of the students were from the town, and it seems that the majority were Ovambos, Hereros and Damaras.²⁰⁹ Next to the location a clinic was built.

The the location continued to be expanded with new houses in the years to come. According to A. Rousseau (pers. communication), the Ovambo, Damara and Herero sections were still being built on to 1980, the expansion of the Single Quarters stopped earlier. In the second half of the 1960s the construction of the Coloured location started. From the beginning where to place the Coloureds was an issue. It was decided they would be placed temporarily in the new

¹⁹⁹ MGR 1/3/16, 1/4/1, Municipality Grootfontein, Minutes of the Council Meeting, 19.7.1951.

²⁰⁰ MGR 1/3/16 1/4/1, Minutes of a Council Meeting, 15.5.1953.

²⁰¹ MGR 1/3/16 1/4/1, Minutes of a Meeting Held by the Council and Members of the Township-board on 21.4.1953.

²⁰² Similarly was in Windhoek next to the new location Katutura built the industrial area as well. This places them away from the town, but made them easily available to work in the mentioned area without passing through the areas inhabited by the whites (see contributions of different authors on the on the life in pre-independence Katutura in Melber 1988).

²⁰³ MGR 1/3/16 1/4/1, Minutes of the Special Meeting Held between Members of the Township Board and the Municipal Council of Grootfontein, 27.4.1954.

²⁰⁴ MGR 1/3/16 1/2/2, Notule van gewone vergadering, 31.1.1964. For Namibian urban spaces within the commercial farming area is, similarly to South Africa, up to now typical the „twin-city phenomena“ with the town areas divided into European and African part (Tvedten, Mupotola 1995: 5, referring to Swilling 1994).

²⁰⁵ Nowadays the name is officially Omulunga.

²⁰⁶ MGR 1/3/16 1/2/3, Monthly Report, April 1964, Location Superintendent.

²⁰⁷ MGR 1/3/16 1/2/6, Die stadsraad van Grootfontein, burgemeestersverslag vir die ampsjaar geëideg 9 Maart 1966.

²⁰⁸ Following the Education Ordinance of 1962 the state initiated basic education for the natives and took over also many mission schools (Wallace 2011: 252).

²⁰⁹ MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/6, Die stadsraad van Grootfontein, burgemeestersverslag vir die ampsjaar geëideg 9 Maart 1966; Gewone Vergadering van die Stadsraad, 30.3.1967; Government proclamation No. 65/1966.

location, with visions of relocating them later on to a *Kleuringsdorp*,²¹⁰ which was established in 1966 and named Luiperdheuwel. In contrast to the location, the Coloureds not only rented property, but could also buy the houses and plots.²¹¹ Later the location was expanded with another district called Soweto, which was constructed by the Namibia Housing Enterprise (NHE). Soweto was intended as a place for the less well-off.

Huis no.	(3)	Autokaste / Owambo	Gebal	Gebal	Ras
		Naam van Eenaar	Mans	Vrouens	
62	+	Wille Erika Neumbo	1	2	Owambo
63		Wille Neumbo	-	1	Owambo
64		Hendrik Ngombe	-	1	Owambo
65	↓	Linus Johannes	3	-	Boesman ✓
66		Jonatan K. Nangombe	-	1	Owambo
67	+	Ewaldine Johannes	-	2	Owambo
68	+	Martha Stefanus	-	2	Owambo
69		Tiki Muvukuani	3	-	Owambo
70	+	Selma Namonde	-	-	Owambo
71	+	Martha	-	-	Owambo
72	L	Erika Hikas	-	2	Boesmans ✓
73	+	Maria Nattali	-	1	Owambo
74	+	Regina Aroes	-	1	Damara
75	↓	Kleofas Haagen	1	2	Kleeling
76		Ephraim Ekali	1	-	Owambo
77		Stefanus Aitembu	-	1	Owambo
78	+	Selma Koakoseb	1	1	Owambo
79		Alfrid Rainhard	1	1	Owambo
80		Thomas Hamua	1	1	Owambo
81	+	Sanna Boesia	-	-	Damara
82		Heremias Hamuarua	1	1	Owambo
83		Titus Kambara	1	1	Owambo
84		Bibija Amtenja	-	-	Owambo
85	+	Erika Hangara	-	-	Herero
86		Kornelius Shiezu	-	1	Owambo

Picture 5. The list of dwellers of the Owambo section of the Grootfontein location in 1960. Notice two Bushmen numbered 65 and 72. (NAN MGR 2/1/8, file 35, location 1954 - 1965)

²¹⁰ MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/2, Grootfontein Munisipaliteit, Notule van gewone Vergadering gehou op 31 Januarie 1963; MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/2, Onderhoud met Dr. J.W.Brandt L.U.K en D. Arnold, 11.2.1963; MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/5, Ordinary Council Meeting, 25.11.1965, Bylae „A“, Stigtingsvorwardes.

²¹¹ MGR 1/3/23, Notule van 'n vergadering van die bestuurskomitee, 16.9.1980, Memorandum, toekomstige uitbreiding: Luiperdheuwel.

The New location consisted of three ethnically divided sections: the Ovambo, Damara and Herero location and there were also Single Quarters for the Ovambo and Kavango contract workers. In the Registry of Natives, each house in the location was marked by a capital D, H or O standing for Damara, Herero or Ovambo location, respectively. This was followed by a number and its inhabitants were often recorded by their first name. In contrast to the old location, only brickhouses were permitted, shanties were outlawed, except for temporary *sinkhuises* (corrugated iron houses) for the accommodation of workers that companies could put up.

Unfortunately we lack reliable statistical data for the number of Bushmen living in the New location from its establishment to independence. In the Grootfontein municipality records kept at the National Archives of Namibia only data for 1967 – 1968 are mentioned. In 1967 there were 13 Bushmen (4 men, 3 women, 6 children) out of a total native population of 2 603,²¹² and the following year we find 15 Bushmen (4/3/8) from a native population of 2 639.²¹³ The data for the ethnicity of Grootfontein's native dwellers for subsequent years state only „Ovambo“, „Herero“ and „Damara“, since this was apparently ascribed to residents according to which of the three sections of the location they lived in. The Single Quarters were meant primarily for single Ovambo men. Thus, these statistics conceal people from other ethnic groups, including the Bushmen, under one of the three ethnic labels. As shown below, when the town's authorities began to lose control of who was living in the location in the second half of the 1970s, it was apparently difficult to get reliable statistics about those dwelling there.

Puzzlingly, during my research between 2007 and 2013 there were two groups of !Xun, one claiming that there were „many“ !Xun in Grootfontein in the decades before independence, and the other saying there were only few. Since the former were only a handful of individuals, for some time I tended to somewhat ignore their claim. However, after a discussion about the number of the !Xun with one of my good informants Paul, I partly reviewed my previous position. Paul, who was born in 1967, told me in 2009 that in the 1970s and 1980s there had been even more !Xun in Grootfontein than there were by the time I was conducting my research. After hearing this, I was very confused. I had tended to believe that the number of the !Xun had dramatically increased only at the beginning of the 2000s, especially after the provision of several plots to !Xun families in Blikkiesdorp.

Why did Paul and Jakob, Petrus and his sister Kun//a give me information that was different to that I had received from the other !Xun I met in the town? It became apparent that in contrast to most of the other !Xun living in Grootfontein during the period of my research they were no newcomers to Grootfontein, but had lived there in their childhoods and spent long periods of their lives there. Most !Xun who had been my informants and had been dwelling in Grootfontein for longer periods only since the establishment of Blikkiesdorp may not know about the !Xun living in the location in past, since before they came to Grootfontein they lived mostly at the farms and visited town only occasionally, when accompanying a farmer. If they stayed there then, it was often in the *buitekamer* and, thus, they did not have the opportunity to establish social contacts with the inhabitants of the location. Even though I am convinced there were significantly fewer !Xun in the town in the 1970s and 1980s than during the time of my research, it is likely that there were always more !Xun than most of the

²¹² MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/10, Grootfontein Munisipalitaet, Maadverslag: February 1967, Bestuurder/Lokasiesuperintendent.

²¹³ MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/11, Grootfontein Munisipalitaet, Maandverslag: April 1968, Bestuurder/Lokasiesuperintendent.

current !Xun Grootfontein dwellers claim. Interestingly, the !Xun who spent their lives moving between the former western Bushmanland and the adjacent farms and visited Grootfontein only sporadically often claimed that when they were young there were no !Xun at all living in the town. Thus, when I asked about the !Xun in the Old location, one of Kashe's older relatives from the Bushmanland settlement of Grashoek, told me convincingly, but wrongly: „There were only the workers and the Boers“. The reason for this was that the kin network of the western Bushmanland !Xun apparently did not reach as far as Grootfontein and since they lived at some distance from the town they had difficulty finding out what the real situation was.

According Jakob quite many !Xun went to the New location in the 1960s. His brother Andris recalled having had three female relatives who lived with non-!Xun men in the Old location. All of them moved to the New location and the numbers of !Xun who resided there were, according to him and other !Xun informants, similar to those in the Old location. The construction of the New location in Grootfontein was an employment opportunity for many urban dwellers, it also enabled them to stay in Grootfontein with their families. Several of my informants mentioned a few cases of non-!Xun men who had families with !Xun women and stayed with them in the town thanks to their work in the building of houses in the New location. The !Xun living in Grootfontein continued to live scattered among other ethnic groups. However, not everything was the same. According to Andris, more !Xun men had started to live in the location, mostly in the Damara section. More !Xun moved allegedly to the Herero location. According to Andris, these were often !Xun who had worked for Hereros in former Hereroland.

Andris (who settled in the township in 2003) explained that up to independence the number of the !Xun in the location was still not very high. At that time he was working at the farms, but would occasionally visit his !Xun relatives, whom he described as „mixed“, at Soweto. Without having any statistical data we may very cautiously assume a steady increase in the numbers of Bushmen in the decades before independence, although we should not imagine it as a linear, year-by-year increase. There may have been increases in some years and decreases in others. Jakob recalled that some of his relatives came to the town in the 1970s in order to flee violence at the farms. He recalled that the !Xun continued to move to the town in the 1980s.

Of the three older !Xun informants, Petrus had spent most time in the location. In the 1960s he had worked for several years in a garage. Then he found work as a construction worker building school. In the 1970s he was employed by the company Etosha Petroleum prospecting for minerals in this area. At that time he lived in the Single Quarters, which shows that it was no longer solely single Bantu men that could live there. Afterwards he worked as a lorry assistant for a company transporting Ovambo contract workers to and from Owambo and still in the 1970s he started to work as construction worker in the town again.

Andris remembered that it was possible to see Bushmen in large numbers in the town only after the South African Army started its operations against the independence movement in the north of the country. The Bushmen were working for the South African Army and staying on army bases. They could be seen in Grootfontein only when doing shopping or visiting the town. He recalled that the Bushmen were also employed by the police counter-insurgency unit Koevoet.

In the 1960s the political situation in the country started to change. In the second half of that decade the location became a hotspot for political agitation against the country's apartheid

system and the town administration was especially anxious about the influence of SWAPO. The party's criticism was also directed against the pass system. „Hierdie paswet kom op niks anders as verdrukking en slawerny neer nie,“ Rehabeam Uazukuani of the NUDO party told a crowd of 300 location dwellers at a political meeting held in April 1966. „Dit is hierdie gedrog wat die werklike eienaars van S.W.A. van hul vryheid ontnem.“²¹⁴ However, the situation in the location was from the perspective of the town's administration still relatively trouble-free and the monthly locations reports generally mentioned only „less serious offences“, for which court fines were paid. There were occasional complaints about youths running on the street at night.²¹⁵ The most troublesome spot was the South West Africa Company worker compound as there was weak control of the movements of the people and there were many deserters and vagrants there, who sold illegally-brewed beer to the Bantu people in transit in the nearby SWANLA depot.²¹⁶ The workers at the SWANLA depot were also selling illegally brewed beer.²¹⁷ Both places were therefore the target of regular police raids during which illicit beer was destroyed.

The situation, however, changed dramatically, when the Government Proclamation No. 205/1968 allowed natives to brew beer at home for their own consumption. This beer could not be destroyed during the raids. In fact, however, location dwellers began to sell the beer illegally to one another.²¹⁸ The municipality also erected a beer hall in the location. At the same time, the municipality also started to sell „white drinks“ in the location.²¹⁹ From then the municipality records increasingly mention incidents of violence in the township: at first people breaking house windows at night and harassing others. In Single Quarters vandalism and burglaries were rife and young women were reported to „sell their bodies“ to the Ovambo men in this part of the location.²²⁰ Stone throwing was often reported at night.

Allowing the making home-brewed beer for self-consumption meant the start of a large-scale drinking culture in the township. As one Native Advisory Member put it at the time:

... dit is nie nie meer n geval van vir eie gebruik brou nie maar dat baie huise nou klein Biersale is. Dit is ook by hierdie klein Biersale waar die moelikhede in die woonbuurt ontstaan. Mense drink daar en daar is geen kontrole nie en dan ontstaan bakleiery en messteek asook klipgooiery.²²¹

In September 1969 two people were stabbed to death in the Grootfontein location.²²² The beer hall was also prone to violence.²²³ The frequency of physical assaults increased. This violence

²¹⁴ MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/6, Notule van NUDO vergadering gehou op 10 April 1966 to Grootfontein bantuwohnbuurt.

²¹⁵ MGR 1/3/16, 1/3/2, Grootfontein Munisipalitaet, Notule van adviesraadsvergadering, 25.10.1965.

²¹⁶ MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/3, Notule van gewone Vergadering, 28. 3.1963.

²¹⁷ MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/10, Grootfontein Munisipalitaet, Mandverslag: April 1967, Bestuurder/Lokasiesuperintendent.

²¹⁸ MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/14, Grootfontein Munisipalitaet, Mandverslag: Februarie 1970, Bestuurder nie-Blankesake; MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/13, Draft Estimates 1970/71, Native Revenue Fund; Municipality of Grootfontein, Monthly Report: May 1970); MGR 1/3/16 1/2/15, Notule van adviesraadsvergadering, 15.4.1971. Andris however recalled that if a worker overdrank and did not get in time to his employment place, the police would come to his house and detain him.

²¹⁹ The first notice I came across regarding the operation of the beer hall was January 1970, but it could happen already in the second half of 1969 (MGR 1/2/13, (Grootfontein Munisipalitaet, Mandverslag: Februarie 1970, Bestuurder nie-Blankesake). However, because the natives could produce the beer at home, they upset the town's administration by not buying it much at the beer hall.

²²⁰ MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/15, Notule van a inwoners vergadering, 22.9.1970.

²²¹ MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/15, Notule van a' adviesraad vergadering, 15.4.1971.

²²² MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/13, Grootfontein Municipality, Monthly Report, October 1969, Manager Bantu Affairs

²²³ MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/17, Munisipalitaet Grootfontein, Notule van adviesraadvergadering, 7.8.1972.

took place mostly at weekends, when people drank the most and when the locations were visited by people from outside the town and Coloureds from Luiperdheuwel. How to control the movements of the short-term visitors, of whom no records were kept, was a headache for the municipal authority. Before the police managed to come to the scenes of violence, the assaulters could run away.²²⁴ The uncontrolled movement of people was also eased by the fact that there were still no street lights.²²⁵ The main reasons for the violence in the Single Quarters were reported the fights for women and knives were commonly used in the fights.²²⁶

In the 1960s the town's authorities tried to keep the location free of illegal dwellers. However, in comparison to the Old location they were not completely successful. This time the problem also concerned unemployed adult men. Since the borders of the location were not clearly marked there were also cases of natives being arrested without knowing they were in the location area.²²⁷ To stop illegal movements into the location in 1967 it was decided to build a fence around the whole location so that there would only be one road connecting it to the town and there would also be three gates to the south, built so that women could go to the bush to fetch the firewood.²²⁸ The fence around the location was finished the following year.²²⁹

Another emerging problem was the developing overcrowding.²³⁰ This situation was exacerbated by the fact that some location dwellers did not want other people to live in the house they rented. Although the municipality would have liked to force them to take lodgers, it could not legally enforce this policy.²³¹ In the houses of the Ovambo section there lived on average 5,65 persons, in the Damara section 5,4 and in the Herero area 3,8. In Single Quarters violence occurred in the rooms that were shared by many workers.²³²

Importantly, the Ordinary Council decided in November 1966 with reference to Government Proclamation No. 56/1951 that in the white area of the town no „Bantu“ women, but only men could be accommodated at the house or premises of their employer. Their numbers were to be regulated, for example, at a private family house there could only be one domestic worker and only five were permitted at the hotel or slaughter house.²³³ The aim was to limit the presence of the natives in the area inhabited by the whites as much as possible and, apparently, to limit contact between white men and black women. Only in 1978 was a concession made that in the case of bona-fide female domestic workers a well-reasoned request would be considered on a case-by-case basis by the town authorities.²³⁴

²²⁴ MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/17, Munisipaliteit Grootfontein, Maandverslag: April 1972; MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/23, Munisipaliteit Grootfontein, Maandverslag: Februarie 1976, Bestuurder Bantoesake.

²²⁵ MLR 1/3/16, 1/2/17, Munisipaliteit Grootfontein, Maandverslag: November 1969.

²²⁶ MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/17, Notule van a' adviesraad vergadering, 27.11.1969.

²²⁷ BAO, 9414, A19/1235-A19/1239, Letter of the Town Clerk, ref. No. 12/2/3, Omheining van inboorlingswoonbuurt: Grootfontein.

²²⁸ MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/9, Notule van a' adviesraadsvergadering, 31.7.1967.

²²⁹ MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/9, Town Council of Grootfontein, Ordinary Council Meeting, 26.10.1967.

²³⁰ MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/6, Notule van adviesraadvergadering, 9.9.1966

²³¹ MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/17, Notule van 'n adviesraadvergadering, 5.6.1972; MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/19, Notule van bestuurskomiteevergadering, 22.11.1973

²³² For example BAO, 9414, A19/1235 – A19/1239, Letter of the Town Clerk, ref. No. 9/2 from 5.10.1964, Oprigting van enkelkwartiere in nuwe Bantoeewoonbuurt: Grootfontein.

²³³ MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/6, Ordinary Council Meeting, 24.11.1966; however the number of the natives outside the location was not very high, in 1970 there were 3030 natives in Grootfontein, out of them 109 in companies' compounds, 130 by their employers in the town and industrial area and 16 at SWANLA compound (MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/15, Munisipaliteit Grootfontein, Maandverslag: November, Desember 1970 en Januarie 1971).

²³⁴ MGR 1/1/16 MGR 1/3/16, 1/3/19, Notule van 'n gewone vergadering van die bestuurskomitee, 16.3.1978

There was also a continual problem with old people settling with their kin in the location without authorisation and also with children whose parents were living in the Otjituo Reserve, Ovamboland, or other urban areas and who were staying in the location with the relatives. The town authorities tried to send these children back to their parents. The government policy was, ideally, to have only employed and productive adults in the town, with their families preferably staying in the communal areas: „Die Bantoes is hier omdat die blankes hier (in Grootfontein – note R.N.) is...“, as this stance was clearly expressed in municipality records in 1963. Therefore, it was more desirable to provide accommodation for single working men by enlarging the Single Quarters than to build the family houses.²³⁵

In the 1970s the situation in the whole district started to change significantly and to get out of control. Towards the end of the first half of the 1970s the Grootfontein area saw increased desertion by extraterritorial and northern contract workers who were leaving their employers before the termination of their contracts. In 1975 desertion in the area was already described as an „uncontrolled evil“.²³⁶ The municipality was, however, also realising that among the reasons behind this tendency were low wages and insufficient rations which did not suffice to providing for a family.²³⁷

In 1936 the whites comprised 43 percent of the town's population, in 1946 this had fallen to 32 percent, but remained at this level for the next 30 years. In its 1975 report for the municipality on the new town planning scheme the hired company INTERBEPLANNERS S.W.A (NAN. INTERBEPLANNERS S.W.A. 1975) based its plans on the projection that between 1985 and 2000 the ratio of the white and black population would remain virtually the same: the whites would drop from 40 to 39 percent of the population (in comparison the the figures from the 1940s it would in fact mean its numErikal increase) and the native population would stay at 55 percent, the rest being Coloureds.²³⁸

However, the legislative changes of the second half of the 1970s altered the situation in the location.²³⁹ Up to the easing of the movement control legislative, the native population of the town increased mainly due to natural growth and as a reflection of the demand for labour in the town.²⁴⁰ The municipality dealt with the problem of an increasingly uncontrolled influx of people into the location between 1975 and 1976. The search for these illegal dwellers was, however, complicated by the fact that they were hidden by the people with whom they were staying.²⁴¹ With the abolition of the contract work system in 1970s the Ovambos or Kavangos could come to Grootfontein and look for work in the same way as the locals, that is, without being contracted in advance, and if they did find work, they did not have to stay here for a limited time as specified in their contract as in the past, but could stay permanently.²⁴² At the same time, the fact that the Ovambos were no longer bound by contracts enabled them to

²³⁵ MGR 1/3/16 1/2/9 (?), Notule van adviesraadsvergadering, 21.3.1968; MGR 1/3/16 1/2/2, Notule van buitengewone vergadering, 12.2.1963; MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/20, Munisipalitaet Grootfontein, Mandverslag: November, December 1973, Januarie 1974 - Bantoesake, Bestuurder Bantoesake

²³⁶ MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/22, Besoek: Werwingskantore: Ondangwa

²³⁷ MGR 1/3/16/ 1/2/23, Notule van 'a gewone vergadering van die bestuurskomitee, 19.3.1976

²³⁸ NAN P 2377 Grootfontein Town Planning Scheme 1975: 2,5

²³⁹ To legislative changes in the second half of the 1970s see also Wallace (2011: 287).

²⁴⁰ MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/19, Munisipalitaet Grootfontein, Mandverslag: November, December 1973, Januarie 1974 - Bantoesake, Bestuurder Bantoesake

²⁴¹ MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/22, Notule van a adviesraadvergadering: Januarie 1976.

²⁴² According to Hishongwa the pre-reforms conditions remained to some extent unchanged even in the early 1990s, because many employers did not provide accommodation facilities for the employees' families, and therefore their wives and children could not accompany them (Hishongwa 1992: 57, 64).

leave easier their jobs, which could hit badly their employers. The town's officials further feared that the social and political unrest in the north could lead to the area becoming home to thousands of black people migrating there from the north.²⁴³

In January 1978 the Single Quarters, originally designed for unmarried contract workers, was home to 197 Ovambo women with children and about 50 % of the Single Quarters inhabitants were classified as „illegals“ by the municipality. Raids in the Single Quarters and the arrest and charging of its illegal occupiers would work temporarily. In August 1978 it was reported that „hundreds of women and children together with approximately 500 illegals“ were living in the Single Quarters²⁴⁴ and that there were taverns and brothels. Furthermore, the overcrowding of the Single Quarters led to both locals and employers being frustrated that there was no accommodation in the town and, thus, the former could not be employed there.²⁴⁵ It was also felt that the overcrowded Single Quarters were a breeding ground for SWAPO²⁴⁶ and it was reported that location dwellers were harassed or even „terrorised“ by groups of young SWAPO sympathisers.²⁴⁷ The chairman of the Native Advisory Board thus raised the question of whether things had not gone so far that Single Quarters should not be torn down.²⁴⁸

This brought about further problems. Since illegal occupiers of the location did not pay any rent, the local natives did not want to pay either.²⁴⁹ The situation had changed to such an extent that town officials no longer felt secure enough to enter the Single Quarters unarmed.²⁵⁰ In April 1978, after the relaxation of the control measures the previous year,²⁵¹ thousands of Ovambos had come to the district and there was no legal provision for repatriating them.²⁵² The movement of the Ovambos into the location led to tension between them and the Hereros, Damaras and even already settled Ovambos, who saw in the new

²⁴³ MGR 1/3/16, 1/3/19, Munisipaliteit Grootfontein, Maandverslag: Januarie 1978, Departement Bantoesake; MGR 1/3/16, 1/3/16, Munisipaliteit Grootfontein, Mandverslag: Julie 1978 – Bantoesake; I did not find out when exactly the passes stopped to be used in the Grootfontein district. In the reports on the income of the Grootfontein municipality the „pass fees“ were mentioned for the last time for February 1973, from the next month they were replaced by „registration fees“ (MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/18, Munisipaliteit Grootfontein, Mandverslag: February 1973 - Bantoesake, Bestuurder Bantoesake). Registration fees were for the last time listed in the municipal income reports for January 1975 (MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/20, Munisipaliteit Grootfontein, Mandverslag: February 1975 - Bestuurder Bantoesake).

²⁴⁴ Since April 1980 the town's administration made arrangement with South African Police and South African Defence Force to undertake raids in the Single Quarters. During the raid on for example 11 August were detained 430 men and charged with trespassing and 371 were said to leave the location (MGR 1/3/16, 1/3/23, Die Stadsklerk Grootfontein, Mandverslag: Augustus 1980 – Departement Gemeenskapsake)

²⁴⁵ MGR 1/3/16, 1/3/17, Die Stadsklerk Grootfontein, Mandverslag: Maart 1979 – Departement Plurale Sake; the employers also often did not register the workers, which came out by frequent inspections and the former were fined.

²⁴⁶ MGR 1/3/16, 1/3/17, Die Stadsklerk Grootfontein, Verslag: Departement Gemmenskapsake, Desember 1978 – Januarie 1970.

²⁴⁷ MGR 1/3/16, 1/3/16, Munisipaliteit Grootfontein, Mandverslag: Augustus 1978 - Bantoesake, Bestuurder; MGR 1/3/16, 1/3/16, Munisipaliteit Grootfontein, Mandverslag: September 1978 – Bantoesake.

²⁴⁸ Notule van a' adviesraad vergadering, 29.8.1978.

²⁴⁹ MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/21, Munisipaliteit Grootfontein, Mandverslag: Augustus 1975 - Bantoesake, Bestuurder Bantoesake.

²⁵⁰ MGR 1/3/16, 1/3/19, Munisipaliteit Grootfontein, Mandverslag: Maart 1978 - Bantoesake, Bestuurder Bantoesake.

²⁵¹ The crucial legal changes between 1977 and 1981 are listed in Simon 1986: 293 - 4, among them was also the removal of racial restriction in residential areas and the right to buy land in the urban area.

²⁵² MGR 1/3/16, 1/3/19, Notule van a' adviesraad vergadering, 25.4.1978; the movement of the Bantu people to the towns into the commercial farming area was brought about also by the drought of the late 1970s (Wallace 2011: 301)

migrants a common enemy.²⁵³ In April 1979 the local natives killed an Ovambo who had come to the location with a group of „molesters“ from Tsumeb.²⁵⁴

Local men complained that the contract workers had affairs with local women, who gave birth to children, but then the contract workers went to work elsewhere and left their families.²⁵⁵ Sometimes it remained unknown who had fathered the children.²⁵⁶ It was reported that the women, if employed in Grootfontein, sent their children to their parents to be raised and went on with their work.²⁵⁷ The Bantu women also often went to the location for one- or two-week visits. However, those who were pregnant frequently stayed longer and gave birth in the town, which meant the child had the right to stay in Grootfontein.²⁵⁸ It was observed as a kind of pattern that the men and women lived together for some time, had children, but then the relationship broke down and they moved onto other relationships, out of which other children were born. At the same time daughters would enter into relationships and have children as well and homes became multi-generational, which led to overcrowding.²⁵⁹

The town authorities felt powerlessness in the face of this challenge:

Onself het nie gepaste voertuie of personal om hierdie plakker vandale aan te kla nie. Die enigste drie konstabels is bang, daar onlangs een van kollegas doodgeslaan is wat teen hierdie mense moet optree. Hierdie plakkers is bewus van ons magteloosheid om op te tree en buit die toestand uit. Indien ons personeel dit durf waag om die Enkelkwartiere te betree, word ons getart en gevloek.²⁶⁰

The 1980s saw rapid urbanisation throughout the whole territory, especially in the communal areas in the northern region. However it was also strong in the white commercial farm area and the population of Grootfontein rose from 7 536 in 1981 to 12 000 in 1990 (Frayne 1992: 20), a 37 percent increase.

This does not seem that many !Xun moved into the town during this period. Amos Shivute (born 1975, mother !Xun, father Coloured born in South Africa²⁶¹), regarded by some !Xun dwelling in Grootfontein as their leader, moved from the farms into the location in 1986. At that time there was still not many !Xun living there. The locations at the time consisted of brick houses, and only a few !Xun people, the relatives of the plot inhabitants, built corrugated iron shacks at the backyard. Then they would share the household's costs.

²⁵³ MGR 1/3/16, 1/3/19, Notule van a' adviesraad vergadering, 25.4.1978; MGR 1/3/16, 1/3/17, Die Stadsklerk Grootfontein, Mandverslag: Mei 1979 – Departement Plurale Sake; there has been always some tension between the local natives „settled“ in the locations and the migrants on the grounds that the latter would interfere with local women (SWAA 2051, A445/7, letter of the Chief Native Commissioner, 2.5.1955)

²⁵⁴ MGR 1/3/16, 1/3/17, Die Stadsklerk Grootfontein, Mandverslag: Maart 1979 – Departement Plurale Sake

²⁵⁵ Notule van a' adviesraadvergadering, 13.7.1967; MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/12, Notule van 'n adviesraadvergadering, 12.3.1969.

²⁵⁶ MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/25, Munisipaliteit Grootfontein, Maandverslag: Julie 1977, Departement nie-blankesake

²⁵⁷ MLR 1/3/16, 1/2/15, Notule van a inwoners vergadering, 22.9.1970

²⁵⁸ MGR 1/3/16, 1/2/25, Munisipaliteit Grootfontein, Maandverslag: Julie 1977, Departement nie-blankesake

²⁵⁹ MGR 1/3/16 1/3/17, Die Stadsklerk Grootfontein, Mandverslag: Februarie 1979 – Departement Gemeenskapsake

²⁶⁰ MGR 1/3/16 1/3/17, Munisipaliteit Grootfontein, Mandverslag: October 1979, Departement Plurale Sake; about the stabbing death of one constable it was reported already few months earlier (MGR 1/3/16, 1/3/17, Munisipaliteit Grootfontein, Mandverslag: Junie 1979 – Departement Plurale Sake)

²⁶¹ The father used to work on the boreholes and in the construction of the tarred roads, but he never lived with the family.

Independence: Bushmen squatters and establishment of Blikkiesdorp

In 1990 Namibia became independent. This did not bring about an immediate change in the !Xun's mobility patterns. As in the past many farm workers moved between the farms depending on the availability of work and how many of their kin could follow them depended on the good will of the farmer. There was not a significant change even regarding the mobility of the !Xun to Grootfontein. Those who wanted to stay there for a long time still had to have a place to live, for which they needed to pay rent which meant they had to have a long-term job. To find such work in the town, where population was swelling and where the unemployment was increasing, was difficult for most !Xun, as most of them were illiterate and had spent most of their lives at the farms. Thus, those !Xun who started living in the town could do so for a longer time only if they had work. If they lost their job and were unable to find a new one, they had to work at the farm in order to provide for their families. Since the numbers of the !Xun in the location immediately after independence apparently did not increase that much, the !Xun at the farms often did not have kinsfolk in the town to whom they could move. Psychological factors played a role as well since many of the !Xun had no experience of living in an urban environment and so they preferred to stay at the farms or in Bushmanland.

In 1991 Grootfontein had 12 829 residents and it was the 11th biggest town in the country. 31 664 people lived in Grootfontein district, half of whom were migrants from other regions (Melber 1996: 16 - 19). The location, after independence renamed a township, has continuously expanded²⁶² and it became much more socio-economically stratified than before independence. What had been before 1990 a non-existent informal sector started to flourish.²⁶³

According to my research based on the data provided by !Xun informants, town officials and inhabitants, the !Xun began to come to Grootfontein in higher numbers and their presence began visible there around 2000. First, the new arrivals squatted at the Total petrol station on the northern edge of the town, from where they could get a hike to farms north and northeast of Grootfontein and to former Bushmanland, and they also squatted under the trees opposite the SPAR supermarket along the main street going through Grootfontein. Even though it had already been 10 years after independence and numbers of the dwellers in the location were rising, it was probably for the first time that families of squatters appeared in the centre of the town, the erstwhile white area. The fact that they were Bushmen made the squatters even more visible. The then regional governor offered the chance to stay in the traditionally built huts at the town's Multipurpose centre next to governor's office out of sympathy for their plight. This was originally meant as a tourist project, but after more and more !Xun came to the centre the situation spiralled out of the control and the intended project turned out to be a disaster. The governor's office then attempted to move some of the !Xun squatters from Grootfontein to the communal area of former Bushmanland with the well-meaning idea that they could start a better life there. However, even this project was an almost total failure - the project was not prepared well, the !Xun felt socially alienated in Bushmanland and did not

²⁶² In the first half of the 1990s was constructed Malanami, it was a joint Namibian-Malaysian private business project and the expensive houses were often sold on government and security sector officials (pers. communication with A. Rousseau)

²⁶³ The stratification processes must have resembled those described in Katutura by Pendleton. If Katutura had before the independence a uniform appearance, after it the gaps between those who could seize new employment opportunities and got formal-sector jobs and those who did not, started to grow (Pendleton 1996: 72, 159 - 161).

know how to make living there and, therefore, most of them ended up again as squatters in the Grootfontein commercial centre.

For many of them, however, the situation changed after the establishment of Blikkiesdorp, the first shack quarter in the history of Grootfontein. According to Rousseau (pers. communication), its older part, now called Old Blikkiesdorp, was set up in 2001 and Ovambo, Kavango and Damara people there moved from the small and overcrowded Shamalendi plots near the town and there were also people from the overcrowded Single Quarters. I learned from different sources that the Grootfontein municipal authority was opposed to the idea of setting up the shack quarter. However, it had to relent to political pressure from above. In 2003 and 2004 a new area next to the Old Blikkiesdorp sprang up and this came to be called New Blikkiesdorp. 376 plots were given to applicants, but interest had been much higher. „We can make 1000 plots and it will be filled in a month,“ claimed Rousseau in 2008. According to him, black farmers want to have a house in the town for their wives and families so that the children can go to school. In addition, the soldiers at the Grootfontein army base want to have their families there as well and there are also requests for plots from people from communal areas.

The establishing of New Blikkiesdorp also played a pivotal role for many !Xun who started living in Grootfontein for longer periods or even settling down there. According to Rousseau, the municipality allocated 9 plots specifically to (!Xun) Bushmen, and these New Blikkiesdorp !Xun were those with whom I spend most of my time. It seems that within a short period of time the highest number of !Xun in the history of Grootfontein moved to the township. The complicated story of some of these Bushmen coming and “settling” in New Blikkiesdorp will be described in detail in the chapter “From Total petrol station to ‘traditional village’”, describing the mobility history of Kashe’s family. It was only after the settlement of the !Xun in New Blikkiesdorp that they became a permanently visible part of the township.

It was striking that many older !Xun, who had spent long periods in Grootfontein, uncritically idealised life in the town before independence. They depicted it as safe, a period when there was no crime and no drunk people in the streets, since people were afraid of the policemen and possible arrest. „That time was nice, clean,“ Kashe’s father reminisced. „That time you must be back during the daylight. Don’t be late. Otherwise you might be robbed by the bachochos. „(That time) if you beat someone, you go to the prison. The Boers were strict. There was nobody stubborn. We were afraid of the police. Now is everything bad,“ as Petrus put it. Andris was another who painted a somewhat rosy picture of pre-independence life in Grootfontein: „It was very secure. After the sunset there was nobody in the stress, only the police. You can sleep outside in the night, it was not a problem.“ Things were supposedly more accessible. „The money (we got) was little, but strong. Things were cheap.“ He recalled the time as being one when bread, sugar or even shoes cost cents. Andris also recalled the allegedly good treatment of the farmworkers at the old Grootfontein hospital, where they were driven by the farmer if they fell ill. On the other hand, people’s mobility was severely restricted because of the pass system. All older !Xun recalled that a person without a pass would be detained by the police („You go to prison“). Thus, Andris talked about the pre-independence period with feelings of ambivalence: „It was a bad time and a good time.“ Andris recalled that one disadvantage of life in the town in comparison to the farm was that people did not get any rations there and had to have a regular income to buy food and also

firewood, something which could be collected easily at a farm. If without work, according to Jakob, the !Xun preferred the farms to the location: „There wasn't a nice life.“²⁶⁴

What are the reasons behind the largely idealised picture of the life in Grootfontein in the past? In the past, especially until the mid-1970s, life in the location was strictly regulated by the state/town administration with the aim of maximalising the profit of the cheap labour force for the state's/its white population's economic needs and benefit. However, despite this clearly exploitative and repressive nature, for many Bushmen who acquired work in the town, it represented in *some* respects a more secure and stable system in comparison to the present day. Most importantly: 1) because of police control the township was regarded as a secure environment, but also in comparison to the farms. There the violence from the side of the farmer or conflicts with other workers, be they !Xun or non-!Xun, remained to a significant extent invisible and under-reported; 2) those living in the town were usually formally employed and, therefore, viewed the employment/payment conditions as better; 3) The urban native labour force represented during the South African rule a more homogenous mass of people in socio-economical terms and the !Xun worked under similar employment conditions to other natives. Nowadays, the !Xun perceive that non-white dwellers have become a much more socio-economically stratified society and they comprise its very bottom section and, therefore, have the feeling of economical marginalisation.

²⁶⁴ Petrus continued to live after the independence in the town, but also worked for some periods at the farms. When coming back to the township and having no work, he used to earn some money by repairing shoes and welding (he had a welding machine). Jakob went after the independence for several years to Walvis Bay, where he accompanied the farmer's couple, for who he used to work as yardworker in Grootfontein. But after the farmer died in a car accident, he moved with his wife back to Grootfontein. He spent some time working at the farms, between 2002 and 2007 was employed by the municipality and during that time rented a house of a Tswana man in Soweto. In 2001 he got a plot in Blikkiesdorp, but let it in the beginning for his children and moved there only later on. Andris worked at the farms, but used to visit his relatives in Soweto, finally after he lost his work at the farm and felt too old for farm work, he settled in 2003 in the township.

What happened to the !Xun who lived in Grootfontein? The offspring of !Xun women from the Old location

I have tried to reconstruct the fortunes of three !Xun families who were already living in the town more than fifty years ago. They are the families of three !Xun women, which the above mentioned Andris remembered as having lived in the „Old location“.²⁶⁵

The first !Xun woman Andris could remember was the mother of his wife Getrud. She had six children with two husbands: one daughter with a !Xun man and five children with a Kavango. Except for the first child, who was born at the farm, all the children were born in the Old or New location and all of them regarded themselves as !Xun. Getrud's mother's Kavango man had come to Grootfontein initially as a contract worker, but was then permitted to stay in the town - until he was killed, allegedly by Bushmen from the farms for not allowing them to stay on an Afrikaner's estate near Grootfontein where he was working. The reason for their staying for a longer period in Grootfontein was the Kavango father's employment status. He worked as a construction worker, building houses in the New location, where they later moved themselves when forced to leave the Old location.

The first (1) of their children, born in 1960, was Getrud, Andris' wife. When her Kavango (Kwangali) father was killed, Getrud was already a young woman. But she does not know her father's language well. It is just her fifth language. Getrud, however, spent most of her life at the farms, where she met Andris (mother !Xun, father Tswana). It was only in 2003 that they went back to the town. Their stay there then was, however, no longer conditioned by having a job there.

The second child (2) of Getrud's mother with her Kavango husband was Tekla. She in turn had six children with a Kavango man. For a short time she lived with him in the town, and then they went to the farms, where their children were born. The children speak both !Xun and Kavango and their ethnic identity is less clear-cut. They are said to claim to be from the mother's side !Xun and from the father's side Kavango.

The third child (3) of Getrud's mother and her Kavango husband was Berta. Berta has had three different Kavango husbands and has spent most of her life at farms as well. She had five children with the first, and two with the second. Both her first two husbands left her. The children she had with her first husband speak both !Xun and Kavango, but !Xun is their first language and they claim, along with the offspring from her second relationship, !Xun identity. The children from her second relationship speak „Kavango“ only poorly.

The fourth child (4) of Getrud's mother with her Kavango husband was Cecilia. She had ten children, all of whom were born at the farms, with two different fathers. The first was an Ovambo, who left her and took the children to Ovamboland to live with him. Later, while working as a construction worker in the location, he met and married an Ovambo woman in Grootfontein and then went with her to Ovamboland. The children he had with his !Xun wife “became”, according to Andris and Getrud, “Ovambos”. But they still understand their mother's tongue and occasionally visit their mother; she, however, never visits them in Ovamboland. Cecilia's second husband is a Kavango; their children speak both languages, but

²⁶⁵ My !Xun informants did not remember that the first locations were in the north of the settlement and were older than the „Old location“.

allegedly feel themselves to be more !Xun. At the time of my research in 2008 and 2009, they lived in Tsumkwe in former East Bushmanland, a predominantly Ju/'hoan San area.

Getrud mother's last child (5) with her Kavango husband was a boy named Helmut who married a !Xun woman. They had four children at the farms. The children lived with Getrud's family at the time of my research in 2008 and 2009, because their parents had died at a farm after drinking home-brewed beer.

The second !Xun woman Andris could remember from the Old location was his sister Helena. Her father was not Tswana as was Andris', but Ovambo. According to Andris, she had only one husband, who was Ovambo as well. They met at a farm, went to the Old location, but did not stay there long before returning to the farms, where seven children were born to them. Later, the husband went to Ovamboland leaving his wife and children behind. They allegedly claim to be mixed !Xun-Ovambo and speak fluent !Xun. All of them live at the farms and visit Grootfontein mostly only for shopping.

The fortunes of the offspring of Maria (sister of the mother of Andris' wife), the third !Xun woman Andris could remember, provide a different picture from those of the other two women. She had a !Xun mother and her father was a Kavango. Maria's first husband was a !Xun and they had four children at the farm. Her second husband, who was Damara with a Hai//om mother and a Damara father, and with whom she had 10 children, took her from the farm to the Grootfontein Old location because he found work there. They did not, initially, stay long in the town, because the husband was offered a job in former Bushmanland helping to drill boreholes. At that time, his wife and children often accompanied him. They slept in a tent erected at the place where the father was working. In this period, members of the family often visited both their !Xun relatives from the mother's side in the farms, and the Damara-speaking relatives from the father's side in Grootfontein. After "several years" of drilling the boreholes, his German employer purportedly went to Okahandja, leaving Maria's family to settle in Grootfontein in the Damara location at the house of her husband's brother. Later, while working for a road construction company, her husband acquired his own house in the Damara location and the family moved there. Ties to Maria's !Xun kin then became severed.

All 7 of the 10 children of Maria and the Damara who were still alive at the time of my research in 2008 were dwelling in Grootfontein, at least three of them in Luiperdheuwel, the rather prestigious part of the town inhabited predominantly by Coloured people. All of them spoke Damara as their first language, together with some !Xun as well. They also claimed (at least on some occasions) !Xun identity.

The first (1) of the 10 children of Maria and her Damara man was Martha, who died very young. The second (2) was Getrud.²⁶⁶ She had six children, five with an Ovambo and one with a Damara man. All of them speak Damara as first language, do not understand !Xun and claim Damara identity. The third (3) of the 10 children was Sarofine, a burly woman with „typically“ Bantu physical features. I met her twice. The first time by chance in the street when she was drunk and spontaneously claimed: „I'm a full-blooded Damara“, despite the fact that taking into account her parents' and grandparents' ethnicity she was just "one fourth" Damara - her father's father being Damara, the other "three fourths" being !Xun, Hai//om and Kavango. The second time I met her she was with her man in the street on the way home from

²⁶⁶ Getrud, her brothers Ludwig and Frans and the son of her brother Martin provided me with the information about the ethnic identity and language knowledge of their relatives.

the Single Quarters, where she had bought a plastic bottle of *tombo* and speaking about her Bushwomanness seemed to make her uncomfortable. When I wanted to interview her about her Bushmen roots she refused, claiming she did not understand the reasons for my questions. Her husband is purportedly Hai//om (not Damara), and their children allegedly speak only Damara and claim Damara ethnic identity. After Sarofine, Christofine (4) was born. She has had two husbands, both Damaras, and the four children she had with them claimed Damara ethnic identity as well. The fifth (5) of the 10 children was Elisabeth who died very early. After Elisabeth came Sofia (6). At the time of my research she was living with her third husband. All of them were Damaras. She had one child with each of the first two husbands. Both of the children “became” Damaras as well. Sofia’s next sibling was a boy named Ludwig (7). He was married for a second time at the time of my research, the first woman was Hai//om, the second Damara. He had one child with each of them, and both children spoke Damara as their first language. The eighth (8) of the 10 children was Julianne. Her second husband was Damara, while the first was !Xun-Hai//om and she had in total three children, all identifying themselves allegedly as Damara. After Julianne, Martin (9) was born. In 2008 he was living with his fourth wife, who was !Xun (with a German farmer as father),²⁶⁷ with the previous wives being two Damaras and a Hai//om. All of Martin’s 8 children allegedly claim to be Damara, speak it as their first language and have no command of !Xun. In 2009 Martin had found a new (fifth) wife, who claimed to be Damara (her father was an Afrikaner farmer).²⁶⁸ The last child (10) of the third woman Andris remembered from the Old location was a boy who died in infancy.

As can be adduced from these histories, the !Xun staying in the town in the Old and, after the 1960s, the New location depended on a provider, in these particular instances a non-!Xun man, having work in the town. Once he lost his job, as was the case for Andris’ wife’s mother and his sister, their families moved to the farms. Thus, many !Xun lived in the town only for limited periods, depending on the length of employment.

Looking at the three !Xun generations, starting with the mother of Getrud, we can see the following: Getrud’s mother (first generation) is said to have regarded herself as !Xun, as, allegedly, do her children (second generation), despite the fact that, except for one of them, their father was Kavango (Kwangali). We may, nevertheless, assume they may also situationally highlight their father’s Kavango ethnicity. The four daughters of Getrud’s mother with her Kavango husband had 30 children with 6 men. Five of the men were Kavango or Ovambo and were fathers to 23 of the 30 children. Only one was a !Xun (and his father was Tswana) who was the father of the other seven children. It should be emphasised that none of the women had offspring with a Damara-speaking Damara or Hai//om man.

Looking at the ethnic identities and language competences of the children (third generation) from the mixed relationships/marriages of these !Xun women and Bantu men we may divide the data into three groups:

First, many of the children regard themselves ethnically as !Xun, and !Xun was also their first language. This was brought about, for example, by being abandoned by the Bantu father, or by living with him in an environment which cut him off from his kin. The offspring’s physical

²⁶⁷ Martin’s oldest son told me in 2008 that his father’s fourth wife used to reply to her !Xun communication partners in Damara.

²⁶⁸ According to the new wife, the !Xun woman “drank a lot and Martin chased her away”.

appearance may share the features of the father (darker skin, taller stature), but without necessarily having any impact on their language and ethnic identity.

Second, some children from the mixed marriages state they are „mixed“ by pointing to the different ethnic backgrounds on the mother’s and father’s sides. They often speak both languages, but are mostly more fluent in !Xun. The children falling into this group are most prone, according to context, or desired objective, to stress or hide a part of their dual ethnic identity. They can thus present themselves as !Xun (perhaps to their !Xun relatives, to an anthropologist working with San people, to social workers focused on marginalized ethnic groups, etc.), and then, for somebody else (maybe the Bantu father’s kin, people from groups with a higher socio-economic status) as Kavango or Ovambo. This can sometimes be supported by their often “untypical” for Bushmen physical features such as being tall and dark-skinned. However, despite allowing a certain space for their ethnic identity „negotiations“, it should be stressed that this was rather limited and that the Bushmen included in my survey in Grootfontein did not speak about their !Xunness only in front of me. They could hardly conceal their !Xunness from people with whom they were in more intensive contact and, as far as I could observe, they were regarded as Bushmen also by their non-!Xun friends, neighbours or pastors. Their otherness was also recognisable by the language used in communication with other !Xun. This second group also comprises the children of the second !Xun woman Andris could remember as living in the Old location, his sister Helena.

Both of these tendencies are not specific to urban space, but to the social environment of the Grootfontein area, where the Bantu men (during the contract work-era there as single man) had relationships with !Xun women, both in the urban spaces or farms. Coming out of ethnically mixed unions has been always common in all ethnically heterogeneous spaces in Namibia, for example in Fransfontein in southern Kunene region around half of the children have parents of different ethnicities (Pauli 2005 in Dawids, Ilonga, Kaumunika, Pauli, Schnegg, Seibeb, /Uirab 2007: 15). But in Namibia clearly asymmetric relationships as existed between Bantu men and San women seems to be largely specific to the Bushmen groups.²⁶⁹

And third, some children, such as those taken by their father to Ovamboland, become substantially assimilated into different ethnic and language environments. Their !Xun relatives in such cases then say: „These people are Ovambos, they do not know Bushman language anymore.“ According to my informants, once the children of a !Xun woman and Bantu man leave Grootfontein for the father’s home area, there is a considerable chance of their assimilation, whether they are taken to the areas inhabited by the Ovambo and Kavango people in northern Namibia or by the Hereros in the northeast of the country.

²⁶⁹ The literature is full of evidence of non-Bushmen men having relationships with Bushmen women irrespective of the region and it mostly follows the same pattern. It has been claimed that the Bushmen could not take Bantu agropastoralist wives since the hunter did not own cattle to pay the bridewealth (Smith, Malherbe, Guenther and Berens 2004: 22); Boonzaier, Berens, Malherbe, Smith 1996: 24). Widlok observed among the ≠Akhoe Hai//om that their women become partners of Ovambo men (Widlok 1999: 202). Sylvain (1999: 329 - 30) saw fairly common marriages between Herero and Ovambo men and the Ju/’hoan women in the Omaheke. (Marshall and Ritchie 1984: 56) observed Herero men to marry Ju/’hoan girls, etc. From all the !Xun I knew in Grootfontein there was only one man, who had as a wife a non-Bushmen woman. It was Amos Shivute, one of the !Xun “foremen’s” in the town. Shivute was, however, able to generate much better income than most of the !Xun living in Grootfontein and in 2013 was working at a drug store. He was also the only one !Xun, who bought on loan a brick house in the township and in contrast to most of the !Xun spoke well English.

Fortunes of of the offspring of Maria, the third women Andris recalled, provide us with a different scenario, which seems to be quite typical for the Grootfontein urban social space.

In three generations, the members of this family were gradually swallowed up into a Damara-speaking environment.²⁷⁰ This can be attributed to several factors. The most important was the acquisition of work in Grootfontein by Maria's Damara husband, upon whom the family depended economically. Initially they had lived at his brother's house, and then later (probably in the 1960s), his economic situation enabled him to obtain his own house in the newly-created Damara location, which as its name suggests was a predominantly Damara-speaking environment, with only a few !Xun. The kin links to the !Xun in the farms were also to a large extent cut off after Maria's death.²⁷¹ The fact that the Damara father supported the education of their offspring was probably a prerequisite for creating their competitiveness in the urban job market and, in contrast to the uneducated and illiterate farm !Xun, gave them relative ease in finding employment in the town, thereby promoting their "integration" into the urban environment. "We grew up here (Grootfontein), we got work here and we have stayed here until now," I was told by Getrud. Her children, and the offspring of her siblings (Maria's grandchildren), all declare their ethnic identity as Damara and Damara is their mother tongue and they no longer speak or understand !Xun.

An example that illustrated the pressure of the Damara environment on the !Xun was given to me in July 2008 by the principal of a school in the township (who was strongly biased against the Bushmen, tending to make negative generalisations about them and failing to, or not even attempting to differentiate between !Xun and Hai//om) that was attended by many San children. According to her, dozens of Bushmen children attended the school, both !Xun and Hai//om, but "when we ask the Bushmen children in the class to raise their hands, so that we can count them, suddenly there is not a single one." According to her, they claim to be Damara. Dieckmann, who touched upon this phenomenon among the Hai//om in Outjo, states that "to a considerable degree (the) adaptable" ethnic identity of the Hai//om "is aided by the fact that the Hai//om and the Damara languages are closely related and that intermarriage is fairly common" (Dieckmann 2007: 298; see also oral testimonies of the Hai//om in Longden 2004: 48 - 9). The tendency to conceal one's Bushmen identity is evidently strongly connected to the fact that the San are in an urban environment and in its schools are a minority, which created in them feelings of shame and inferiority. In majority San schools the children readily claim their Bushmen identity (Ninkova 2009: 40, 73).²⁷²

In the chapter describing the setting of the Grootfontein township as I encountered it during my research between 2007 - 2013 I will elaborate more on the pressures weighing on Grootfontein !Xun dwellers from Damara (Khoekhoegowab)-speakers, who are numerically strong in the township and especially in Blikkiesdorp. The complexities regarding possible

²⁷⁰ These !Xun went apparently into kin relationships with especially Damara people and not the Hai//om, who occupy an inferior position in the local hierarchy among the Damara speaking population.

²⁷¹ To illustrate the difference of the situation and pressures in the urban and farm area, combined with the factor of the sex of a !Xun person, I add that the only child from the first marriage of Maria with a !Xun man still alive in 2009 was Frans. He had spent his whole life in the farming area and had had two wives. The first was !Xun and they had four children, who stayed in the farms. The second wife was Hai//om, and they had just one daughter, who speaks !Xun and Damara as well, but found a !Xun man in the farm and their children's mother tongue is !Xun.

²⁷² Ninkova did her research at the Gqaina school in the Omaheke region attended by the Ju/'hoan children.

assimilation pressures on the !Xun in the urban environment will also be addressed in the final conclusions of this study.

The mobility history of Kashe's family

Kashe's father

From Kavango region to farm Keibeb: Der Karrenjunge (1934 – 1940s)

Kashe's father Willem, who I interviewed on his family history mostly between 2007 and 2009, claimed his parents had come to the Grootfontein farm area from the Kavango region on the Angolan border. He mentioned specifically the area of Nkurenkuru, Tondoro and Rundu, where his father grew up with the Kavango people, speaking their language and working for them. He also engaged in agriculture subsistence activities and used to grow crops, such as beans, for his own consumption. He engaged in what we today call a mixed economy, since he foraged as well and used to hunt with a bow and arrows.

We do not know exactly when Willem's father was born, but it must have been in the period around the turn of the 20th century. Of Bantu settlements in this area we know, that:

Most of the so-called Okavango tribes only settled on the southern banks of the Okavango River after 1900, the area being regarded as the domain of Bushmen. The dominant economic structure that emerged with black settlements of the southern banks of the Okavango was a form of slavery, or bondsmanship... Each subject was supposed to work and assist his or her master, and the master was supposed to provide his or her subjects with fields for planting. (Gordon 1984: 211).

The Bushmen, who typically resided about a mile away from their patron's kraal, would also hunt for their masters and herded their cattle (Ibid.). Even in the 1940s these settlements of Bantu people rarely extended more than 4 to 6 miles from the river and the vast territory between them and the commercial farm area was inhabited only by the Bushmen. It was proclaimed as game reserve and served as buffer zone prohibiting the spread of cattle diseases from the Bantu settlements to the white farming area.²⁷³ The growth in the numbers of the Kavango people has forced many of them to move further down the river since the 1950s. Up to then, the Mpunguveld was the "exclusive domain" of the !Xun (Cole et al. 1999 cited in Suzman 2001: 37).

When Willem was about two years old, his father decided to go to a farm in the Grootfontein commercial farming area: „because there is work“. They went to farm Keibeb.

We have a valuable source of information describing life at Keibeb at the time. The farmer's son, Kurt Hülsmann, who was born in 1928 and was probably several years older than Willem, wrote a book "Keibeb. Geschichten, Begebenheiten und Erlebnisse. Erinnerungen aus unbeschwerter Jugendzeit" (n.d.) depicting this period. His parents came to Namibia from German Niederrhein in 1925 and in 1933 moved to Keibeb, or Neu-Desenberg as it was known during the German colonial era (Hülsmann n.d.: 6 - 8). Willem's ID card, which is, unfortunately, not a totally reliable source of information, states the year of his birth as 1934 and it indeed seems he came with his parents to the farm in the 1930s. He could remember young Kurt Hülsmann well and Willem's Bushmen name Nanni (correctly !Nani) is also mentioned in the book. Willem claimed his family stayed at the farm even after the farmer's death in 1945, and I estimate they may have stayed there for about 10 years in total.

²⁷³ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/9 Report of Mr. M. A. Helle, letter No. 378, 6.8.1947.

In 1933 the farm lay on the frontier, Red Line, of the commercial farm area. To the north and partly east it bordered on the Crown land of the *Sandveld*, regarded as “Niemandland” (Ibid.: 10): “‘Sandveld’ - ein, ausser in der Regenzeit, wasserloses und nicht besiedeltes Niemandland, wo nur einige Buschmannfamilien ihr Nomadenleben führten” (Ibid.: 157). It was their “hunting area” (Ibid.: 164). In some parts of the area near the Red Line there was an abundance of wild animals in some periods during the year. At the beginning of the rainy season in December and January hundreds of wildebeests and hartebeests migrated from Etosha pan along Omuramba Ovambo, which led through the farm, eastward up to the farms Wackies, Güntsas and Nurugas. In times of heavy rains the animals stayed in the area reportedly until April and May before returning to Etosha. In other years in winter time huge herds of elands came to the area from the east, from the present-day Botswana (Ibid.: 79 - 80).

Willem claimed his father’s „brothers“ were already living at Keibeb before their arrival. „There (at Keibeb) were a lot of !Xun people,“ recalled Willem. When his family came to Keibeb, they wore still the loincloths: “There we got used to wearing the (European) clothes”. Nevertheless, in Keibeb they went on living in the traditional huts built from bent branches covered by grass.

According to Willem, his father used to hunt with a bow and arrow while living in the Kavango, but ceased to do so at Keibeb or at the other farms he subsequently went to: “He was a worker”. Among his duties were, for example, milking cows, cutting the bush and preparing the land for the planting of maize. However the unemployed !Xun staying with his family at the farm continued to hunt in its vicinity. Willem could not remember the remuneration his father received from the farmers. He thought they were provided with food mostly and probably also small amounts of money.

As he grew older, Willem started to help with the farm work as well, for example, he used to go with the others with the donkey cart, when it was going from Keibeb to Duiweb, where he uitspanned the donkeys and drove them into the *kraal*. He performed the work of what Hülsmann calls the cart boys /„die Karrenjungen“/ (Ibid.: 94). Willem claimed he had learnt at the *plaas* almost “all the farm work” and later on he was given very small amounts of money by the farmer as well. „That time was good,“ claimed Willem. For his father, life at Keibeb was allegedly „much better“ than working for the Kavangos. However, Hülsmann emphasises the Bushmen worked at the farm only temporarily:

I sage bewusst ‘zeitweise’, weil sie - als ausgesprochenes Naturvolk - sowie der erste Regen gefallen war, ohne Vorwarnung, über Nacht in das ‘Sandveld’ verschwanden (‘desertierten’). Wenn es nach der Regenzeit wieder trocken wurde und es wenig Feldkost gab, standen sie in kindlicher Unschuld eines Tages wieder auf dem Hof und wollten arbeiten. (Ibid.: 155)

Willem confirmed to me that some !Xun did indeed behave in this way, but not, according to him, his father, who had previously done some agriculture work for the Kavangos and was used to a more settled life. However, Willem told me that the Bushmen could live in the bush area behind the farm zone throughout the whole year, since there were many pans with permanent water and it was also common to drink the water from tree holes.

Regarding the ethnicity of the workers at the farm, according to Willem, there were almost only !Xun, but the farmer purportedly also employed a few Kavango or Ovambo contract workers to look after the cattle. There were allegedly only a few “Damaras”, who were probably Hai//om. Willem’s information seems to be accurate, since according to the Keibeb farm survey from 1947 there were 48 natives, of whom 44 were Bushmen and only four

Ovambos/Kavangos.²⁷⁴ Willem claimed the Bantu workers at the farm had sexual relationships with !Xun women, including from his “family”. Hülsmann mentions in his book almost only the Bushmen. He refers once to two different Bushmen subgroups by their distinctive ethnonyms:

Hinter der ‘Roten Linie’, nämlich, war sogennantes ‘Kron-Land’, d.h. Staats-Land, das sich bei unserer Farm bis zum Ovamboland und zum Okavango erstreckte. Hier lebten nur nomadisierende Buschleute - die Heikum, und weiter zum Osten bis ins Betchuanaland, die Khung - von der Jagd und Feldfrüchtsammeln. (Ibid.: 79)

However, given the information provided by Willem and the Bushman names in the book, it seems it was mostly !Xun living at Keibeb. The !Xun at Keibeb were also famously studied by the Denver expedition in 1925 (Gordon 1997) and Lebzelter (1934 in 1996).²⁷⁵

Hülsmann writes also that in the first years they employed Hereros as cattle tenders, because they were traditional cattle herders (Ibid.: 179). Hülsmann mentions two of them by name, one being “unser alter, zuverlässiger Hereroarbeiter” Kasupi”. Kasupi regarded the Bushmen as “inferior”, used to give them orders in “a military tone” and was proud of having been a horse-boy to the German colonial armed forces /Pferdejunge bei der Schutztruppe/ (Ibid.: 153 - 154). Hülsmann also refers to one Ovambo, who milked cows (Ibid.: 180) and one Baster living with his wife at *Wasserstelle* called Kukerip. The latter were described by Hülsmann as “sehr anständige, bescheidene Leute” (Ibid.: 38).

The German farmers made a distinction between the “tame” (“zahme”) and “wild” (“wilde”) Bushmen. Some of the latter, who must have been relatives of the former, lived at the farm as well. Hülsmann calls them „unsere ‘wilden’ Buschmänner“ (Ibid.: 178). Hülsmann defines the „zahme Buschmänner“ as the ones “die im festen Arbeitsverhältnis bei uns standen” (Ibid.: 66). When I asked Willem if the !Xun at Keibeb stole the cattle from the farmer, he claimed it had only been the “wild Bushmen”. As mentioned, Willem’s father did not hunt because he was a “worker”. Apparently, some !Xun moved between farmwork and foraging in the bush. However, those who had spent a long time on the farms became alienated to it.

Hülsmann writes that during the early years they lost a lot of cattle due to four reasons: they fell prey to predators such as lions; due to cattle sicknesses; because they fed on poisonous plants; and, fourth, due to the looting by the Bushmen /“Schlagten durch die Bushleute”/. (Ibid.: 150).

Interestingly, at least some !Xun workers probably felt more loyalty to their white employers than to the “wild” !Xun stealing from them. Willem claimed they reported cases of stolen cattle to the owner of the farm and then the farmer sent a !Xun worker called Tamme to the farmer of Duiweb, who reportedly went by motorbike to Nurugas (Morealaboom) police station to call the police in to arrest the culprits.

²⁷⁴ LGR 3/1/7 2/20/10, Annual Report on Native Affairs 1947, Station Commander, South African Police, Grootfontein, 23.12.1947.

²⁷⁵ Lebzelter mentioned that in the second half of 1920s the owner of the farm Courtney-Clark taught the !Xun to make the charcoal in the bush outside the farm and deliver it to him. The charcoal was then sold to the Abenab mine (Lebzelter 1934 in 1996: 18). Lebzelter spread also sensational information about the alleged cannibalism of the Bushmen in the Keibeb area. Referring to information provided by “Toke”, probably mistype of the linguist Doke, he wrote that in 1925 the !Xun killed by Keibeb eight Barotse and allegedly ate them. Doke (1925b: 42) himself indeed mentions the “reputed” cannibalism of the !Xun. No doubt such information must have nourished the notion about the “wild” Bushmen.

According to Hülsmann, in the 1930s and 1940s the farm was regularly, almost once a month, visited by police patrols (first riding camels, then on horseback and later on in cars), because Keibeb lay at the Red Line frontier between the farm region and the “Niemandland” and between the police stations in Nurugas and Tsintsabis.

Die Hauptaufgabe der Polizisten damals war um Verbrechen - hauptsächlich Viehdiebstahl und Schlagten durch Buschleute - zu untersuchen und die Schuldigen zu verhaften - wenn sie ihrer habhaft werden konnten! (Ibid.: 60)

Willem could remember well the feared patrols. According to him, many Bushmen fled the farm when they heard a patrol was coming. Hülsmann described that once Bushmen suspected of a crime were caught they had to trot ahead of the camels to the police station, which he called “fast übermenschliche Strapazen” (Ibid.: 62). Furthermore:

Wurden sie aus irgendeinem Grunde (Untersuchung einer Straftat, Verzögerung wegen Regen, usw.) aufgehalten und konnten ihr Tagesprogramm nicht schaffen, übernachteten sie unterwegs im Freien. Die Gefangenen wurden dann am Lagerfeuer an einem Baum oder an einem schweren Baumstamm gebunden. (Ibid.: 64-5)

Sometimes the captured Bushmen were also used to lead the policemen to other Bushmen presumed involved in criminal activities. Hülsmann describes an incident when a policeman, a certain sergeant Sieberhagen, was attacked by the Bushmen he was pursuing, and hit by a poisoned arrow, which he luckily survived after long treatment.

According to Willem, the German farmers treated the workers well and did not resort to corporal punishment as seems common at many other farms.

Bei uns waren unsere Arbeiter die ‘Jungs’ und Bezeichnungen wie: ‘Neger, Kaffer, Schwarzer’ oder sonstige Benennungen, wurden vor uns nicht gebraucht. (Ibid.: 157)

The term “boys” symbolises, of course, the social hierarchy between the white farmers and the workers. However, on the scale of the common typical paternalistic approaches of the white farmers in South West Africa towards the Bushmen, Hülsmann’s family seem to be rather exceptionally broad-minded.

Hülsmann writes that as the only one boy in the family, he had only his Bushmen peers for play-mates. He depicts this period in a romantic style as a “care-free youth” (unbeschwerte Kindheit), which is also the subtitle of the book. He recalls he hunted with the Bushmen children, called by the farmers „Acharobs“ („Jugentliche“) or „Kannatjes“ (Ibid.: 50, 157), with little home-made bows and arrows small animals such as birds, squirrels and birds and they enjoyed riding donkeys (Ibid.: 129). It is apparent with regard to the social status there was a relative equality between him and his Bushmen peers at that age (even though he called them “meine Adjutanten”). However, the distance between him and the Bushmen grew gradually as they became older and the white children started attending school. Kurt himself only visited the farm during school holidays. Thus, by the time he is seventeen, he has already become the “little boss” / “der kleine Mister” / (Ibid.: 129).

The paternalism, expressed in calling the Bushmen “boys” or in the book’s frequent references to “our good kitchen boy Tamme” (“unser guter Küchenjunge Tamme”), may have been the prevailing characteristic of the farmer - Bushmen relations. Naturally, they were not one-dimensional, but rather in many ways a typical mixture of various attitudes, and positive and negative expectations and fears. The memoirs of Hülsmann show that the German farmers had esteem for some Bushmen abilities and occasionally relied on them. They

especially admired their knowledge of bush life. The tamed Bushmen “long Onda” saved policeman Sieberhagen by sucking the arrow’s poison out of the wound (Ibid.: 69). The farmer also used the Bushmen as trackers to look for wild animals. They ascribed them what were for farmers very typical animal features. “Buschleute besitzen (wiew die Tiere) die Fähigkeit zu ‘wittern’ wo es etwas zu (fr)essen gibt“ (Ibid.: 162). We find in the book also admiration of the working/technical skills of the Bushmen. Hülsmann recounts a story about a Bushman the farmers called “Cream Onda” (“Sahne Onda”), who was almost blind, but learnt brilliantly the task of centrifuging the milk, which was how the farmers produced cream: “Dieses konnte er nach kurzer Zeit mit solcher Präzision, das eine mechanische Automatik es nicht besser hätte machen können (Ibid.: 66).” At the same time the very fact that the Hülsmanns continued to employ the man despite his handicap because he had a family to provide for shows they tried to approach their Bushmen workers with a certain empathy.

However, it is obvious that they did not trust even the “tame” Bushmen totally and had to control their behaviour to some extent. Hülsmann describes, although in this case with some irony, the time when his father wanted to start a business breeding pigs. Since there was a lack of fodder, they had to shoot wild donkeys and cook them for the pigs. After some time had passed and the pigs were still not putting on weight, the farmer found out that the Bushmen who cooked the meat in barrels had been eating it (Ibid.: 128).

Wild Bushmen were regarded as a threat to the farm not only because of the cattle theft, but because they started bush fires. According to Hülsmann, they often did this deliberately before they rain season because the new grass would attract wild animals. However, sometimes the bushfires were reportedly a consequence of mere unwariness when the Bushmen moved at night with burning torches as a deterrent against predators (Ibid.: 164) such as lions or when they attempted to smoke out bees from hollow trees to obtain honey (Ibid.: 82).

The farmers’ relationships with the policemen in the patrols were also not one-dimensional, but contained some ambiguousness as well. On the one hand, the police protected them from illegal Bushmen cattle thefts. On the other hand, they could hinder their own illegal activities as they could catch the farmers while poaching. Hunting on Crown land was “strictly forbidden” (Ibid.: 79 - 85). Since the farmers sometimes shot wild animals to give them to their Bushmen workers, in this particular instance they must have built a kind of alliance against the policemen.

The relationship between some farmers must also have been ambiguous to some extent. Hülsmann reports that if the free roaming cattle got eastward to farms Jumkaub and Nukuwis, they were lost for good. According to Hülsmann, those farmers (apparently Afrikaners) did not report the stray animals. They allegedly removed the burn marks from the animals and marked them anew to make them look as they were the owners (Ibid.: 121).

Between the farms, Otjiwarongo and Grootfontein: kitchen boy and farm worker (1940s - 1970)

From Keibeb Willem’s family moved to other farms in the area. However, for Willem it was difficult to remember their subsequent order. He recalled Guiganab Ost, Güntsas, Asenib, Begus, Klingenberg, Sus and plot Morson near Grootfontein. Except of Morson they lay in the same area northeast of Grootfontein. He stayed at the farms with his “family” or “friends”

or he was employed there and performed a variety of farm-work ranging from cutting and burning the bush, cleaning the yard, watering the grass and lemon trees to tending goat herds. Nevertheless, we should not regard this list of farms as complete. He may have forgotten some of them and in all probability he stayed or worked at some farms more than once.

Willem's memories regarding his movements in the past were fragmentary. Thus, for example, he claimed that he left Gūntsas and went to Asanib because he disliked tending goats: "The goats run too much. You don't get any chance to sit and the sun is also warm. Then I don't want to take care of the goats. So I go to Asanib." However, it was clear that in many instances his movements depended on the white employer. In Willem's particular case this included a network of Afrikaner policemen and their relatives or friends at the farms who seemed to virtually "hand over" Willem from one to another. In these cases Willem appeared to be at least partly subject to his white employers' decisions ("The eienaar took me").

At Sus he worked in the kitchen and the tasks he performed were probably very similar to the ones of the "kitchen boy Tamme" from Keibeb mentioned by Hülsmann. "The owner said I must work in the kitchen. I washed all the things," recalled Willem. Then, he did similar work at a house of a policeman called Hanig at the Maroelaboom police station. Willem worked in the kitchen, cleaned the house, worked in the yard, watered the trees and took care of his employer's children. Later on, he started to work for another policeman with the name Nedlenk, who was a relative of the farmer from Sus's family. Nedlenk took him to his house in the town of Otjiwarongo. Willem worked there in the kitchen as well. According to him, Nedlenk employed him because he saw that "this *mannetjie* knows the kitchen work." He left Otjiwarongo when he was purportedly told by the policeman: "you must visit your family" and was sent back to the Grootfontein area. According to Willem, he lived for "one month" in Grootfontein, where he worked at the house of a certain Johannes Steyn, allegedly a friend of Nedlenk's. Then, he purportedly returned to Nedlenk in Otjiwarongo. Later, Nedlenk moved to Windhoek and, according to Willem, promised to take him there as well, but he did not and Willem went once again to Johannes Steyn in Grootfontein. At some time during his movements between Grootfontein and Otjiwarongo he probably worked also for a policeman called Paul Spietkop in Grootfontein. From Grootfontein he was allegedly taken by Johannes Steyn's brother Charles to farm Elandslaagte, near Asanib. There he was to meet his future wife Maria: "There I stayed and got Maria. We stayed there all the years." From Elandslaagte they went to Jomkaub, where in 1970 Maria gave birth to Kashe, my main informant.

The ethnic setting of these farms northeast of Grootfontein seemed to be very similar to Keibeb. According to Willem, at all the farms northeast of Grootfontein there were many !Xun and only a few Ovambo or Kavango contract workers. Willem claimed there was a distance between the Bushmen and the Bantus. They often occupied different spaces on the farm and communication between them was rather limited. Therefore, the !Xun did not learn the Bantu languages or only to a limited extent. Willem remembered that there were also quarrels and fights between the !Xun and Bantu workers at Asanib: "The owner said (to the contract workers): your contract is finished. You must go to another place." According to Willem, the owner did not want to have many Ovambo workers, because they could become, apparently more than the Bushmen, "too angry".

First encounter with Grootfontein: the place where people buy bread

Grootfontein played an important role for the whole farm region, including Keibeb. “Die Farm lag ungefähr 65 Meilen (104 Km) nordöstlich von dem nächsten Ort ‘Grootfontein’,” wrote Hülsmann (n.d.: 9). Kashe’s father Willem viewed Grootfontein above all as a place from where important basic food stuffs such as salt, sugar, mealie meal and tea originated and which the farmer had to buy there and then in part distribute among the workers as part of their regular food rations. During his stay at Keibeb, Willem went for the first time to Grootfontein. He rode there with the foreman in an ox-wagon, which was the usual mode of transport in that area at that time (Ochsenwagenzeit). “Then I saw Grootfontein for the first time,” recalled Willem. Then I said: Ó, such a big place (“plek”). Houses are many. This is the place where the people buy bread, sugar and the tea and coffee and sweets. Ó, so this is the place, big place.” Later on he went to Grootfontein in the ox-wagon more often. It was a two-day journey with a stop at farm Kayas or at another place close to Grootfontein (which the Bushmen nowadays call Coca cola factory). In the town he and other farmworkers slept in a small house next to the railway, on the ground and covered by blankets.

Grootfontein also provided other vital services for the farmers. Hülsman recalled that it was in Grootfontein that the district doctor lived (Ibid.: 72). Furthermore, it was the seat of the veterinary surgeon responsible for all of the Grootfontein district (Ibid.: 173). Grootfontein was also a key market for agricultural products. The farmer had to ensure that twice a week the cream produced at the farm made it to Grootfontein, from where it was transported by train to the dairy in Rietfontein (Ibid.: 55 - 58) and, most importantly, the farmer sold his cattle in Grootfontein. Every year the farmer moved a herd of 120 - 150 bulls from Keibeb to be sold in Grootfontein (Ibid.: 132). Willem could remember these events well. According to Hülsmann, driving the cattle to Grootfontein took three days. On the first day they got to the farm Kayas about 29 kilometers from Keibeb. They next day they covered another 50 kilometres to farm Aukaswasser and only the next day did they reach Grootfontein. The herd of bulls was driven to Grootfontein by three to five horse- or donkey-riders and several game-drivers went on foot. After arriving at Kayas and Aukaswasser, they had to water the cattle and drive them to the *kraal*. They had to wake up several times during the night to check on the animals. After their arrival in Grootfontein the accompanying team faced the difficult task of driving the animals through the “place” (Ort) to the watering-places on the other side of Grootfontein. “Der Einzug in den Ort war für uns immer ein Alptraum, da die Tiere waren 2/3 Jahre lang nur im Bush herumgelaufen.” The cattle were not used to move between houses or to cars and many people. Therefore, there was always the danger the scared animals would run into the side-streets and it was difficult to get them back to the herd (Ibid.: 192 - 7).

In the following years, Willem became well acquainted with the urban environment. He probably spent several years in Otjiwarongo and several months in Grootfontein, where he worked for white policemen and farmers. He used to live there at the *buitekamer*. The *buitekamer* often served the farmers as a place for work tools and laying aside things for which was no other place in the large house. Willem claimed that his friends in Otjiwarongo were “Damaras”: “There I learnt the Damara language.” This was due to the ethnic setting of the town which lay a great distance from “traditional” !Xun territory.

Willem remembered that there were only a few !Xun in the Grootfontein location. However, it turned out that he did not have first-hand information. Despite the fact that the location was near the business centre of the town, Willem did not use to go there: “We don’t know each other,” he said about the location dwellers. He also lived in Grootfontein for periods that were too short for him to build more intensive social relationship with the locals. According to

Willem, at that time the people in Grootfontein allegedly regarded him with a certain suspicion as the one who “works for the police”. “That time, if you don’t have a pass, they will catch you and arrest you. Otjiwarongo or Otavi, at all places it was the same. You had to have the *papiertjie*,” i.e. the passports. However, Willem generally regarded life in the towns in that period as unproblematic. “That time was good, clean. There were no problems.”

During his stay at Elandschlaagte, Willem used to accompany the farmer when he drove with the car to different places in the area, for instance to Otavi to sell firewood. In periods of less intensive work at Elandschlaagte, he went at least twice with the farmer to Windhoek to visit the Afrikaner’s relatives. According to Willem, the farmer took him as *handlanger* (helper) in case there were technical problems with the car. Willem claimed that during his visits to Windhoek he would stay only at white peoples’ houses and that he did not move around. He claimed to go only rarely to the shop to buy some sweets and he went there and back using the same route, because “I’m too afraid”.

Kashe’s mother

Makalanivlak or Kanovlei in western Bushmanland?

Finding out the origin of Kashe’s relatives of his mother Maria’s side of the family proved to be extremely difficult and time-consuming. Kashe’s mother claimed she had not known the birth place of her parents because they died when she was a small child. The inquiry into her place of birth was also difficult. On her ID card it is stated that she was born on 10. 10. 1924 in Grootfontein. This turned out not to be true. When I asked her in 2007 about her birth place, she claimed it was Grootfontein. She was apparently afraid, I might be a government official and if she had stated another place of birth, she could have been evicted from Blikkiesdorp. However, later on she revealed she was born at farm “Makalanivlak”.

However, Makalanivlak is the name of an area south-east of Grootfontein called after for its landscape typical makalani trees, the *Palmzone* of the German period. Theoretically, Maria may have meant farm Makalaan, which lay several dozens of kilometres southeast of farm Keibeb. Maria recalled many other farms where she had lived before meeting Willem, mostly with the names given to them by the !Xun or other non-white ethnic groups. With the help of local !Xun informants I reconstructed the list as farms Omlopp (Maria called it Shikoti), Breeds Kroon (Karinga), Sardo (Sóko), Bushfeld, Fetzelhofen, Klippan, Sachsenwald and Nurugas. Another farm Maria called “Hans Minge se plaas” after its owner and this probably lay near Oopval. Maria remembered one more farm, which she called just “plaas” and said it lay “near” Grootfontein. Maria also once mentioned that her parents worked for the Hereros at a place near Koblenz, which lies on Omuramba Omatako.

However, after meeting with Maria’s relative /Kan//a (in July 2008), the councillor from Grashoek settlement in former western Bushmanland, who claimed his and Maria’s mother’s mother were the same woman and who seemed to remember the past movements quite well, Maria changed her notion about her birth place. She started to claim she was born in Kanovlei in Bushmanland, which was also the birth place of /Kan//a.

We may only speculate about the origin of Maria’s parents and grandparents. However, we may cautiously suppose that they may originally have lived in or near the Omuramba Omatako area. In this regard I may mention that /Kan//a’s mother was allegedly !Xunig!u

!Xun and his father was born somewhere between Kanovlei and Karakuwisa. He hinted at his possible origin from the Rundu area. According to my informants in Tsumkwe District West, many of the !Xun who came to this region in the “old time” had been from the north, and came down along Omuramba Omatako from the Rundu area.

Maria’s origins in former western Bushmanland could also be supported by the claim of Maria’s younger “sister” Emma, their mothers were probably consanguineous sisters, who claimed to have been born in the Nurugas area. Other farms Emma recalled were Jagterslust, Klippan, Neitsas (or the neighbouring Nuitsas) and Elandslaagte, lying near the farms named by Maria. Further fact supporting the assumption of Maria’s coming from Bushmanland is the information her husband Willem provided about her brothers. At the time when he was courting her, which could have been in the 1950s or at the beginning of the 1960s, her parents had already passed away so he had to arrange the marriage with her brothers, who were, according to Willem, originally from Bushmanland.

If Kashe’s kin from mother’s side originated from the Bushmanland, what were the reasons for their movement into the commercial farm area? According to /Kan//a, who was told about the situation in the “old time” by his father, going to the farm area was advantageous for two main reasons. First, living at the farms seemed to be more secure. /Kan//a claimed the border region between the commercial farm area and the area next to it was too volatile. According to him, the !Xun used to steal cattle from the farmers and were then pursued by police patrols from Nurugas (Maroelaboom). /Kan//a claimed even his father used to steal cattle: “They went to a farm, because they were afraid (of the patrols).”²⁷⁶ Second, living at the farm and getting regular food rations seemed to be for some an economically more acceptable mode of living than foraging.

Maria’s answers remained ambiguous when asked whether her father also hunted with a bow and arrow. She only remembered well that at the farm he hunted only with a gun lent to him by the farmer. Maria’s “sister” Emma claimed her father used to hunt various animals with a bow but later at the farms he would only hunt pigs with a spear. But there was no ambiguity that their families used to gather bushfood at the farms.

Comments

Interestingly, Kashe’s parents came to the Grootfontein farm area from different regions, Kashe’s father’s father from the north and Maria or Maria’s parents from the area of Omuramba Omatako, east of Grootfontein. According to Kashe, one could hear that they pronounced many words differently.

Apparently, the kin on both parents’ side were, thus, migrants to the farm area and they were not incorporated into it as a result of their traditional area being occupied by the whites. Instead of having been passive objects of the colonial administration, both “families” may have moved to the farms “deliberately” because they expected life in the commercial farming

²⁷⁶ Interestingly, he also recalled, even though it was not given as a reason for moving to the farms, that in the western part of former Bushmanland there was also a strenuous relationship between the !Xun and the Ju/’hoansi groups to their east. According to /Kan//a, in the time of his grandparents, as an estimate at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, the two Bushmen groups would fight each other with bows and arrows. He described it, maybe with some exaggeration, as “almost a war”.

area might be in some ways a more advantageous option than living outside the area. Farms may have displaced Bushmen traditionally living there, but they also drew many Bushmen from outside areas to them. Kashe's parents are examples showing that many !Xun with various local identities, including dialect differences, moved from their territories deeper in the farm zone and when encountering each other their original local identities melted and merged.

Importantly, in the case of Willem's father we know that his decision to move into the farm area was influenced by the presence of brothers who were already there. Thus, he made the move into the commercial farm area in the wake of his kin.

Going to the farms changed the !Xun's life in many ways. However, it would be an oversimplification to consider it as a rash leap from one "world" into a totally different one. Some !Xun may have moved to different extents between the foraging life and farm works, as described in the reports of the Grootfontein district authorities, preferring one economic mode to another or even combining them. However, some became used to farm work and alienated to the life in the bush. Kashe's father Willem remembered his father only as a farm worker, who lived on food rations and also a small wage, not on bushfood. The Grootfontein administrators' observations that many Bushmen became farm workers once and for all if they spent a long period at the farms seem to be correct.

Willem, who had grown up on a farm, never properly learnt to hunt with bow and arrow and became automatically socialised into the farm work. He never thought of living in the bush as his forebearers. Interestingly, even Willem identified with the farmers' favourite terminological difference between the "tame" and "wild" Bushmen. According to Willem, the "tame" ones worked and lived on food rations and small wages and the "wild" ones would live by foraging and stealing cattle. The farm workers differed from the "wild" Bushmen also in their material culture. Most strikingly, they started wearing the European clothes they were given by the farmers. Furthermore, Kashe's father recalled that they lived in huts from branches covered by grass in the beginning at Kaibeb. Photographs of such shelters are also published in the memoirs of Kurt Hülsmann. But later they moved into houses made from corrugated iron sheets.

Nevertheless, when we observe the reality more closely it was more complex and contained many continuities. Willem's case shows that some !Xun coming to the farm area from the north were actually much less "wild" than the farmers, administrators and other interested people could have thought since they were, in fact, used to working for non-Bushmen, in the case of Kashe's father in the fields of Kavango masters, or their own fields, and were used to a kind of a master-client relationship. Thus, at the farms, despite all the differences, the Kavango masters were replaced by the white ones. It is not too far-fetched to speculate that Willem's father, like other !Xun in this area, may have heard about farm-work from Kavango contract workers. Furthermore, the !Xun behind the Police Zone and inside its borders were often, of course, in kin relationships and hence, as many farmers knew, the border between "tame" and "wild" Bushmen was rather fluid. The !Xun families at the farms also continued to some extent to gather the *veldkos*.

Willem claimed his father had a better life at the farm than as a worker for the Kavango. However, the farmers, sometimes also struggling to keep their business viable, could often provide only for the !Xun's basic needs. The low needs of the latter perpetuated the caricatured image of them as people satisfied just with having some "food and tobacco" and their lowly status.

After moving for some time with his kin from one farm to another, Willem saw his mobility patterns change completely by following the decisions and movements of his white employers, who had their own social kin and friends networks as well. This network extended to much larger areas than the !Xun territories. Thus he worked for whites in the urban areas of Grootfontein, Otjiwarongo and for some time even in Windhoek. In this way he became to some extent acquainted with life in the towns, even though, this experience was in many ways limited. He was socially closely attached to the farmer's family, lived in a *buitekamer* at their garden and was virtually cut off from the lives of the locals living in the location. According to Willem, there were also only a few !Xun living in the Grootfontein location at that time and they were not part of Willem's kin network, which did not then reach up to Grootfontein at that time.

Kashe, the son

Period I.: Movements among the farms (1970-1987)

See the map on Kashe's mobility as attachment to this study.

Kashe was born in October 1970 at farm **Jumkaub (1)**. He lived there until he was approximately six or seven years old, longer than at any other place later in his life. Kashe's father Willem worked at the farm as a foreman and his mother Maria in the kitchen. Kashe was drawn into farm activities from the early age. He recalled that as a small boy he used to accompany his father to his work and he liked observing the adult !Xun workers and performing their tasks. He remembered going with them by car to the cattle post to check the animals. Occasionally, he also helped with different tasks, for example holding smaller goats when they were milked so that they would not run away or carrying buckets of cow's milk, and the white farmer, who was allegedly an "Englishman", used to reward him with some sweets and sugar. He seemed to remember this period as a calm and pleasant time.²⁷⁷

I did not manage to find out precisely what made Kashe's family leave Jumkaub. When I first asked Kashe's father Willem about their reasons for leaving the farm, he kept on telling me that the farmer sold the farm and he did not want to work for a new farmer. However, later during my research it emerged that the real reason may have been that Willem decided to leave because his father passed away at Jumkaub. According to my !Xun informants, it used to be a cultural habit of the !Xun, reported also by other Bushmen groups, to leave a place where a family member had died.

Willem was allegedly offered work at a nearby farm, **Jagterslust (2)**, whose owner he already knew. Willem's relatives (for example his "brother") had already lived at the farm as well. Kashe's father worked for the farmer, who was an Afrikaner, probably for a few years. They also spent "one year" at farm **Langvorbag (3)**, allegedly situated near Otjiwarongo, which was also owned by the owner of Jagterslust. Then, the farmer brought them back to **Jagterslust (4)**. However, according to Willem, the Afrikaner sold the farm and consequently they left. "I was afraid of staying there. I was not used to working for other people," explained Willem. Kashe's account differed as he believed again death had played a role - at Jagterslust his newborn brother suddenly passed away at two to three days of age of some undisclosed disease. According to Kashe, when the father saw his son was seriously ill, the farmer was away from the farm at Jumkaub. Willem went there in a tractor to ask him to drive the sick child to the Grootfontein hospital. Nevertheless before they embarked on the journey, Kashe's small brother died. At that time was Kashe about 10 years old.

From Jagterslust, Kashe's family returned again to **Jumkaub (5)**. The reason for choosing this farm was the presence of Kashe's mother's "sister" Emma and her husband Anton and the fact that they did not have to fear the farmer, who did not object to their staying there, because they had known each other well from before. Kashe's father then found work at **Wackies (6)**, another farm in the area. Willem's and Maria's relatives had already lived there as well.

²⁷⁷ We may assume many of the !Xun would portray their early childhood at a farm as a troubleless period, since they could rely on the care and attention of their older relatives and could not have been much aware of any possible difficulties their family may have been facing.

The relationship with the farmer there was, however, problematic. Thus, Kashe recalled, for example, that one evening, when his family was sitting around the fire and the adults were already drunk, he saw the farmer coming to them and looking for Willem. He was afraid the farmer would beat his father and, therefore, went to the farmer and took him in by saying: “Willem has gone to the homesteads of black workers.” However, the stint at this farm ended abruptly after an incident that involved an in-law of Kashe’s family. The farmer gave his father two goats. According to Kashe, the farmer was rewarding him for his good work. Another worker called Titus, the husband of Kashe’s ‘sister’, who was, according to Kashe, an “Ovambo” (but talked !Xun)²⁷⁸ and who worked at the farm as a foreman, could allegedly not stand the fact that the livestock had been awarded to Willem. “How is it possible? I am a foreman and I did not get anything?” wailed Titus. He allegedly demanded Willem give the animals to him, but Kashe’s father refused. During the ensuing quarrel Titus and his friend, who was allegedly an “Ovambo”²⁷⁹ as well (but did not talk !Xun), overwhelmed Willem, bound his hands with pliers and wire and tied him to a small tree before beating him with a stock on his buttocks and back. Kashe and his brother Andris, at that time still boys, who witnessed the events, ran screaming to farm Jumkaub to ask the farmer for help. The farmer phoned the police at Maroelaboom, who subsequently came (two Afrikaners accompanied by two !Xun) and arrested Titus. Nevertheless, Kashe’s family decided to leave the farm immediately, without informing the farmer of their intentions. According to Kashe, Titus was punished only physically (beaten by the police) and was soon released. His father’s goats remained at the farm and Kashe thought the farmer took them back.

Kashe’s family went again for “several weeks” to **Jumkaub (7)** to his mother’s “sister” Emma and her husband Otto. Willem had to recover from serious injuries. Kashe could vividly remember the bloody wounds on his father’s body. Later on the owner of Jumkaub drove Willem and his family to farm **Moroster (8)**, which was owned by his son. Kashe: “The farmer gave my pa (to his son at Moroster)” /Die eenaar het my pa gegee/. Kashe’s mother’s relatives had also lived at that farm. Kashe’s family stayed there for approximately “one year”. The main reason for their departing the farm was, again, violence. His father was constantly quarrelling with other !Xun people, especially at the weekends when all of them drank alcohol. According to Kashe, most !Xun at the farm were !U !Xun (Dune !Xun) “mixed” (Kashe’s term) with the !Xun from Hereroland and were hostile to his father because they wrongly regarded him as Kxabin!a !Xun (Tamboti !Xun). They allegedly recognised the difference in Willem’s different dialect: “They were saying Willem is from Tsintsabis.” He was considered to be Kxabin!a !Xun in spite of the fact he came to the Grootfontein farming region from the area near the Okavango river in northern Namibia. According to Kashe’s brother Andris, the decisive moment for leaving the farm came after one day at the weekend when their heavily drunk father fought with the !U !Xun, who allegedly wanted to beat the young brothers as well. That night both brothers fled in the bush, where they spent the night, sleeping on the ground. After this violent incident the family left the farm. According to

²⁷⁸ Kashe apparently did not know exactly his ethnic background, but since Titus spoke !Xun it seems his mother was a !Xun and father a Bantu man. Kashe once also said he was Kwanyama or Herero. But highlighting the alleged non-Bushmeness of Titus Kashe was expressing, as usually in similar conflict situations, his distance and annoyance with him.

²⁷⁹ The !Xun talked mostly very negatively about the Ovambo/Kavango contract workers describing them as people looking for troubles often resulting in fights. On the other side the experience of these migrant workers of travelling and working in geographically and socially alien environment must have been in many aspects traumatic, as well as for their relatives left behind (Nambhila 2005: 9 - 11; Silvester, Wallace and Hayes 1998: 33 - 4; Wallace 2011: 256).

Kashe, they left the farm in the middle of the night, without informing the farmer of their intentions.

When Kashe's family left Moroster they slept in the bush by the road the first night, the next day was spent at the cattle post of farm **Welgemoed (8b)**, where Titus, who had beaten his father approximately a year ago, was now living, but, according to Kashe, it "was an old (forgotten) story" by the time of their arrival at the cattle post, and the next day they arrived again at **Jumkaub (9)**, the place of Emma and Anton, with whom they found short temporary refuge for a third time. However, they stayed there just for a "few days", because the situation had changed. "We feared the new farmer. He was a problem," explained Kashe. According to him, the farmer had a bad reputation, since he was known for beating his workers. Kashe recalled the farmer was feared not only by the !Xun, but also by the Ovambo workers, who waited often only for their salary before leaving the farm.

From Jumkaub the family moved to farm **Nukhuwis (10)**. According to Kashe, the !Xun from the area knew it was quite easy to find employment at this farm because the farmer was known for his addiction to alcohol and behaved in an unscrupulous manner towards the workers, regardless of whether they were !Xun or non-!Xun, and they usually could not bear to stay there for a long time and left. According to Kashe, prisoners also used to work at the farm. His family stayed at Nukhuwis for about a year and he used to help there in the garden. They left the farm after a violent incident involving the Afrikaner owner. One Friday evening when he was drunk he seriously beat Kashe's father with a wooden axe handle. Kashe claimed the strikes injured his father's ribs (Kashe was sure that at least one of them had been broken) and vertebrae. Willem and his family fled in the night to the bush near to the farm's cattle post and the farmer's wife, who was also scared of her husband, slept with them there as well. The next day she phoned her relatives (according to Kashe, in Windhoek) to come to the farm and drive her away. Her family fetched her the same afternoon and shortly afterwards Kashe's family left the farm as well. When I asked Kashe why they did not leave the farm immediately after the incident, he said they had tried to save some of their property, notably his brother's bicycle. But since the father was seriously injured, this task was up to his sons. The day after the incident they managed to take the bike from their house without being seen by the farmer and hid it for the time in the bush.

Then they went to a neighbouring farm called **Olivantsput (11)**. Anton and Emma had already gone there from Jumkaub. The circumstances of Anton's coming to Olivantsput were dramatic as well. He fled after being beaten by the owner of Jumkaub.²⁸⁰ It should be mentioned that there were relatives of Kashe's family at Olivantsput even before Anton and Emma's moving there. The fact that Olivantsput was owned an absentee farmer who allegedly spent most of his time at his house in Grootfontein also played an important role. It made the farm a frequent retreat for any !Xun who wanted to escape a farmer's control or feared the police. At first, Kashe's family stayed at the farm for about "two months". But since they were afraid the farmer from Nukhuwis might be searching for them, they spent most of the time in the bush near the farm's cattle post and slept in the houses of their relatives only rarely. The place in the bush, where they had only a few blankets, clothes and utensils, was so far from the farm house that it was not possible to see the smoke from their fire. They used to visit their relatives at the cattle post only occasionally and at night to fetch some food and water for the still badly-injured Willem, who had to lie down and recover in the bush from his

²⁸⁰ Together with Anton fled to Olivantsput also /Xae, an old !Xun, who lived in 2007 at plot I numbered in this study as No. 4 in Blikkiesdorp and then moved to plot No. 3.

injuries. But since they were afraid that farmers looking for their fugitive workers would see their traces on the ground, it was rather the family from the cattle post who visited them in the bush.

After recovering, Willem started to hunt with other !Xun at the farm. Usually this involved hunting warthogs with a spear and by using the dogs. Thus, the family was provided with meat and they could also sell it to the black workers (according to Kashe, Ovambos or Kavangos) who were tarring the Grootfontein-Rundu road and had a temporary compound near Olivantsput. With money from the meat they sold, they bought basic food stuffs such as mielie meal and sugar. Going to the workers' camp was regarded as a safer option than visiting their relatives at the cattle post, where they could be more easily sighted by the farmer or policemen. Nevertheless, after about "two months" Kashe and his family, feeling more secure, decided to leave the bush and to sleep with their relatives at the workers' houses. However, after only a few days the owners of farms Nukuwis and Jumkaub learned of their whereabouts and caught them by surprise one morning at their dwellings. The farmers were carrying rifles and were accompanied by police from Maroelaboom. Kashe lay down on the ground in the house and covered himself with a mattress. His father managed to flee to the bush before they could spot him.

Willem returned to the house at noon when the farmers had already departed. He took Kashe and Andris and some blankets and they embarked on the way to a farm called **Voorpos (12)** where other relatives²⁸¹ lived and which was about 30 kilometres from Olivantsput. They walked overnight as well but when they were just a few kilometres from the farm, Willem decided they would stay in the bush until the morning because the sons were already exhausted. I did not find out why Willem took just his sons and left the others behind. In 2008 Kashe told me that his father had thought the boys could walk faster than the women and so he should take them first. In 2010 he thought it may have been because of his fears the police might interrogate the *mannetjies* about the whereabouts of their fugitive father, which was reportedly a usual police procedure at that time.

However, they stayed at Voorpos for only two days. Then, Willem decided they would return to **Olivantsput (13)**. According to Kashe, his father realised Voorpos was near the Maroelaboom police station and this made him fear possible apprehension. Willem wanted to go back to Olivantsput already the day after they arrived at Voorpos, but his relatives persuaded them to stay a day longer, so that the children could recuperate. The journey back to Olivantsput again took one day. The first night they stayed with some relatives, but the next day they again went into hiding in the bush not to be sighted by the farmers or police.

On their return they went to a different place than the first time. This time they were near the cattle post where their relatives worked and closer to black road workers' camp. They again hunted wild pigs and sold the meat to the black people. According to Kashe, they often bought *tombo* with by the workers. It was usually only Willem and one or two workers from the cattle post at Olivantsput who went inside the construction workers' camp to sell the meat, buy some food stuffs and the women and children stayed in the bush. According to Kashe, the road workers must have thought, at least in the beginning, that Willem was employed at Olivantsput since the !Xun allegedly did not tell the "Ovambos" they were hiding from the farmer.

²⁸¹ This particular family lived already in 2007 in Blikkiesdorp in Grootfontein at plot I numbered in this study as No. 3.

The !Xun men often brought *tombo* to the family waiting in the bush, according to Kashe sometimes about five liters. Alcohol was also a key trigger leading to violence between the black workers from the camp and the !Xun. One night drunk “Ovambos” went to where the !Xun were staying and they attacked Kashe, his grandfather Tame and his mother’s “sister” Emma with sticks. “They wanted to have the (!Xun) women,” said Kashe. According to Kashe, at the time of the incident the adult !Xun people were also drunk. Kashe could well remember the screams of Emma and her cries for help.²⁸² The beatings ended when the other !Xun men, who were several hundred meters away, reached the place and forced the “Ovambos” to leave. Later the situation repeated and the drunk “Ovambos” tried to beat the !Xun in the bush again. However, this time the !Xun men put up resistance and the drunk attackers gave up without harming anybody. The !Xun men from Kashe’s family continued to visit the camp even after these incidents. When I inquired why the !Xun had gone again to people who had beaten them up, Kashe said it had been “only because of *tombo*” they wanted to drink. Since at the workers’ compound there were many people, Kashe’s father could buy food and *tombo* from people other than those who had assaulted them. One day, when some of the !Xun were drinking *tombo* at the camp, the farmers of Nukhuwis and Jumkaub accompanied by policemen stormed the compound looking for the deserted workers. But the !Xun managed to run off in the bush.²⁸³ The next day Kashe’s family fled to a farm called **Elandslaagte (14)**. It may be added that later at Elandslaagte Kashe was to learn that the black road had beaten to death one of his adult relatives at Olivantsput and, according to him, “took” his wife to Ovamboland.

According to Kashe they were save at Elandslaagte because his father “grew up with these Afrikaners”. The owner of the farm, Jan Albert, and Kashe’s father knew each from a previous time Willem had worked at Elandslaagte before he had his own family. According to Kashe, Willem probably did not tell the owner about the problems with the farmer from Nukhuwis and the latter later must have learned about their presence at Elandslaagte, but since the owner of Elandslaagte employed his father, who became a foreman there, he could not do anything about it: “He is now his old worker. He can stay.” Importantly, the owner of Nukhuwis was a friend of the farmer from Jumkaub and they used to visit each other, but he did not have such a close relationship with the owner of Elandslaagte: “Elandslaagte was not his friends.”

Meanwhile the policemen, who usually accompanied the farmers from Nukhuwis and Jumkaub and who were, according to Kashe, their “friends”, quit their posts at the Maroelaboom police station. One of them reportedly left to a farm and the other found work at the municipality in Grootfontein. To Maroelaboom came the son of Jan Albert, the owner of Elandslaagte, who was transferred there from Tsumeb. Nevertheless, in spite of certain security and protection at Elandslaagte Kashe remembered that his father had remained very cautious and vigilant and always when he had seen a police car coming to the farm went rather into hiding in the bush.

²⁸² I should mention that in the beginning Kashe apparently did not want to talk about this incident. But after initial hesitation he could not resist deep laughing while narrating the event. Emma was during my research an old wrinkled, quiet and shy woman, who was regularly attending church services and she was a total absentee. The very notion, that Emma, was ever, as apparently most of his close kin, a drinkard, and the events of that night were for Kashe at the time of my research somehow absurd.

²⁸³ The “Ovambo” workers did not give away the place where the Bushmen were hiding. Interestingly, despite of some tensions between the black people and !Xun the former felt in this particular instance apparently more solidarity to the Bushmen than with the white farmers and policemen.

At Elandslaagte, as at other farms, the workers depended on the food rations and money they were given by the farmer. However, according to Kashe, it was together with the farm Welgemoed (15; see below) the only at which he stayed and where some of the !Xun hunted sometimes also with bows. However, in most cases they hunted only warthogs with spears and wild dogs. Kashe also killed two kudus: one in a trap made from a wire attached to a tree which caught the animal's head and the second with a spear after it was startled by the dogs and was trapped in a fence near the farm compound. According to Kashe, the farmer did not stop the workers from killing the animals, as was otherwise often the case at other farms, because they were destroying the harvest.

Kashe stayed at Elandslaagte from the ages of 12 to 15 years old approximately. Thus, he was there at the time when adults often call !Xun boys by the Afrikaans term *mannetjies*, meaning "young man". On becoming a teenager, Kashe, like other boys, used to visit his kin and friends or to make acquaintances with !Xun girls at neighbouring farms by bike or just on foot. He went there with some of his peers. They usually went in the evenings and returned late at night. He estimated that as a teenager and young adult man he had had short sexual relationships with about "ten" girls. Kashe went in the evening with his brother or friend/s to the farm, where the girls they were seeking lived. If the girls wanted to meet with them privately, the boys used a trick: they announced to the people sitting around the night fires they were returning home, but before that they had arranged with the girls to meet at another place on the farm and then went with the girls to places where their teenage friends or relatives stayed. Before sun rise the boys rode back to their home farm.²⁸⁴

Kashe claimed that when he became a young man and started to move independently of his parents, he had been a "bit stupid" (a *bietjie dom*). If somebody told him he should move to another farm with him, he often did so, but if he did not like it there, he stayed at the farm for only a few days before moving to another place. There is no doubt that the short visits to farms in the vicinity supported the development of social relations with other !Xun that he could later, to some extent, capitalise on when moving from one place to another.

During that period, when Kashe lived at Elandslaagte, he worked for the farmer several times, but often left of his own will as he went to visit his relatives at other farms, mainly Welgemoed. According to Kashe, this behaviour was not specific to him, but that the !Xun *mannetjies* often behaved in this way and the farmers were not surprised by it: "He (the farmer) knows the small *mannetjies*. He knows I'm still stupid." According to Kashe, it was also well known that the owner of Elandslaagte did not beat the workers who deserted him. Kashe knew he could virtually always come back to the farm and the owner would employ him. If he did not want to work, he would rather have stayed at another farm and did not visit his parents at Elandslaagte at all: "I know, if go always there, I must work." Kashe recalled with certain amusement a day when the owner of Elandslaagte ordered him to wash his clothes so that he could go with him to Grootfontein. However, Kashe did not want to and instead of accompanying him to the town he hid in the bush. Kashe's father then scolded Kashe for his behaviour because the farmer was looking for him. Kashe, however, did not regard it as serious problem since he knew the farmer would not punish him.

The farmer obviously had, to some extent, a different approach and expectations towards *mannetjies* and adult workers (*groot mense*). Thus, correspondingly, at the beginning, when

²⁸⁴ The life of the Nharo Bushmen boys as being less restricted as by the girls, including visits to neighbouring farms, staying there for few days and courting girls reported also Guenther (1986: 211).

Kashe had to herd the goats with his brother, he did not get financial remuneration, but only clothes. Later on he also worked on the farmer's vegetable garden (tuinwerk) and made the fences (draadwerk). The farmer engaged him (in two different periods of time) to take care of the goats, but when he saw how much Kashe disliked it he did not task him with this generally unpopular work any longer.²⁸⁵ It was also during his later stay at Elandslaagte that Kashe finally started to receive remuneration and became treated virtually like an adult worker. Until coming to Elandslaagte, Kashe mostly only assisted others in their work.

Before coming to Elandslaagte, Kashe followed his parents from one place to another. It was also from this farm that Kashe started to live to another place, the neighbouring farm **Welgemoet (15)** for longer periods without being with his parents. There he stayed for "several months". He had relatives living at Welgemoed as well (his sister and her husband and Kashe's "brother" Kues) and Kashe "just stayed" (net so gebly) with them without working at the farm. When I asked him about the reason for his frequent departures from Elandslaagte, Kashe claimed that except for the two particular cases when he had to tend the goats he did not have any specific reason for deserting the farm. He did not feel he had been the victim of any abuse, mistreatment, or threat: "I left the work by myself". In similar instances in the future at other farms he often described the reasons for leaving the place as "just so" (net so). Sometimes he even compared himself to a child who "is stubborn" (maak stout) or he blamed his thoughtlessness and the carelessness typical of !Xun *mannetjies*. "It's bad. We were a problem," said Kashe retrospectively of his behaviour. Another accompanying reason for deserting the farm was according to Kashe that he had started to "get friends" (kry friends).

During that time, Kashe made his first attempt to gain employment at a farm where his parents did not work. He learned that the owner of **Jumkaub (16)** was in need of workers and decided to ask for employment there. The decision to go to this farm was also influenced by the fact that his "grandparents" (the "brother" of his mother's father) were also working there. Kashe recalled the details of his attempt to gain the job well. When he approached him, the farmer was just sitting on a tractor with a trailer standing near the fence. According to Kashe, he himself stood just between the tractor and a fence. After telling the farmer he was looking for employment, the farmer reacted by saying: "You, young guys, you do not like to work!" Kashe tried to explain that the opposite was true. But when the farmer put down his pipe and started to roll up his sleeves, Kashe thought he was going to beat him. He wanted to run away, but saw the place was a flat open space with hardly any bush he could run into and hide. He was sure he would be caught up by the farmer or by his black workers. Thus, he tried to outwit the Afrikaner by saying there was another !Xun at the workers' houses at the farm looking for a job. After being told by the farmer to fetch him, he went to his "grandparents" house at Jumkaub, took his blankets and went away.

He went back to **Elandslaagte (17)**, where his father still worked, and he was employed there again. However, even this time he decided to leave. The reason he gave me for deserting the farm this time was his feeling of loneliness. He wanted to go to a farm called **Wackies (18)**,

²⁸⁵ Kashe has often complained that tending goats was a hard work, because these animals moved quickly in the bush and in the heating sun it was strenuous to follow them. In the case of Elandslaagte it was allegedly the more difficult as the grass at farm was heavily grazed off by at the *plaas* numerous cows and the goats had to run long distances to feed them. Furthermore, according to Kashe it was hard to keep the old and young animals separate to ensure that the small ones were weaned only at given time and that the farmer sometimes objected to him and also his brother to neglect the care for the goats: "He talks always like this."

where he had stayed before and where also his older sister's husband Otto and his brother Andris lived. Nonetheless, he did not work there and had stayed there only for "several weeks" before running away from the police once more. This time he was accused by a !Xun woman (the wife of Lukas, the "brother" of Otto, Kashe's brother in-law) at the farm of assaulting and raping her. According to Kashe, one day he was drinking alcohol with his brother Andris and the woman. They had distilled the alcohol themselves and Kashe expected it to be shared among them. But when the woman drank the whole bottle of the alcohol, which was meant to be shared among all of them, he lost his temper. He said he had punched her in the face and knocked her down. He was about to go on beating her, but his brother grabbed him and prevented further violence. The woman ran away and, according to Kashe, shouted that they wanted to rape her and that she would report it to the police. After this incident Kashe and his brother fled to Jagterslust (18a), to where his parents had meanwhile moved. Importantly, according to Kashe, the owner of Wackies was angry at his family since all of the !Xun left the farm within a relatively short period and finally the only person left was an Ovambo, who tended the goats.

Kashe stayed for only "one day" at Jagterslust. Then he moved with his father to **Grootfontein (19)** because his father decided to find work in that area. Kashe remembered it was in 1987, in the year he was seventeen. They went there on one bicycle, one of them riding and the other sitting behind, which his father had bought at Elandslaagte. According to Kashe, they did not take any blankets with them. His father's plan was get to their relatives at one farm near Grootfontein. Kashe went with his father, even though he did not have any friends in the town and did not know the area well.

Table 7: Period I: Kashe's movements among the farms (1970 - 1987)

	Place	duration of the stay	work	ethnicity of the farmer/employer	ethnicity of the workers	kin ("family") bf. arrival	reasons for coming to this place	reasons for leaving to another place	way of leaving
1.	Jumkaub	6-7 years	father	„Englishman“	!Xun O/K	Yes	father was looking for work	- moved with parents - farmer sold the farm? - death in the family?	father's donkey cart
2.	Jagterslust	1 year	father	Afrikaner	!Xun	Yes	- offer by the farmer - family	- moved with parents - work for the farmer/farmer's family at another farm	farmer's lorry
3.	Langvorbag	1 year	father	Afrikaner	!Xun Herero Damara	No	work for the farmer at another farm	- moved with parents - work for the farmer at another farm	farmer's bakkie or lorry
4.	Jagterslust	1 year	father	Afrikaner	!Xun	Yes	work for the farmer at another farm	- moved with parents - farmer left - death in the family	father's donkey cart
5.	Jumkaub	several days	No	„Englishman“	!Xun O/K	Yes	family	- moved with parents - looking for work	father's donkey cart
6.	Wackies	1 year	father	Afrikaner	!Xun O/K	Yes	family	- moved with parents - violence	father's donkey cart
7.	Jumkaub	1 month	No	„Englishman“	!Xun O/K	Yes	family	- moved with parents - the farmer "gives" Kashe's father to his son	farmer's bakkie
8.	Morooster	1 year	father	Afrikaner	!Xun O/K	Yes	family	- moved with parents - violence	by foot
9.	Jumkaub	2 weeks	No	Afrikaner	!Xun O/K	Yes	family	- moved with parents - looking for work	father's donkey cart donkey cart
10.	Nukhuwis	1 year	father	Afrikaner	!Xun O/K Damara	Yes	- offer by the farmer - family	- moved with parents - violence	by foot
11.	Olivantsput	2 months	No	Afrikaner	!Xun	Yes	family	- moved with parents - fearing the police	by foot
12.	Voorpos	2 days	No	Afrikaner	!Xun	Yes	family	- moved with parents - fearing the police	by foot

13.	Olivantsput	3 months	No	Afrikaner	!Xun	Yes	family	- moved with parents - violence - fearing the police	by foot
14.	Elandslaagte	several years	Yes	Afrikaner	!Xun O/K	Yes	- family - known farmer	- “only so” - did not like tending the goats - wanted to be with friends	by foot/bicycle
Kashe’s first independent moves									
15.	Welgemoet	4 months	No	Afrikaner	!Xun Damara	Yes	- family - friends	looking for work	by foot
16.	Jumkaub	0 days	No	Englishman	!Xun	Yes	looking for work	fearing the farmer	by foot
17.	Elandslaagte: Kashe moved from and to El. “many times”	1 year	Yes	Afrikaner	!Xun O/K	Yes	family	- „only so“ - wanted to be with his brother	by foot
18.	Wackies	1,5 month	No	Afrikaner	!Xun	Yes	family	- violence - fearing the police	by foot
Kashe moves with his father to immediate Grootfontein area									
19.	Grootfontein (location)	1 day	No	-	!Xun/Damara	No	“Damara” friend	- looking for work - family	

Comments: following the parents and fleeing the violence

In the period between 1970 and 1987 we can observe that Kashe's family moved virtually only among the farms which lay northeast of Grootfontein and Kashe, due to his age and dependency on his parents, moved only with them up to the age of fifteen. Except for the instance when they were transferred by lorry to the farm Langvorbag in the Otjiwarongo area, they lived on farms in a geographically relatively small area, where the !Xun comprised the absolute majority of workers. They moved among farms that were relatively near each other, sometimes neighbouring, the biggest distance between them could be covered in a one or two-day march.

Kashe himself had the feeling they were always moving in the same area and returned to places they already knew: "We moved only so around" (Ons het net so rondgeeloo). The presence of kin was, in most instances, crucial. Many of Kashe's relatives lived in the period until he was six or seven years old at Jumkaub. Kashe recalled that, in addition to his father and mother, there was his brother and two sisters and also his father's father, his father's 'brother', his mother's "sister" Emma and her husband Otto. When going from one place to another the virtually landless !Xun families relied on kin networks.

If they left one farm, they could find a temporary refuge virtually only with their relatives at another farm. Except for their move to farm Langvorbag in Otjiwarongo area, in all other places they went to farms they had kin. One day, when discussing with Kashe the way he had moved between farms in the past, he said: "It were almost only the same places. I do not know the other places, I come only to places where is my family."

If not utilising the kin network, Kashe's family could capitalise on the acquaintances build up with particular farmer families. In this regard we could also see that Kashe's father Willem utilized his old social bonds to the farmer at Elandslaagte (14), with whom he found employment after he had been on the run from the farmer he left and the police.

When Kashe's family stayed at a farm without being employed, it seemed to be only for few days or weeks. Sometimes they feared their presence was disliked by the farmer. However, sometimes they had good relationships with the farmers and he did not mind them doing this. Visiting the farms was generally accompanied by some concern that it would cause the !Xun who they were visiting problems, when the farm would be stormed by policemen looking for fugitive workers. There was always a threat that the visitors would be arrested and interrogated at the police station and maybe also beaten. The presence of unemployed !Xun at the farm could have been also a burden for their employed relatives as they had to provide them with food. In cases when the breadwinner could not work, as was the case of Kashe's father after he was beaten at Nukhuwis and Wackies, they could, however, hardly refuse to help.

Suzman met many Ju/'hoansi in the Omaheke region who identified with a certain farm as their *n!ore* territory to which they felt bound (Suzman 2000: 66 - 72). However, this was not the case for the !Xun I worked with and who used to live in the farm area before moving to Grootfontein. Even though some of them were born there, as was the case for Kashe, their forebearers were often born somewhere else and moved there only later on. Nevertheless, some !Xun developed a close relationship to this geographical space in the course of time and felt it to be very familiar. Kashe viewed his family's constant retreat to farm Jumkaub, where

he was born and where they lived for several years, as a result of the fact that they were “used to” this farm. When I asked Kashe whether his family felt negatively about those !Xun not in a kin relationship to them but who lived at the same farm, he denied it by saying: “They look only for work.”

Living in a certain area for a longer period of time made it a socially familiar environment for the !Xun. The moving and visiting !Xun intensively exchanged information about work opportunities and on the situation on particular farms. Thus, for example, “all the people” knew they could find a refuge at Olivantsput with its absentee farmer or that it was easy to find a job at Nukhuwis because the farmer often beat the workers and they run away.

The prime decision-maker behind his family’s moves from one place to another was Kashe’s father, on whom the family depended economically, and the mother played virtually no significant role. “Mother is nothing. Mother waits for the father. There is only one way” (Ma is niks. Ma wag vir die pa. Daar is net een weg), claimed Kashe. This, it seems, was a general feature of the movements of the !Xun families in the farm area. The family moved to where the father found employment. Kashe’s mother also did not get employment at all the farms. It was more difficult because the farmers mostly needed several male workers, but only one woman working in the kitchen. When we discussed the movements of his family, Kashe talked only about the father and the mother was hardly ever mentioned. Eventually Kashe moved to various farms independently of his parents but when he decided to go to the farm where they were staying, he talked only about going to a *plaas* where his father lived. He mostly said: “My father is there” and did not mention the mother at all. The perspective may also have been influenced by the gender of my informant and may have been different if I had talked with Kashe’s sister.

It should be stressed, however, that when moving to another place, Kashe’s family often chose a place with Kashe’s mother relatives as well: they frequently went to where her “sister” Emma and her husband Anton were. Kashe himself had a very close relationship with Emma. Emma, who is childless, assumed the role of his foster mother early on: “She grew me up.” Even when Emma and his mother Maria stayed at the same farm, he ate at Emma’s fire and he used to visit her even after he grew up. Thus, when Kashe talked about the reasons for going to Jumkaub, he said it had been because of the presence of both Emma and Anton.

Interestingly, both Kashe and his father initially gave me different reasons for leaving Jumkaub (1). Kashe claimed it was because of the death of his father’s father, Willem said the farmer had sold the *plaas*. Kashe recalled that when he was young and someone passed away, it was common for the !Xun kin either to leave for another farm or re-build their house at a different place on the farm. This cultural practice apparently gradually lost its importance for the !Xun in the Grootfontein area and I did not hear about it during the time of my research. It was also only in the two cases (Jumkaub 1, Jagterslust 4) in the 1970s that Kashe mentioned a death in the family as a motive for leaving for another place. The reason for the disappearance of this practise was apparently closely connected to changes in the !Xun’s religious beliefs as a result of contact with Christian religious ideas and modern Western medicine. Willem admitted for the first time, during my fourth field research trip to Namibia in 2010, that he might have left the farm as a result of the deaths in his family, because his kinfolk may have been “afraid”. However, he immediately started to excuse his behaviour by saying that at that time he did not understand the reasons for a person’s death properly and that only later on did he come to learn that a person’s death was caused “only by a sickness”. Kashe did not know

why the !Xun had left places after a person's death and explained it by saying that the relatives of the person did not feel good at the place anymore: "They were not satisfied."

When I asked Willem for the motives for quitting Jumkaub (1) and Jagterslust (4), he initially claimed to have stopped working for the farmers because they had sold the farm. „All the Afrikaners (The !Xun often use the terms Afrikaaner or Boer for all whites, including German or English-speaking farmers) I have worked for sold the farm,“ he often repeated. Willem said vaguely that "they went in the factory" in the towns, hinting that the farmers had left farming entirely. Nevertheless, Willem's general claim might reflect a tendency in the 1960s and 1970s. A number of farmers left the farms because of the armed conflict between the South African forces and the liberation movement led by the South West Africa Peoples' Organisation (SWAPO) in the north of the country. It was a consequence of the volatility of the area that in 1968 the mother of Kurt Hülsmann, who run the farm business after her husband's death, left the Keibeb farm:

Als die ersten Terroristen²⁸⁶... den bewaffneten Kampf aufnahmen und mit ihren gewalttätigen Aktionen begannen, wurde das leben auf "Keibeb" - da diese in Ihren Einzugsgebiet lag - zu unsicher und Mutter musste sich schweren Herzens entschliessen die Farm zu verlassen und in Grootfontein eine kleine Mietwohnung beziehen. (Hülsmann n.d.: 200)

Generally, given the close ties between some !Xun families and particular farmers' families, we can assume that movements of the farmers away from the conflict area may have affected the life of the !Xun workforce and their mobility.²⁸⁷ Kashe himself was not aware of any farmer who had moved out of the farm area in the 1970s or 1980s because of the effects of the armed conflict in the north. It must be remembered that he was still too young to follow these developments closely and we can assume the farmers have had no need to discuss with their Bushmen workers the reasons for leaving their estates. Thus, Kashe claimed, he still had the rather untroubled life of a teenager even during the period of the liberation struggle: "*I'm (was) stupid.*" He did remember that adult people were more worried by the developments than him and that they feared the "terrorists", as the liberation fighters were apparently also called by some !Xun in this area.

Kashe remembered that when they stayed at Nukhuwis, they sometimes heard the sound of bombs and explosions from the area to the north of the farm. Information was spreading that the SWAPO soldiers were coming to the farms at night and were forcing workers to show them where the owners of the farm slept so that they could kill them. The farmer of Nukhuwis told the workers that one !Xun (Ou Hendrik, who was Kashe's relative and used to stay with Kashe's family at farm Vuilduin) led the SWAPO soldiers to the house of the owner of the nearby farm Boomplaas. The soldiers allegedly threw grenades at the house. Kashe did not know what had happened to the farmer, but his daughter allegedly shot one of the attackers. The !Xun men collaborating with the SWAPO fighters were allegedly arrested and sentenced to "10 years", but released upon Namibia's independence in 1990. In fact, although my informants talked about the better-known SWAPO, at least some of the actions may have been conducted by PLAN (People's Liberation Army of Namibia), which was able to operate

²⁸⁶ As is well-know the farmers used this term for designating the liberation fighters.

²⁸⁷ Some white farmers possibly left the area also around the the time of Namibia's independence, however, I do not have any data for supporting it.

in the 1970s as far south as in the area between Otavi, Tsumbeb and Grootfontein, and occasionally even in Windhoek and Swakopmund (Wallace 2001: 285 - 6; Cliffe 1994: 32).²⁸⁸

Kashe also remembered that the South African soldiers often came to the farms and requested the workers report to them any suspicious traces on the ground. A consequence of the farmers' fears of the "terrorists" was that the farm workers had to clear - plough with the tractor – ten-foot wide strips of ground beside the farm's fence so that the *plaas* owners and police could control the movement of any suspicious persons. According to Kashe, the !Xun did not feel restricted in their movements by this measure. First, they knew the farmers, policemen and soldiers were looking for the footprints of the boots of SWAPO soldiers and not workers, and, second, if the !Xun did not want other people to see and recognise their footprints, they simply crossed the boundaries of farms at places where the traces were hard to observe, as Kashe said, where the ground had been "dirty".

The activities of the South African army may also have had some effect on the movements of the !Xun in the area. Although it is rather anecdotal information, Willem recalled that some of his relatives went at that time to western Bushmanland. It is possible that some of the !Xun were attracted to the area by the activities of the army, which had set up military bases in Bushmanland and, in many ways, enhanced the living standards of the Bushmen they employed and their kin. Even Kashe contemplated joining the South African army and as will be mentioned below, his father might have worked for the army very briefly as a yard worker shortly before the South Africans left the country. However, the Grootfontein !Xun farm workers were, according to my informants, not often employed by the South African army. During my research, I heard about only one !Xun living in Grootfontein who was said to have worked for the army on a long-term basis.

A striking motive behind Kashe's family's movements since the 1980s was violence. From the thirteen reported movements starting with his stay at Wackies (6) in approximately 1980 to leaving the same farm in 1987 (Wackies 18) five of the moves were as a direct consequence of physical violence and most of the incidents involved Willem. Kashe's family's encounters with violence, which caused or facilitated their movement to another place, had manifold forms, be it intra-ethnic among the !Xun, sometimes in a kin relationship and sometimes not,²⁸⁹ or inter-ethnic, often against the Ovambos/Kavangos or from the farmer. Yet, it was not only violence that was exercised that made the !Xun move. The fear of possible violent behaviour on the part of farmers and policemen had a similar effect. Crucially, the key trigger for violent behaviour was, in almost all cases, alcohol, which, as Kashe openly admitted, all adult !Xun including the women drank excessively.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁸ Although this information does sound somehow strange, Kashe recalled that when they were in Jumkaub one of his father's brothers attempted to commit suicide by hanging himself allegedly after hearing in the radio, that the "terrorists" were approaching the farm. But he did not kill himself, since the rope, made from makalani palm leaves, broke under the weight of his body. Kashe remembered the bruises on the man's neck caused by the toe.

²⁸⁹ I did not come across of violent behaviour among close !Xun kin. However, Kashe's father narrated to me that in the time before Kashe was born or was too very small to remember it, Willem once had a quarrell with his "brother" a stabbed him several times with a knife and had to spent his term at Maroelaboom prison. Both "brothers" were during the quarrell drunk.

²⁹⁰ If the violence among the !Xun was triggered by alcohol, it could, but did not have automatically to affect seriously the relationships among the fighting parties. Similarly as other social anthropologists I was sometimes struck by the way the !Xun could quickly overcome violent incidents among themselves. In 2009 I witnessed a fight between two men in Kashe's age, but they looked like very good friends just few minutes after the fight. In this case Kashe claimed, the people knew "it was only because of alcohol" and therefore there was no reason for being at loggerheads for longer time. The association of violence and alcohol consumption observed also Sylvain

The occurrence of violent behaviour could depend also on the numerical strength of the quarrelling parties. According to Kashe, if Titus had been alone at Wackies (6) and not helped by his friend, he would not have dared to beat his father. Later on, when they fled from Moroster (8) to the cattle post of Welgemoed (8b), where Titus was living, they did not have to fear him, since he lived only with his wife and children there.

Generally, the climate of violence and fear made Kashe's family members vigilant and suspicious of other people's motives. When Kashe's family fled from violence or its prospect, events took place often very quickly and they had to make fast decisions about where to move. It must have been an extremely stressful and confusing situation. Escaping from the police or farmer was a usual situation for Kashe's family in this period. When they were normally moving among the farms, he and his family always used the roads, but when on the run from the police or a farmer they went through the bush between the farms.

Capitalising on their own social network significantly counter-balanced the networks between farmers and policemen, who were perceived by the !Xun as collaborating closely. The closeness between the policemen and farmers reduced the !Xun's room for manoeuvre when they transgressed the law.

The described movements of Kashe and his parents provide us with information about the possible interplay of various motivations the !Xun had for moving to another place and the perception of this mobility by the white farmers and the consequences this had for the creation or supporting of their stereotypes about the !Xun's behaviour. There is no doubt that when the !Xun deserted the farm without informing its *eienaar* of their intention to leave, it must have put stress on him to ensure the undisturbed running of the farm business.

It could only have supported many farmers' notions of the Bushmen as being nomadic by nature and hence unreliable. As has been seen, Kashe's father Willem had substantial reasons for running off, reasons which did not have anything to do with the Bushmen's alleged primordial tendency to nomadism. However, the farmer could hardly be aware of these motives. This was, for example, the case when Kashe was beaten by the "Ovambo" Titus at Wackies (6) or when he fought with !U !Xun at Moroster (8). "That time you shouldn't say it (that you leave the place) to the owner. You should only stand up and go." To avoid conflict situation with the farmer, the !Xun deserted the farm in the night, which enabled them to escape without being sighted by the farmer and gave them the whole night to reach a place they envisaged as a refuge. The Ju/'hoan farm workers in the Omaheke acted in the same way (Sylvain 1999: 392).

The instances when Kashe moved to another farm for no serious reasons ("only so"), could also confirm the farmers' stereotypes about the Bushmen's inclination to nomadism. However, during my interviews with Kashe it came out that, in fact, there were also some concrete reasons behind the "only so" movements and that they were partly generational- and gender-related. Kashe was entering adulthood and it was quite usual for young men, often brothers, to move that time among the farms, while daughters "stayed with the parents till

(2004) among the San in the Omaheke region. Abstinent Ju/'hoan men in the Tsumkwe area showed in the past also less violent behaviour than the drinking ones (Christiansen and Winkler 1992). Sylvain pointed to an interesting connection between violence, alcohol and spiritual ideas among the Omaheke Ju/'hoan Bushmen and convincingly explains the rash overcoming of violent conflicts with the need to restore the kinship fabric on which the economically vulnerable Bushmen depend.

they married". The young males were looking for sexual partners and wanted to spend time with relatives and friends. Young !Xun men began to be paid in money for the farmwork they did, which made them less dependent on others. When I talked about this period with Kashe, he was already struggling to provide for his own family and from this perspective he did not perceive the reasons for leaving the farms when he was young as really being substantial.

On the other hand, if the interaction between the !Xun workers and the farmers was taking place for a longer period, it could have reduced the development of mutual biases and stereotypes. This often depended on particular farmers. The way Kashe put it was that some farmers had respect of the !Xun since they knew their Bushmen labourers well. Those farmers grew up at the farms, had had !Xun children as playmates and even sometimes learned to speak !Xun. Kashe called them "farm Afrikaners" (plaas se Boere). They build close relationships with particular !Xun families, those whose heads they had grown up with, so that they were even used to the Bushmen's frequent movements between the farms and knew quite well the reasons behind them. When a worker left the farm without telling the farmer and later returned, he did not necessarily have to expect a negative reaction from the owner. Kashe remembered that when he had returned to Elandslaagte (17), the farmer just stood in the *kraal* and asked him: "Where have you been?". "I was at other farms," answered Kashe. "You do not want to work?" asked the Afrikaner. But Kashe assured him he wanted to and the farmer employed him again. Kashe had left Elandslaagte without giving notice to the farmer several times, but was always employed there when he wanted to. This was also due to the fact, that the farmer knew what to expect from teenage !Xun workers.

Interestingly, during my fourth research trip in Grootfontein, Kashe self-critically admitted that, retrospectively, the way his "family" sometimes moved from one place to another may have caused the farmers serious problems with running the *plaas* business. This was the case when they left the farm Wackies (18), whose owner was very angry at them: "We were a big problem. That time we follow each other." (Ons volg mekaar). The members of his close kin and the in-laws usually moved together, whether or not they decided to leave a place abruptly: "If one man goes and finds at the other place work, then the others go there to visit him. Now when they pay the visit, maybe they find work there and then the others come as well." In this way they quite closely resembled the traditional Bushmen band-like structures.

Kashe and Grootfontein: *I was afraid of Damara mannetjies*

Kashe saw for the first time Grootfontein as a little boy when he lived in the 1970s at the farm Jumkaub. He went to the town with the farmer driving the car. He had stayed the whole time in the car waiting till the farmer made his shopping. The farmer bought him sweets, bread and some other food and they went back to the farm. His first experience with Grootfontein was thus similar to his father's. Both went there with the farmer and he bought them some, from their point of view, tasty foods, which were not easily available at the farm. However, they did not go into the shop. Then he went to Grootfontein when the farmer from Jagterslust drove to the hospital his father after a pump engine belt broke Willem's forearm. That time Willem's family slept in the *buitekamer* of the farmer's house in the town. He also went to Grootfontein with the farmer of Nukhuwis. Kashe remembered that the *eienaar* had given him 50 cents, which was allegedly the first money he was ever given and he bought for it in Wecke and Voigts shop some sweets. Then they went to a plot behind Shamalendi owned allegedly by the farmer's mother, where they also were overnighting.

The next time Kashe went with the farmer from Nukhuwis to Grootfontein he bought a 750 ml bottle of cheap Clubman mint punch wine (23 % alcohol) which the workers used to drink at the farm. The price was allegedly around one Rand, a substantial amount given the fact Kashe's salary at that time was 5 Rand. He recalled with huge amusement that he waited until about 10 p.m. to be sure the farmer slept to start drinking the alcohol in the garage, where he slept. When he wanted to drink from the bottle he always switched on the light and then turned it off. Later on he became apparently very drunk. When he awoke in the morning the bottle was empty but the light still switched on. Mentioning here this information is quite important. Even though it looks as a "funny story" it is revealing that Kashe was developing at this time when he was approximately sixteen years old, already alcohol drinking habits. Since that time, or even a bit earlier he drank regularly till the beginning of 2007. As will be shown below, severe alcohol drinking affected in many aspects strongly his life.

Kashe started to visit Grootfontein more often only as a teenager at Elandslaagte. At that time he became a farm worker, although as a *mannetjie* he still did not have the status of an adult labourer, and could be used by the farmer in the town for the yardwork and doing other chores. Kashe went to Grootfontein usually for a week long trip and slept at the blankets in the garage of the farmer's house in the town. The next week he was then driven to the house of the farmer's son in the neighbouring town Tsumeb. According to Kashe when he went to Grootfontein with the farm owner he used to stay only at his house in the town and did not go to the location. When he went with him with the car to do shopping, he also mostly stayed in the vehicle. He claimed to have been afraid of the Damara *mannetjies*. He recalled that once when the farmer was in the Wecke and Voigts shop and he was waiting for him outside, the Damara boys threatened him and he had to climb at the pick-up to be safe from them. The Damaras allegedly shouted at him "*Plaasjappi*".²⁹¹ However, Kashe claimed it had been only the boys and not the adults, who behaved in this hostile way. I may add that when it came to some kind of tensions among the people of different ethnic groups dwelling in the locations the Grootfontein municipality records at the National Archives in Windhoek occasionally mentioned that they developed among young men. Apparently the young men from numerically strong ethnic groups generally vented their tensions towards the "others" more openly than other age groups.

The story of Damara speaking *mannetjies* in Grootfontein beating or threatening the !Xun was mentioned also by other !Xun. My !Xun informant Petrus recalled that the „Damara“ boys at Mariabronn school were often harassing their !Xun schoolmates. Köhler (1959b: 63) mentioned that there were no observed ethnic tensions in the Old location, but there were sometimes clashes among the youths (in 1956 between the Damaras and Hereros).

²⁹¹ *Plaasjappi* is a derogatory term for people from the farms, who are regarded as helpless in the town and by this contrasting to the townspeople (Greiner 2008: 169). However, in the period of my research this term did not seem to be applied by the Grootfontein dwellers extensively. The reason behind it may be that the mobility between the farms and Grootfontein was very intensive and a substantial part of the town population was so poor that they at the first sight did not look different from the farm workers.

Period II.: To the immediate Grootfontein area (1987-1997)

The decision to move to the area near Grootfontein or, if the possibility arose, to the town itself was made by Kashe's father. When I asked Willem about the reasons for going to Grootfontein he initially repeated that the farmers he had worked for had sold their farms and he did not want to work for people with whom he was not well acquainted (reason 1²⁹²). Nevertheless, we saw that Willem did not go to Grootfontein from a farm that had been sold. Only in 2010 did Willem tell me explicitly that he went to the immediate Grootfontein area to find work there ("Ek soek werk"; reason 2). However, Kashe thought that other reasons and motives were involved as well: they hoped to get better salaries in Grootfontein or its immediate surroundings than in the farm area dozens of kilometres northeast from Grootfontein they were coming from (reason 3). Moving to Grootfontein meant, according to Kashe, being close to shops where it was possible to "buy all necessary things" and to be "near the cheap goods", "near all the things". At the farms the workers were usually provided with food rations by the farmer and occasionally were given some old clothes, but they had to acquire all the other items or food in the farmer's shop, where the prices were often high, so that the farmer could make profit. The farmer sold there goods mostly bought in Grootfontein. As Kashe emphasised "being on the farm you have to borrow the things from the others, in the town you buy them" (reason 4). Thus the combination of having a better income and being near the town meant according to Kashe that "I will save my money, I will buy the food and will buy many other things yet".

Furthermore, as another reason for moving to Grootfontein Kashe gave me the attempt to escape the violence-ridden farm area northeast from Grootfontein (reason 5). The violence stories were probably one of the important constituents of the farm workers discourse at that time in this particular farm area. Due to the permanent movements of the !Xun and their dense and active social network, these stories could easily circulate among the people, their content naturally undergoing various modifications but influencing the listener's attitude and behaviour. This influence was probably the more profound if relatives were involved in the events or if those events had happened in the vicinity.

One such story, which Kashe recalled in connection with his family's decision to move to Grootfontein, reached them by means of the "world of mouths" at the time when they worked at farm Nukhuwis (10). At a plot near Grootfontein, whose owner was allegedly the mother of the owner of farm Nukhuwis, was killed with a spear a "!"Xun-Damara" man. The attacker, who was Kashe's relative,²⁹³ fled to the farm area northeast of Grootfontein, where Kashe's family were living. During his escape the attacker also passed through the farm Leuness, where his brother Hans worked. He passed by his house but did not enter it, but the policemen looking for the murderer found his footprints near the house and arrested his brother. According to Kashe, they beat him viciously, bound him with a rope to a tree branch, pulled him up and set a fire under him. Then they allegedly pulled him up and down above the flames. Later on, when the farmer saw the attacker's brother would not help them, he

²⁹² The subsequent numerical listing of the reasons does not express their importance, but has to highlight the apparent heterogeneity of the involved factors.

²⁹³ His name was Willem Kóko and he was a brother of Hans, with whom Kashe worked in 2008 at plot Lemoentjie by Grootfontein. Hans' father worked at Voorpos (12) at the time when Kashe's father, Kashe and his brother Andris fled there from Nukhuwis (12) to run off from the drunk farmer and he lived in Grootfontein's township at plot 3 until my second field research in 2008, and passed there away. Willem knew W. Kóko from the time, when he stayed at farm Wackies, when the former lived at farm Leuness.

reportedly suggested stopping the torture. “This was the time when we came to Grootfontein,” explained Kashe.

Kashe and his father went from farm Jagterslust to Grootfontein by one bike. They took turns, each of them riding the bike for a while with the other sitting on the frame. Willem told me that when going from farm Jagterslust to Grootfontein he knew there was “family” at one farm near the town. Kashe, who was merely accompanying his father at that time, however, had the feeling that his father did not have a precise plan about where to find work. Kashe thought his father had learned of the work at the farm only after accidentally running into some !Xun friends or relatives in Grootfontein. But since I have almost never encountered an instance when someone from Kashe’s family moved to a totally unknown social environment with the intention of settling there, I tend to believe rather his father’s version.²⁹⁴

Kashe and Willem spent the first night in **Grootfontein (19)** in the Damara location with a “Damara” friend of Willem’s called Haniku. They knew each other from the time when both of them worked at the Maroelaboom police station and Haniku also spoke the !Xun language. Kashe’s father claimed he had not planned to sleep at Haniku’s house when he and Kashe were on their way to Grootfontein and that the chance to overnight at his house arose only after they met Haniku by chance in the town. According to Kashe, at that time they did not have any kin who lived in the town with whom they could stay.

The next day Kashe and his father went on their bike to farm **Kamatete (20)** where their relatives lived. But they stayed there just one night and went back to **Grootfontein (21)** where they again spent only one night (or a few nights) at the house of Willem’s “Damara” friend in the Damara location. Kashe recalled that after their return they got drunk in the Single Quarters. From Grootfontein they rode by bicycle to farm **Felsenquelle (22)** where some of his mother’s relatives whom his father knew lived. They were allegedly of “mixed” !Xun-Damara ethnic background. Kashe could remember especially one woman: “She is !Xun, but she speaks only Damara language. But if you speak !Xun, she will understand”.²⁹⁵ According to Kashe, she was a “mixed” !Xun - Hai//om. Kashe became good friend with the woman’s son Elias who Kashe called “mixed Hai//om!/Xun/Ovambo”. His father was allegedly an “Ovambo”, but Elias did not talk his father’s mother tongue.

Kashe’s father Willem found soon work at neighbouring farm **Strydfontein (23)**²⁹⁶ and Kashe moved there as well. In 2009 I noted that it was probably the first time that Kashe had started to live at a farm where there were not any of his relatives. According to the information provided by Kashe, at that time there were only “Damaras”(Hai//om?) there with just one !Xun woman. In 2010, when I discussed the matter again with Kashe he said there had been three !Xun at that farm and that the woman was also in some kin relation to them and that his father knew some of the people at the farm. I have to emphasise that Kashe’s “family” in the immediate Grootfontein area was predominantly from the mother’s side, since his father’s relatives lived, according to Kashe, dozens kilometres northeastwards from Grootfontein, nearer the Rundu area, which was where Willem came from. After a few weeks at Strydfontein, Kashe went on the bike, accompanied by his friend Elias, to farm Jagterslust to

²⁹⁴ Nevertheless, it provides us with further example of different interpretations of reasons for a movement by its two actors in a different position (father vs. son; leader vs. dependent).

²⁹⁵ During my field research in 2010 she lived in Blikkiesdorp.

²⁹⁶ The work of the Oblates of Maria Immaculate among the Bushmen (apparently Hai//om) at Strydfontein mentioned Pater J.Schulte (1912).

tell his family to join them in Strydfontein. As a result Kashe's mother, brother, brother's wife and his sister Kristine came soon to Strydfontein as well after getting a hike from the farmer from Jagterslust. Kashe and Elias went to Jagterslust on Saturday, overnighed there and on Sunday rode back to Strydfontein. Kashe avoided being seen by the farmer at all. He explained this behaviour to me by saying that he did not want to meet him because the farmer was new at the farm and Kashe was afraid of him: "That time the owners beat the *mannetjies*."

Kashe did not feel safe even at Strydfontein and whenever he saw a police car he run off into the bush. However, after about "two months" he and his brother were arrested by the police, who were still investigating the rape accusation at farm Wackies (18). According to Kashe, the police arrested his brother first while Kashe was resting in the bush, but when he saw Andris being apprehended, he decided to give himself up to the police as well. According to Kashe, the policeman Gert Albert, who was the son of the owner of Elandslaagte (14) and knew Kashe well from the time when he worked for his father, saw them one day in this area walking along the tarred Grootfontein-Rundu road. He tried to arrest them but that time they managed to run into the bush. According to Kashe, he and his brother spent about "one month" in custody at the police station in **Maroelaboom (24)**. According to him, the Grootfontein court acquitted him, proclaiming them "underage". Before their release, they met with their father Willem, their brother in-law Otto and Otto's brother Lukas in the prison. All three had been arrested by Gert Albert following an accusation from the owner of the farm Elandslaagte that they had killed and eaten his bull. Willem was arrested at Strydfontein, Otto at Jagterslust and Lukas at Wackies.

From Maroelaboom Kashe went back to **Strydfontein (25)** where his mother and other relatives still were. The farmer gave Kashe the job that William had been doing before he was apprehended. Willem was meanwhile allegedly transferred from Maroelaboom to Hardap prison in central part of Namibia. Kashe's father, Otto and Lukas spent allegedly six months in the jail. According to Willem and Kashe, the punishment was unjust because the bull was a stray animal and it was allegedly found roaming in the bush.

After his release, Willem returned to Strydfontein but, according to Kashe, was employed there only for "few days". Then the farmer allegedly told him he had enough workers and dismissed him. Kashe's explanation was that the owner became suspicious towards his father: "When he came from the prison, the owner thinks this man will maybe also eat my cow." Soon after his father's release from prison, Kashe left Strydfontein. He went with his sister's husband Otto to a **plot (26) behind Shamalendi** near Grootfontein where an Afrikaner employed them as construction workers helping to build a house. According to Kashe, it was primarily Otto who wanted to go there because he had a family to provide for and needed some income. Kashe, who was still single at that time, just joined him. But they stayed there for only one week. Kashe gave me three reasons for their rash departure. First, they were scared by the rumours spread by other workers: "The people said, the *einenaar* is a problem. He kills the people and then gives them to the pigs." It is of course highly improbable that this ever really happened; however, such hearsay attaching itself to the Afrikaner affected the attitudes of the workforce towards him. Second, according to Kashe, the work was very hard. They were transporting heavy building material by wheelbarrow and they had to work all day long with little time for a rest. Third, the Afrikaner took a close interest in what the workers were doing: "This man, he stays with the people," He was permanently present at the construction site overseeing their work. Kashe and Otto left the plot after their first week

without telling the farmer or asking him for any money. They knew that if they left after such a short time, he would refuse to give them anything.

However, Kashe did not return to his parents to Strydfontein but went instead to his relatives at **Felsenquelle (27)**, a neighbouring farm. He felt he could not stay at Strydfontein any more because of the alleged consequence of an incident that happened when he worked at the farm. According to him, at that time he and his brother almost beat an “Ovambo” worker. Kashe and the Ovambo had argued over the use of the latter’s bike. One day Kashe wanted to visit a neighbouring plot to drink alcohol and asked the Ovambo if he could borrow the bicycle. Despite his initial reluctance, the Ovambo agreed but asked Kashe to return it quickly so that he could ride to Grootfontein the same day. However, Kashe got drunk, lost track of the time and came back late. The Ovambo was, according to Kashe, angry and was still objecting to his behaviour the next day. Kashe, his brother and another !Xun reacted to Ovambo’s ongoing swearing by threatening to beat him up. The man, he was the only Ovambo at the farm, went to the farmer and asked him for his salary, announcing that he was leaving the farm. After Kashe and Andris later on also left the farm, the “Damara” workers allegedly told the farmer the story. The farmer was said to have labelled the brothers as “stubborn” (stout). Since that time, Kashe avoided visiting the farm to avoid any potential conflict with the farmer.

Through his relatives at Felsenquelle, Kashe learned about an employment opportunity in **Abenab (28)** in a hennery owned by an Afrikaner since the brother of his friend Elias from Felsenquelle was working there. Kashe went to Abenab again with his brother-in-law Otto, the Afrikaner drove them there in his car. They did not discuss with him the level of their wages: “That time you should not ask the Afrikaner how much he will pay or he will tell you: come, take your things and go. (Then) I will take only my blankets and go. I was too afraid.” However, he considered the work, which consisted of feeding the hens, cleaning the hennery and packing eggs into the boxes, as too hard. “There were plenty of hens. The life is very hard, there is too much work,” recalled Kashe. Furthermore, according to him, the farmer was accusing them of stealing the animals. Thus, after “one month” they asked him to drive them on a Friday to Strydfontein so that they could take their wives there to go with them to Abenab. The Afrikaner arranged to pick them up on his way back to Abenab on Monday morning. But for Otto and Kashe, who did not, as he had told the farmer, have a wife, this was only a pretext for leaving the job. Thus, Kashe and Otto left without receiving any remuneration.

Kashe stayed for “a few weeks” with his friends at **Felsenquelle (29)** and then went to farm **Waldorf (30)** near Berg Aukas, where his father had meanwhile found work.²⁹⁷ Kashe was not employed at the farm but stayed there allegedly for “several months”. They decided to leave the farm because they feared the “Ovambo” foreman would beat his father. Kashe did not have precise information about the nature of the tension between the two men, but one day when he was visiting the shebeen at the Berg Aukas location he was told by the “Ovambo” foreman’s friends that he had said he would “kill” Kashe’s father. When I asked Kashe whether it was not just a verbal threat, he insisted it was meant seriously. The same day Kashe went back to Waldorf and after conveying the news to Willem, all of them (Kashe, both his parents and his niece Popi) left the farm the same day. The versions of this event I

²⁹⁷ In the time which preceded his stint at Waldorf Kashe’s father probably worked shortly, as he claimed, for South African army in Berg Aukas. According to Willem he was employed as yardworker. It must have been for a brief time of maybe two month or so and relatively shortly before the army left the country before its independence 1990. However I could not verify any details of this alleged employment.

was given by Kashe and his father in 2008 and 2009 were partly different from the one they told me in 2010: the “Ovambos” in Berg Aukas allegedly said to Kashe that they had been told by the “Ovambo” foreman that Willem would “beat all the Ovambos in Berg Aukas”. The “Ovambos” who talked to Kashe then asked him to convey the message to his father that if he came to Berg Aukas, it would be him who would be beaten by them. Kashe said that since Berg Aukas was near Waldorf the “Ovambos” could also come to the farm and assault his father there.

They went to **Jagterslust (31)** where Emma, Kashe’s mother’s “sister” and her husband Anton had moved already. However, according to Kashe, the farm owner did not like visitors and, therefore, he stayed there mostly only at the weekends and during the week lived with his relatives and friends at farms in the vicinity such as Sus, Klingenberg and Veldduin. Willem, meanwhile, moved to **Sus (32)** where his son in-law Otto was working. Willem was employed there too. Kashe moved there soon after as well. He was to stay at Sus for only “a few days” before going to **Asanib (33)**, where some other relatives lived. Kashe found work there but stayed only for “a few weeks”. He decided to leave after being beaten by a “Damara/!Xun”. It happened on a Saturday at the neighbouring farm, Güntsas, where the !Xun men drank alcohol. Kashe first had an argument with another !Xun man. The “Damara/!Xun” man sided with the latter and assaulted Kashe and hit him in the face. The next day when Kashe was back at Asanib the “Damara/!Xun” came there and allegedly wanted to take his bicycle. Kashe, who was this time, as he stressed, sober, managed to make him leave. However, he decided to stay at the farm only until the end of the month, took his 20 Rand salary, which he was given for the worked days and left again to **Sus (34)** and his parents.

According to Kashe, he knew he would find work there because of the constant flow of workers caused by the bad reputation of the farmer. “He cannot (does not) beat you but he is only bad,” as Kashe characterised him. He worked at the farm for about “two months”. It was probably from Sus that Kashe and his brother Andris went to farm **Vogelsang (35)** to where his father had gone in the meantime. Kashe said he had stayed there for about “three months” without working. When Willem went to farm **Ella (36)**, which was owned by the same family that owned Sus, Kashe and his brother followed him as well. After working there for about “a year”, they were taken to **Wiesenthal (37)**, another farm belonging to the same Afrikaner. There he worked only with his father. After spending approximately “two months” there, Kashe and his brother Andris were sent to farm **San Souci (38)**, which was owned by the farmer’s son. Their stay there ended abruptly after a violent incident with the latter. “He was young. That was a problem. He was stubborn,” said Kashe. According to him, one day the Afrikaner beat his brother Andris with a fan belt. His brother ran away, but the farmer took a rifle and shot twice in the air and once next to him. Kashe remembered that it was at a flat place with no bush nearby to hide. Therefore, his brother had no option but to return to the farmer’s son, who beat him again. In Kashe’s account, Andris had done nothing wrong: “The *eienaar* is only stubborn.” Kashe and his brother left the next morning without telling their employer and returned to **Ella (39)**. They explained to the farmer that they had left San Souci because of his son’s violent behaviour. Nonetheless, they stayed at Ella for “a few weeks”. “Here (San Souci), he (the farmer’s son) is a big problem, at the other place (Ella) is he (the farmer) a bit better, not much, only a bit”. Kashe remembered that at Ella the farmer once accused Andris of killing and eating a sheep. The farmer found the carcass of the animal and called the police to investigate. Nevertheless the !Xun could not understand this reaction because from the footprints at the killing site it was clear for them that the sheep was killed by a caracal, which had eaten only part of the animal before it was finished off by jackals and

dogs. For Kashe and Andris, this story only strengthened their fear that the farmer was able to “call the police anytime”.

From Ella Kashe went with his friend Johannes (mother !Xun/father Ovambo; but not, according to Kashe, a relative), with whom he had worked at San Souci and Ella, to **Veldduin (40)**. His relatives (his brother-in-law Felix and sister Katrina and one sister of his father Willem with her husband) were already employed there and later on his parents and his brother Andris joined them as well. Kashe worked at this farm for almost “two years” (appr. 1988 -1989). During that time Kashe also used to work at farm Guikanab Ost, which was owned the farmer of Veldduin, and Leuness’s son.

According to Kashe, there were a lot of !Xun workers at Veldduin, about “40” of them. As a result of the concentration of people and excessive alcohol drinking fights were common and Kashe complained that when there was violence at the farm, the !Xun workers often laid the blame at his (by then he was being called “Small Kashe”) and his brother Andris’s feet: “They say, it’s only me and Andris.” Kashe recalled, for example, an incident when he and his brother fought with the husband of his father’s sister and this man’s brother. They quarrelled because of a !Xun woman (the sister of the wife of the “Ovambo” Titus). “They were drunk, all of us,” narrated Kashe who reportedly beat his rival (the husband of his father’s “sister”). He recalled another violent incident which involved him and the farmer. It happened on a Friday at a cattle post where the workers, including his father, were building a fence. In the evening they started to drink *tombo* and became drunk. Kashe was allegedly afraid that one of the drunken workers might want to drive the farmer’s tractor back to his house as usual but given his drunkenness it could result in an incident. Therefore, Kashe decided to drive the vehicle to the house on his own, which he did successfully. The next day when the farmer learned it was Kashe who had driven the tractor without his authorisation, he beat him with a fan belt.²⁹⁸

Kashe gave me three versions for his leaving Veldduin. In 2008 he claimed: “We go just to another place to look for another life.” However, two years later he blamed the conflict-ridden climate at the farm due to the presence of many !Xun and their abuse of alcohol. Nevertheless, when I talked with him in the same year about the role looking for relationships with women played in his movements. He said he had left Veldduin because of a !Xun woman called Martha, who he had already been courting for some time. He also recalled that after making this decision he first waited until the end of the month to get his salary. Even this time, he again failed to tell the farmer of his impending departure.

Kashe thought he might find Martha at farm **Jagterslust (41)**, where his mother’s sister Emma and her husband Anton also lived. Since Martha was not there he went to look for her at **Welgemoed (42)**. However, she was not at Welgemoed either. Initially, Kashe did not intend to work there, but since the farmer was looking for workers, Kashe changed his mind and stayed there. But Kashe stayed only for about “one month” until he was apprehended by the police and detained at the **Maroelaboom police station (43)** for “eight months”. According to Kashe, this was a consequence of a false accusation by a “Damara” called Old Ségel, who claimed Kashe had raped his wife. When I talked about these events with Kashe in

²⁹⁸ However, Kashe thought it helped him later on, because the farmer made him subsequently his *handlanger* (lorry boy), a worker who was accompanying him when he was driving. Kashe also started to work with the tractor and transported workers to Uitkanab Ost farm where they built the fences. According to him it made the workers jealous: “I don’t understand the people. When you drive they feel bad.”

2007, 2008 and 2009 he claimed the woman had been forced by her man to confess to the police that Kashe had raped her. He said he had no idea what the man's motives for the accusations could have been and blamed his problematic character ("He was stubborn"). During that time Kashe gave me no details about what happened at Welgemoed, as if there was nothing more to add. It was only in 2010, apparently when he had more trust in me, that he told me some particulars. Then, Kashe laid the blame on the "Ovambo" Titus who had brutally beaten his father at Wackies. Titus allegedly made Kashe and the brother-in-law of Old Ségel to beat Old Ségel. Kashe remembered clearly that this had happened on a Saturday at one of Welgemoed's cattle posts when the workers were drunk. According to Kashe, Titus and Old Ségel were often "fighting". Kashe portrayed Old Ségel as a very problematic person, who had already once forced his wife to falsely confess at the police station that she had been raped by her own father, who allegedly, as a consequence of this reportedly fabricated story, ended up in jail. That day at Welgemoed, Titus, whose wife was Old Ségel's wife's "sister", allegedly insisted on Kashe beating up the "Damara" and taking his spouse, who was also present at the cattle post and, in Kashe's recollection, had been drinking alcohol as well. After Kashe and the man had beaten Old Ségel, Titus purportedly ordered the woman to follow Kashe. "This man is now your man, you won't get back to that Damara," Titus allegedly told the woman.

She went with Kashe to his place the same day and they stayed there until Monday morning, when the police apprehended him. Kashe had sexual intercourse with the woman, but he claimed he did not force her to have sex with him. Kashe claimed that while she was interrogated she confirmed his story, but the "Damara" kept on claiming that Kashe had raped her. According to Kashe, the policemen were confused (*deurmekaar*) and did not know what the truth was. Kashe claimed to have been driven from Maroelaboom police station to the court in Grootfontein several times because the hearings were constantly adjourned. Finally, he was sentenced to six slashes on the buttocks with a bamboo stick to which salt had been applied and the punishment was discharged in the Grootfontein police station. He remembered the executors left deliberately long pauses between the strokes, so that the wounded spots would swell and the pain would intensify. I should mention that during our discussion in 2010 about these events Kashe certainly felt guilt. When I asked him directly about it, he also admitted that the young woman must have been very scared throughout the sequence of events, starting from the beating of her husband, through being *de facto* ordered by drunk men to go to the house of another man, staying with him and then being interrogated. As far as Kashe knew in 2010, she was still with her "Damara" man.

After his release from prison, Kashe went to farm **Klippan (44)** to his family (both of his parents and his three siblings and their partners were there), where he was to live for a relatively long period of four years between 1990 and 1994, with an interruption in 1993. At Klippan Kashe also started to live with Martha, who came there later on and worked in the kitchen). Since she already had four children from her previous relationship(s), he had to provide for all them. In 1993 almost the whole family left the farm. Kashe claimed it was mainly because of the insufficient meat rations the !Xun workers received there. According to him, at the beginning there was no problem as regards the meat, since the Afrikaaner owner, Charles Grobbelaar, allowed the workers to hunt warthogs with dogs and spears. However, when the farmer handed over the farm business to his son Luis, called among the !Xun the "small owner" (*klein eenaar*), the situation changed. The son forbade the Bushmen from hunting, claiming that the dogs made the kudu wild and the animals ran out of the farm. Luis occasionally shot a kudu for the workers, but, according to Kashe, this was not enough.

Since Kashe stayed at Klippan for three years, he managed to acquire a flock of hens, which in his estimation amounted to 25 - 30 birds, and when leaving the farm he wanted to transport some of them to farm **Jagterslust (45)**, where Anton and Emma lived (Kashe's attempts to acquire domestic animals will be dealt with in the chapter dealing with material culture). All of the members of Kashe's family went from Klippan first to the junction where the cars turned off from the Grootfontein-Rundu road to former Bushmanland, spent the night in the bush there and also ate many of the hens. The next day Kashe and his brother-in-law Felix went by bike almost 60 kilometres to Grootfontein to buy a new wheel for Kashe's bicycle. But Kashe found that in the town the price was an unaffordable 150 rand and so the same they returned to the junction. However, only their wives, Martha and Katrina, were still waiting there for them. The others, including Kashe's parents, had already left. Kashe did not know to which farm they had gone, only that the parents had headed east to the Morealaboom area. Kashe, his brother-in-law Felix and their women rode first to Jagterslust, where they gave some hens to Anton and Emma. From Jagterslust they cycled to the farm Lente (45a), where they had relatives. At Lente they learned that Willem and Maria were at farm Rumara whose owner was looking for workers. They spent one night at Lente, leaving the bicycles there because this was area in which the ground started to be sandy. The next day they went to farm Zithri-Zepho (45b), where relatives lived as well.²⁹⁹ They spent the night there and arrived the next day at **Rumara (46)**.

Kashe was immediately employed at the farm but stayed there for only "one week". The workers told him that the farmer had been beating his employees and Kashe probably concluded that working for him could be problematic. One day, when he and his brother Andris were cutting the bush, they heard the farmer's car coming from the cattle post to the farmer's house, but the road was far away and they could not see the vehicle because of the bush in-between. When the car stopped for a while, they thought the *handlanger* was getting out of the car as usual to open the gate, so that the vehicle could move further. Soon they heard the vehicle drive away. This meant they were caught by surprise when the farmer suddenly appeared in the front of them with a rifle on his shoulder. At that moment they realised he must have handed over the car to the *handlanger* at the gate. "Luckily we were just working," recalled Kashe. According to him, they only greeted the farmer, but he did not say anything else to them and went to check other workers, two Ju/'hoan Bushmen, and caught one napping. After adding this experience to the rumours spread by other workers about the farmer, Kashe decided to leave. "This man kills people," recalled Kashe in his expressive way of the farmer. According to Kashe, the farmer supervised the workers to an unbearable extent.

The same day Kashe left the farm together with his sister's man Felix and their wives. They deserted the farm in the night and spent it again at Lente (46a). There they took the bikes and set out for Jagterslust. When they were almost at Maroelaboom, Felix realised he had left his blankets at Lente and had to return back. Kashe lent him his faster bicycle. Nonetheless, after Felix's return with the forgotten blanket, they managed to get only to farm Nuitsas and had to sleep in the bush by the road. The next day they arrived at **Jagterslust (47)**. Kashe stayed there for about "two months" and then, still in 1993, went with Felix for the second time to farm **Klippan (48)**. Why did he go back to a farm he had left recently because of its insufficient provision of meat? Kashe claimed he felt he had a close relationship with the farmer, dating back to their childhood friendship when they were playmates.

²⁹⁹ For example "old" Olka (her husband was Kashe's relative) who lived in 2009 in the same settlement in Bushmanland as Kashe in Swart Tak (see below).

His stay there was interrupted for one week in December 1993 which he spent at the **Maroelaboom police station (49)**. According to Kashe, it was again because of the quarrel with Old Ségel, who had accused Kashe of raping his wife at Welgemoed (42). Old Ségel came from Welgemoed to Klippan once and asked Kashe's brother-in-law Felix to sell him a hen for 20 Rand. They arranged that he would take the animal and pay the following Saturday. That day Kashe and Felix came to Welgemoed and drank alcohol with Felix and other !Xun. When it came to the matter of paying for the hen, they began to quarrel. According to Kashe, the "Damara" ate the hen but then did not want to pay. Instead of this, he provocatively insisted that they ask the farmer from Klippan for the money. They argued ("He wants to fight with us, that was always like that"), but it did not escalate into physical assault. The next day when Kashe was at Elandslaagte, he heard from Felix's brother that the "Damara" had reported the case to the police. Kashe told me he did not try to escape from the police because he knew he was innocent. The police arrested him and Felix the next day. The Grootfontein court released him after a week and the police drove him back to the farm **Klippan (50)**.

When I talked with Kashe about his second stay at Klippan, he claimed he could not complain about anything. It was there that he first worked as a foreman, he ploughed the land with a tractor and was also allowed to shoot kudu with the farmer's rifle. Thus, there were no longer problems with the provision of meat. He was earning a wage of about 50 NS per month and was also satisfied with the food rations. When Kashe was at Elandslaagte (14) small Luis Grobbelaar often spent weekends at this farm because the farmer's wife was his mother's sister. "We are used to each other. We have stayed for a long time together. We know each other." However, this close relationship was to turn sour.

Kashe stayed at Klippan until the end of 1994. The incident that brought about his departure seems to have had a significant influence on his further decisions regarding where he would seek employment and where he would want to live. On the 23rd December 1994 the farmer went to another farm to celebrate the holidays with his relatives over there. As a foreman, Kashe had to look after the farm business in his absence. But the workers, as usual at Christmas, indulged in heavy drinking. On Christmas Day, when, like every day, he had to count the 240 goats at the cattle post he wanted to get there by donkey cart. Somebody else had already borrowed the cart and Kashe, therefore, decided to drive there in the farmer's Ford lorry, something he was not authorised to do. However, Kashe did not find the animals at the cattle post and on the way back he hit the fence by the entrance gate to the farm and damaged the front of the car. Kashe claimed the problem was that since he was not used to driving the car, he did not know he had to brake hard. Kashe said he had managed to avoid hitting the main poles in the gate, but hit the smaller ones between them. According to Kashe, he destroyed only the car lights and the damage was rather minor. Despite this unexpected negative development he went to search for the goats in the bush, where he found and counted them and brought them into the *kraal*. The next day he repaired the fence.

When the farmer came back and he assessed the incident as being far more serious than Kashe did. On meeting Kashe he started to beat him with his fists and the gunstock. Kashe, who even now has a small cross-shaped scar above his right eye from this incident, ran off. According to him, as he tried to get over the fence the farmer shot at (above?) him. He claimed the bullet hit the tree trunk in front of him. Kashe narrated that for a while he was in a state close to losing consciousness and fell down, not knowing what was going on around him. His brother-in-law Otto, who saw it, allegedly thought for a moment that the farmer had shot and killed Kashe. But Kashe came to himself and escaped. He ran first to his house to

pick up a sack with about 5 kg of mealie meal and went into hiding in the bush. He did not cook the mealie meal at all because he was scared the farmer would see the smoke from the fire. During the days he stayed in the bush, he said that all he ate were makalani fruits and drank water at the cattle post.

After a few days in the bush, Kashe returned to the farm. He gave me several reasons for this decision. He thought the farmer would consider the corporal punishment as enough and would not resort to it any more. He also expected that if the farmer still had a problem with him, he would not act violently but just call police. Further, his wife Martha was staying at the farm and also his and his father's property - the donkey cart, two donkeys and a bicycle - remained there. Kashe met the farmer's wife and allegedly told her she should call police. Kashe also discovered that Martha had meanwhile been transported to the Maroelaboom police station for interrogation. According to Kashe's interpretation, the reason for her detention was to make him return to be arrested.

However, when the farmer was aware of Kashe's return, he went to him and started to beat him again. The farm owner made Kashe squat down, tied a chain around his belly and put the chain over a branch of a tree. Kashe claimed the farmer beat him again with his fists and also kicked him and kneed him in the chest and back. Kashe was tied to the tree overnight, his only cover being an empty mealie meal sack the farmer gave him. According to Kashe, he could not free himself from the chain because it was very tight and padlocked. Kashe recalled that Luis Grobelaar's father tried to calm his son down and also requested he would stop beating Kashe. The farmer released Kashe at around 5 a.m. Kashe's brother-in-law Otto (husband of Kristine) then gave Kashe 10 NS to pay for a lift to **Grootfontein (51)**, where he went straight to the hospital. I cannot judge the seriousness of Kashe's injuries; according to him, his breastbone and two vertebrae were badly injured. However, the fact that he was x-rayed in the hospital and released only with some pills might hint that he merely suffered some contusions. Nevertheless, Kashe claimed the doctor advised him to report the incident to the police and thus he went back to the farm in a police car allegedly the same day. When the policemen and Kashe came to Klippan, the *eienaar* was allegedly resistant and informed them he was going to sue Kashe for smashing his vehicle.

After this, Kashe went to **one of the Shamalendi plots (52)**³⁰⁰ near Grootfontein, where his parents and other relatives had moved. The owner of the plot was brother of the traffic policeman Paul Spietkop, for whom Willem had worked in the past (see chapter "Among farms, Otjiwarongo and Grootfontein: kitchen boy and farm worker, 1940s - 1970"). "After coming there, I just lay," remembered Kashe. He continued to suffer from the wounds brought about by the farmer from Klippan and had to recover. Kashe claimed that he was so severely sick that he was not able to attend the final hearing at the Grootfontein magistrate court at which the farmer from Klippan was allegedly ordered to compensate Kashe with 800 NS, and, thus, he did not receive anything at all. He was told that the court hearing had been attended only by Otto, his sister Kristine's husband, who also worked at Klippan and who had been summoned as a witness. When I asked Kashe why he had not inquired at the court about its verdict after recovering from the injuries and thereby claim his money, he said he had been glad the issue was behind him and did not want to be involved in it anymore.³⁰¹

³⁰⁰ I did not find out its name.

³⁰¹ As regards the alleged verdict of the court it was not clear what really happened, since all what Kashe knew about it was from Otto. I also did not find the respective case file in the court's archival records.

After this, Kashe spent about two and a half years “shuttling” between the plots next to Grootfontein and farms where his relatives lived, staying at one place for no longer than a few months at a time, sometimes only for a few days. As mentioned, the first place he went to was one of the Shamalendi plots. However he struggled to recall the order of the other places he went to and he also did not remember how many times he went from one place to another. He was sure that he returned several times to some places. The plots he mentioned were **Driehook**, a place he called **Driehook location** because of the number of people living there³⁰², plot **Arina** and **Morson**. From the plots he often went to farm **Welgemoed**, another **farm near Berg Aukas** where his mother’s “brother” was living and also to farm **Jagterslust (53-59)**, where his mother’s “sister” Emma and Otto lived. However, he stayed at the last two farms always only for a few days because their owners did not like to see visitors there.

Kashe did not work for most of this two and half year period. He claimed that for approximately a year after leaving Klippan he did not work at all and then he “was just helping a bit” at Driehook. “I just stayed at the places. I just ran so around. I am alone, I run a lot. I just sit so and if I’m tired I just lay.” This was brought about also by the pain he suffered from the injuries received at Klippan.

When Kashe was at one of the Shamalendi plots, he lost his wife Martha to another !Xun farm worker called Ágrob,³⁰³ who was a new worker at Klippan. Apparently, this enabled Kashe to move frequently from one place to another because he did not have to provide for her and her children. Kashe claimed to me that this still common behaviour among the young !Xun men who did not have any dependents. “Without the children I run a lot. (With the children, a) father must work (remain at one place) and the children eat”. Without any dependents he was also not such a burden for his hosts, who shared food with him. However, he also gave me as a reason for avoiding work the fear for the farmer from Klippan. His reluctance to work at a farm during the described period was according to his own words brought about by being afraid that the farmer could ask him to accompany him to Grootfontein where he could meet Luis Grobbelaar from Klippan, whom he feared.

Since Kashe was afraid of the owner of Klippan, he did not venture to the farm to attempt to persuade Martha to stay with him. Thus, he went first to farm Welgemoed, a farm neighbouring Klippan, where his “brother” Kues³⁰⁴ lived. However, Kues discouraged him from going there. Kashe told me he let Ágrob know through his relatives that he would fight him to get his wife back “even after 10 years”. However, because his rival soon married her in the church, he could allegedly do nothing and gave up. Kashe claimed Ágrob made Martha marry him by beating her.

At the plot Driehook, where Kashe probably spent the end of 1995 and beginning of 1996, his father Willem was working: “I worked there only a bit. I worked there but I was not healthy yet,” recalled Kashe in 2008. They left the place without informing the farmer. The main reason for deserting the plot was, according to Kashe, a lack of food. “We were a bit hungry. You had always to struggle to get some food.” According to Kashe, he was also drinking a lot of alcohol at that time. They got the *tombo* from the “Damaras” at the nearby plots where they used to drink at the weekends. They went there in the morning and returned in the evening.

³⁰² Driehook and Driehook location had allegedly different owners.

³⁰³ Ágrob was the head of the !Xun family living in 2007 and 2008 at a plot in Grootfontein I numbered No. 11.

³⁰⁴ Kues was the father of Kashe, a namesake of my main informant, who was living with him in Grootfontein in 2010 - 11.

Kashe recalled that one evening, when he was coming back with his drunk brother-in-law Otto and the latter's brother Ephraim from Arina plot, which Kashe called a "drinking place", they were attacked by drunk Ovambos. His two companions managed to run off but Kashe was badly beaten. This happened allegedly on the 22 or 23 December 1995 and on Christmas Day he went to Grootfontein hospital where they sewed up an open wound on the top of his head, where he still has a scar.

At the Driehook location were Kashe's relatives and he made many friends there. The !Xun from the location were driven by the white owner of the Driehook plot to a place (probably a farm) in the Mururani area at the very north-eastern border of the commercial farm area and worked there at a wood mill, where they produced planks. These !Xun workers left their families at the location and used to stay at the mill for about a month, after which they returned to Driehook. Their return meant that Kashe would get food and could indulge in drinking: "The men bring the money. I just sit," recalled Kashe smilingly. On Friday he used to go with them to the town to buy food and alcohol - at that time they used to buy a five-litre bottle of cheap wine. Kashe recalled that he could stay in the location for as long as he wanted to, he was welcome there and nobody hinted to him that he was a burden on them and he should leave: "It was almost as if I have my house there." Similarly, he felt comfortable at the plot Arina, where his father's "brother", who worked for a road construction company, lived: "The old man has no problem." At the plot Morson, where Willem found a job as yardworker, Kashe "stayed only at home". His sister Kristine and her husband Otto lived there as well but it was only Willem who was employed. "It was quite good," recalled Kashe of that time. I have also to emphasise that, according to Kashe, at neither Driehoek and Morson did he have any relatives before he went there, which was rather exceptional.

From the plot area next to Grootfontein Kashe went to the farm **Welgemoed (60)**. His brother Andris and sister Kristine lived there. In 2008 Kashe told me he had thought "maybe to find work there". Nevertheless, in 2009 he contradicted this, claiming he would not work there because Klippan and its farmer were too nearby. Therefore, he allegedly stayed at Welgemoed only for a "few days" and then decided to go to the communal area of former Bushmanland for the first time. He headed to its western part, officially called Tsumkwe District West. According to Kashe, this was in the winter months of June or July 1997.

Table 8: Period II.: To the immediate Grootfontein area (1987 - 1997)

	Place	duration of the stay	work	ethnicity of the farmer/employer	ethnicity of the workers	kin (“family”) bf. Arrival	reasons for coming to this place	reasons for leaving to another place	way of leaving
Kashe moves with his father to Grootfontein and it immediate area									
19.	Grootfontein (location)	1 day	No	-	!Xun/Damara	No, but went with father	“ Damara ” friend	looking for work - family	bicycle
20.	Kamatete	1 day	No	?	!Xun	Yes	family	looking for work	bicycle
21.	Grootfontein (location)	1 day	No	-	!Xun/Damara	No, but went with father	friend	looking for work	bicycle
22.	Felsenquelle	Days	No	?	!Xun Damara	Yes	family	looking for work	by bicycle/foot
23.	Strydfontein	2-3 moths	No	German	Damara O/K !Xun	It is possible	looking for work	arrested by police and sent into prison	by police car
24.	Maroelaboom	1 month	-	-	!Xun	-	released	family	by foot
25.	Strydfontein	6 months	Yes	German	Damara O/K !Xun	Yes	- looking for another work - fearing the farmer	looking for work	by bicycle
26.	plot by Grootf.	1 week	Yes	Afrikaner	Damara !Xun	No, but went with family	looking for work	- fearing the farmer - supervision of workers - heavy work	By foot ?
27.	Felsenquelle	several weeks	No	?	!Xun Damara	Yes	family	- looking for work - fearing the farmer from Strydfontein	car of the new employer
28.	Abenab	1 month	Yes	Afrikaner	!Xun Damara	Yes	looking for work	- problems with the farmer	car of the employer
29.	Felsenquelle	3 weeks	No	?	!Xun Damara	Yes	family	family	by foot
30.	Waldorf	several months	No	Afrikaner	!Xun O/K Damara	Yes	family	violence	by foot

Return to the farms north-east of Grootfontein									
31.	Jagterslust	2 months	No	Afrikaner	!Xun	Yes	family	family	by foot
32.	Sus	Days	No	Afrikaner	!Xun	Yes	family	- looking for work - family	by foot
33.	Asanib	1-2 months	Yes	Afrikaner	!Xun	Yes	family	fearing violence	by foot
34.	Sus	2 months	No	?	!Xun	Yes	family	work for the farmer/farmer's family at another farm?	by foot
35.	Vogelsang		No	?	!Xun + ?	Yes	family	following the father to another farm	by foot
36.	Ella	1 year	Yes	Afrikaner	!Xun	No, but went with family	work for the farmer/farmer's family at another farm	work for the farmer/farmer's family at another farm	farmer's car
37.	Wiesenthal	2 months	Yes	Afrikaner	!Xun	No, but went with family	work for the farmer/farmer's family at another farm	work for the farmer/farmer's family at another farm	farmer's car
38.	San Souci	2 weeks	Yes	Afrikaner	!Xun Damara	No, but went with family	work for the farmer/farmer's family at another farm	violence	farmer's car
39.	Ella	several weeks	No	Afrikaner	!Xun	Yes	family	fearing the farmer	by foot
40.	Veldduin	1-2 years	Yes	Afrikaner	!Xun O/K	Yes	family	- "looking for other life" - violence - woman	by foot
41.	Jagterslust	several days	No	Afrikaner	!Xun	Yes	family	family	by foot
42.	Welgemoed	1 months	Yes	Afrikaner	!Xun Damara	Yes	family	violence – arrested by the police	police car
43.	Moroelaboom	8 months	-	-	!Xun	-	prison	released	police car/by foot
44.	Klippan	several months?	Yes	Afrikaner	!Xun Damara	Yes	family	- only temporary work - insufficient meat rations	by foot
45.	Jagterslust	several days	No	Afrikaner	!Xun	Yes	family	family	by bicycle/foot
46.	Rumara	1 week	Yes	Afrikaner	!Xun	Yes	family	fearing the farmer	by foot
47.	Jagterslust	2 months	No	Afrikaner	!Xun	Yes	family	looking for work	by bicycle

48.	Klippan	3 years	Yes	Afrikaner	!Xun	Yes	family	arrested by the police	police car
49.	Maroelaboom	1 week	-	-	!Xun	-	prison	released	police car
50.	Klippan	1 year	Yes	Afrikaner	!Xun	Yes	- family - work	violence	hike
Return to the immediate Grootfontein area									
51.	Grootfontein – hospital	0 days	-	-	-	-	medical treatment	family	by foot
52.	Shamalendi – plot	1 month	No	Afrikaner	!Xun Damara	Yes	family	family	by foot
53.- 59.	Driehook, Driehook location, Morson, farm by Berg Aukas, Jagterslust Welgemoed	moving between these places for 2,5 years	Only at Drie- hook plot	Afrikaner or German	!Xun Damara	mostly Yes	family	Kashe followed the family; Shamalendi plot - went away after the farmer left; Driehook – left because of hunger	by foot; to he farms by hiking
60.	Welgemoed	several days	No	Afrikaner	!Xun Damara	Yes	family	fearing the farmer (L. Grobelaar)	- hike/by foot
Moving to Bushmanland									

Comments: the life of a provider and single man

We can observe that in the period between 1987 - 1997 Kashe spent a substantial time at the plots and farms near Grootfontein, but still most of his time was spent in the more familiar farm area further away from Grootfontein. After spending about a year and half near Grootfontein, Kashe, already a young man who could enter freely into employment relationships with the farmers and provide for himself, moved back to his broader “home” farm area. He left it only after several years and having been beaten by the farmer of Klippan. Only then he went back to the plots in the immediate Grootfontein area for several months.

The following of their kin network remained the most important pattern of the movements for Kashe and his family. The relationship to Emma and Anton remained important for Kashe as he went to their farm Jagterslust several times. When heading to a place without the presence of his relatives, he was almost always accompanied by at least one of them. Also importantly, Kashe’s moves, although he could provide for himself, also remained strongly bound to those of his parents. Kashe often followed them and could always rely on them after quitting a job elsewhere or when he was sick after being beaten by the farmer at Klippan. When generally talking about his movements, Kashe often claimed he “always” went with his brother. As we could see and will further observe, this was not the case in all instances. However, this did happen often and Kashe’s perception also showed the importance he ascribed to the bonds to his brother. According to Kashe, there was also a similar relationship with his two sisters Kristine and Katrine.³⁰⁵ Thus, they were often living at the same farm even after they married.

The area near Grootfontein should not be regarded as being a space apart socially from the more distant farms Kashe came from. Although apparently not that many, Willem had some relatives also in this area. During my research, it was, however very difficult to make Willem remember of how many he knew were living there before coming to Grootfontein. As we saw, moving near to Grootfontein also did not mean being safe from the police investigating alleged crimes in the former area. Kashe was arrested at Strydfontein, which lies close to the town, following the accusation of rape at Wackies and his father was also apprehended for the purported killing of a bull at Elandsplaagte.

While moving to Grootfontein area in 1987, Kashe and his father managed to make the important leap into this area where he had apparently only a few kin by capitalising on Willem’s old social bonds among workers that as I thought in the beginning, crossed the borders of the members of the same ethnic group. In Grootfontein they could overnight with a “Damara” friend of Willem’s. Kashe’s father knew him from the time when both of them worked at the Maroelaboom police station. Nevertheless, I suspect that the “Damara” may have been of mixed origin because, according to Kashe, he spoke !Xun (Kashe did not know what the ethnicity of his wife was but they spoke to each other in Damara). According to Kashe and his father, at that time there were still not many !Xun in Grootfontein.³⁰⁶ In this respect, it is also important that the next place to which Kashe and his father went from Grootfontein was farm Felsenquelle, where some relatives of Willem lived. Interestingly, according to Kashe, these people were !Xun mixed with Damaras-Hai//um (ghom) and also Ovambos, but they communicated with Kashe in !Xun. It obviously means that they were the

³⁰⁵ She died on tuberculosis in 1996.

³⁰⁶ This perception might be based on the fact, that both of them did not know the social environment of the location and its dwellers well.

offspring of !Xun women with non-!Xun men brought up in !Xun society and, thus, also the language environment.

During Kashe's lifetime there no longer existed among the !Xun in the Grootfontein area any cultural rules bound to marriage which could influence the movements of the spouses. It has been described by the Ju/'hoansi (e.g. Shostak 1990: 128 - 129) living as foragers that the husband was supposed to move for a period, a year or even longer, to his wife's *n!ore* and do there his bride service, which meant above all hunting for his wife's family. In contrast to the "old time", for Kashe there was no need to ask a woman's parents for permission to live with ("marry") her. People just started to live together and then they lived at or moved to places, which were mostly farms, where they could sustain themselves where the man found work. Sylvain (1999: 323) described by the Omaheke Ju/'hoansi that pattern of getting married without parental influence and bride service became prevalent since the 1970s.

When staying with a woman with children, the man had (and still has) to weigh more carefully whether to move to another place since he was obliged to provide for them. Therefore, staying at one place with somewhat satisfactory terms, in other words a decent salary, rations and a healthy relationship with the farmer, may have been (and still seems to be) a desirable option. Thus, we also saw that Kashe stayed with Martha, his first long-term partner, and her four children at farm Klippan for several years. Whether a !Xun man was married or single had a significant role on his mobility and the way he could move from one place to another. When Kashe's father was young, there was still the rule that before a marriage there must first be a discussion between the relatives from both families about gifts, mostly clothes, that were to be given to the bride's family. Kashe did not give Martha's parents any present because, as he claimed, he had "nothing" and her family understood this situation.

The in-laws may significantly enlarge the space a !Xun and their kin could (or may be obliged to) move. For Kashe, and apparently other !Xun men as well, brothers-in-law played an important role. They often lived at the same farms as Kashe. "We spent many years together," Kashe said about his former brothers-in-law Felix (Felix was Martha's brother) and Otto. Kashe very often went with one of them when they moved from one place to another. It was conspicuous that, even though Kashe used to move at the same time with his brother(s)- in-law and their wives - his sister(s), he always described the movements as undertaken with, for example, Otto or Felix, not mentioning his sisters, who went (as if) automatically with them. Joking and avoidance relationship might play a role, but it was also brought about by the fact that the whole economic system in the farm area was male-dominated with men running the farms (whites, foremen) and also performing the most important tasks for its functioning (workforce). The brothers in-law, often peers, were natural partners who could also become friends over the course of time. At the same time, due to the high mobility of some !Xun in this farm area, which enabled people to meet each other, in some cases this friendship could start very early. For example, Kashe already knew Otto when they were boys and when Kashe lived at Jumkaub and Otto at the neighboring farm Welgemoed. I also have to say that when the brothers-in-law were moving together from one place to another, they did not necessarily end up at the same farm. This also depended on concrete conditions such as the availability of work or presence of their kin or friends at given farms. Thus, their ways would sometimes divide at some point.

Measured by the number of changes of place that Kashe stayed at his movements accelerated in the ten-year period from 1987 to 1997. While in the previous seventeen years there were twenty movements, or slightly more than one per year on average, in the shorter time-span 1987 - 1997 the figure was around forty, almost four movements per year. In fact, since Kashe moved between some of the listed places more than once it may have been more. I assume the difference is for several related factors.

First, the increasing number of places given by Kashe could, to some extent, have been brought about by the fact that the more we approach the present, the better he could remember the events and the more detailed picture he could provide.

Second, as stated, Kashe was now an adult and economically more independent and he could make his own decision where to move and provide for himself, especially when he did not have a partner and children to provide for.

Third, while deliberating their moves from one place to another, Kashe's parents were no more constrained by the need to provide for the offspring. Kashe was their youngest and, thus, also their last dependent child. The more frequent movements of the parents, in a certain sense, facilitated the movements of Kashe, who often went automatically to the farm or plot where his parents lived or worked. The emotional dependence between his and his parents' movements remained strong.

Fourth, the employment market in the urban area, with many plots in its vicinity (and also a lot of work providers), seems to have offered more opportunities for employment. This could have led to more intensive workers fluctuations.

Fifth, in the 1980s the climate on movement restriction was eroding and since independence in 1990 the !Xun were becoming used to a "free" Namibia (although the situation was more complex, see below).

It is also clear that there was often a combination of factors which lay behind the decision to leave the farm. When it came to events in his very distant past, Kashe could often hardly remember a single reason for deserting a given place. This changes when he recalled more recent events. For example, in the case of the plot at Shamalendi (26), it was a consequence of at least three reasons – the bad reputation of the farmer (He kills the people and then gives them to the pigs), the farmer's close supervision of the workers and the heavy work. Kashe's narratives regarding this period also show that leaving various farms and plots was often a result of specific and complicated interactions among him, other workers and the farmer.

Looking at the reasons for Kashe's movements in the period of 1987 – 1997, we can see that Kashe frequently had to move for economic reasons, since he was now expected to provide for himself. When a !Xun man becomes adult and is thus capable of finding paid employment, generally, he should not stay with other !Xun at another farm for a long period and expect to be given food by them without helping them in some way - according to Kashe, he must, for example, assist them with cattle herding or other farm tasks or at least help them by collecting firewood and water. If not working, a person's long-time presence at the farm may also be disliked by its owner. "He says, you only eat the food of others," commented Kashe. Thus, Kashe told me although he had stayed at farm Waldorf (30) for a relatively long period of "several months", it did not mean he only stayed at the house of his relatives. In fact, he

spent much time helping one employed !Xun to herd the goats at the cattle post. He also often visited his “family” at other places, mostly farm Felsenquelle or a !Xun friend in the location of Berg Aukas settlement, and so, in fact, distributed the burden of the provision of food on more people. When unemployed and staying at farm Jagterslust (31), he visited his relatives and friends at farms in the vicinity such as Sus, Klingenberg and Veldduin. One farm served as a kind of a “base” from which he visited the farms in its vicinity.

However, it was only during my fourth field research trip, in Grootfontein in 2010, when I learned from Kashe that it is also possible to live with others for months without making virtually any significant contributions to them: “just to stay” (Ek het net so gebly). This was what happened in the period of approximately two and a half years after Kashe left Klippan. Since he was ill, at the beginning his relatives provided for him. However, later on he just moved between various plots and farms without working (The men /relatives, friends/ bring the money. I just sit). This was possible when the emotional closeness of the host and visitor was for whatever reason strong and, according to Kashe, this way of life was common among young single men without families. Since he was alone, he was also not a heavy burden on his hosts. I believe he avoided working during this period also because of his abusive drinking, a condition that was rife on the plots next to Grootfontein. The movements of the single men were also influenced by their looking for female partners. At the same time, young !Xun single men avoiding work, squatting at different places and indulging in drinking must have certainly contributed to the strengthening of the negative stereotypes about Bushmen held by certain farmers.

Nevertheless, we also observe that violence and conflict or even the prospect of it, whether in the form of various rumours about the volatile farmer, the perception of the negative feelings from the farmer’s side or the negative perception of farmer’s strong control of the worker’s performance, continued to play a significant role in shaping Kashe’s decisions regarding moving to other sites. Hence, Kashe left San Souci in reaction to violence, and because of fearing violence at a plot near Grootfontein (26) and farms Felsenquelle (27) and Waldorf (30). The fact that the !Xun avoided conflict with the farmer saw them not only deserting without telling him in advance, but as we saw also without asking for the money for the time they had worked. In the period between 1987 and 1997 Kashe did this three times (plot near Grootfontein (26), the poultry farm in Abenab (28) and farm Rumara (46)). In order to avoid any conflict with the *eienaar*, the !Xun planned when to visit the farm so that they could, if it was a preferred option, avoid meeting him. If they made the decision to leave, but the conditions were still somehow bearable, they often waited until the end of the month to ensure they received their salary (Asanib - 33, Veldduin - 40).

The relationship between violence and alcohol consumption, especially on Friday evenings and at the weekends, remained significant. Interestingly, the distance to a place where they could acquire alcohol did not always play a decisive role in a choice about where to move. Thus, when Kashe worked at farm San Souci, he, his brother Andris and their !Xun-Damara friend Johannes³⁰⁷ used to go to the workers compound, which the !Xun called “Coca Cola”, near the farm Kalkfontein, on the Grootfontein-to-Rundu road. It would have been easier to go drinking in the Grootfontein Single Quarters but they preferred a more distant place because the *tombo* there had a reputation for being tasty and very strong.

³⁰⁷ During my field research in 2010 Johannes worked at farm Dismyn, where lived also Kashe’s brother in-law Andris and Kashe’s sister Kristine. According to Kashe Andris and Johannes were friends.

However, we should not be over-inclined to see violence behind the movements of the !Xun. As reason for the decision to move from plot Driehook (53 - 59), Kashe cited the lack of food and not the fact that he was beaten by drunk "Ovambos". It is clear that violence was a trigger for leaving a place only under certain conditions and, in certain contexts of social relations. In the mentioned incident he was beaten by men he met by chance, who did not work at Driehook and with whom he, thus, had not had any earlier relationship. Similarly, Kashe's family did not leave Olivantsput (13) because some of them were attacked by the drunk black road workers, but only when they were being searched for by the farmer and the police.

For the first time it was possible to observe that Kashe's negative relationship to another people had, in some instances, a consequence for his further movements as he avoided going to certain places and areas. This was the case of farm Strydfontein because he heard people saying the farmer thought negatively about him and later Kashe also avoided going to Klippan and neighbouring farms because he was also afraid of its owner. After being beaten at Klippan, he did not go to work at a farm since its owner would want him to accompany him to Grootfontein, where he might run into the farmer from Klippan.

It is also noteworthy that this was the first time that Kashe's decision about his movements could also be influenced by the ownership of material objects, which he could acquire only since he was now an adult man earning a wage. For example, when in 1993 Kashe was leaving farm Klippan (44), he had to decide what to do with a flock of hens, which he had acquired there. He ate most of them with his relatives soon after leaving the *plaas*, but he also took some of them to farm Jagterslust to place them with his relatives there. Similarly, in 1994 when he decided to return to farm Klippan after being assaulted by the farmer, he did so because his and his father's property was still there (donkey cart, donkeys, bicycle and personal belongings). Not returning would have meant giving up these things.

As we saw, the farmer of Jumkaub transported Kashe's family to his son's farm at Moroster. Kashe's formulation: "The farmer gave my pa (to his son at Moroster)" (Die eienaar het my pa gegee) usefully illustrates an important element in the relationship between the farmer and the !Xun workers. Kashe and his relatives moved between four farms owned by one family (Sus, Ella, Wiesenthal and San Sounci). We saw that both the farmer running the first three farms and his son were regarded by the !Xun as problematic, but to different extents. "He talks a lot, but he did not beat (the workers)," Kashe said of the father. On the other hand, the son, in Kashe's words "little white man" (klein wet man), resorted to violence. In this regard Kashe made an interesting general observation: "The small white people are a problem." Later on, he had a similar experience at farm Klippan, whose first owner he regarded as more reasonable and less prone to violent behaviour than his son, who later took over the running of the farm business. From Kashe's narratives it was evident that the !Xun men may have sometimes perceived the farmers' sons, especially if they were very young, as more troublesome than the fathers. Given the information provided by Kashe, we may assume the farmers' sons, being aware of the fact they enjoyed less respect from the farm workers, may have been inclined to ensure the workers' obedience by more coercive violent methods.

Kashe, of course, mostly chose the place where he wanted to go for some particular reason, usually where his relatives, friends or employment opportunities were. Nevertheless, there was a considerable space for altering his plans according to the particular conditions and incentives he was exposed to at a given moment. When he moved to Welgemoed (42), he did not plan to stay there for a long time, because he was looking for Martha and he also

contemplated going to his father at farm Klippan. Nevertheless, during his visit at Welgemoed he used the opportunity to gain employment there and finally, owing to an unexpected twist of events, ended up in Maroelaboom prison, where he spent eight months. He went to Klippan only after his release, that is almost one year after his initial plan to go there.

Furthermore, when leaving a farm, especially if it happened abruptly, then the members of Kashe's family did not always know where to go next. We saw this when Kashe and his parents left Klippan (44) and were looking for a place to stay. They and Kashe parted for some time and they let Kashe know to which approximate area they intended to go to without knowing themselves at which farm they would settle. Kashe then embarked on a journey to the area he expected them to be and had to inquire with his relatives at the farms about their whereabouts. Kashe's relatives did not move as "nomads" from one place to another until the father finally found the work rather they went first to their relatives, with whom they knew they could stay for some time and lived there until the men found employment at a farm. The relatives would later, if the farmer allowed it, follow the breadwinner.

In the decade between 1987 and 1997 Namibia gained independence (in March 1990). In fact, Kashe thought this had happened in November 1989 because he associated it with the first independent elections in Namibia held in that year, in which he also voted. Interestingly, according to him like "all" !Xun in the farms, he voted for the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), a moderate multi-racial grouping established with the support of the South Africa-led administration of the country in the second half of the 1970s to counterbalance the radical liberation movement of SWAPO, which pursued its independence goals militarily. Kashe was not able to explain me why the Bushmen voted for the DTA. It seems that the Bushmen voted for a party that was much more acceptable for the white farmers than the SWAPO, which was associated with the Ovambos, and that the farmers might have advised the Bushmen on who to vote for. Country-wide won the elections SWAPO (57,3 %), but in Grootfontein district this party was defeated by DTA with 46,3 % to only 33,7 % of SWAPO. Sparks and Green (1992: 184, 263) suggested the voters could have been influenced by their employers. What I was told by Kashe's father when I asked him for his explanation for the presence of the South African soldiers in the country until the countries' independence may be telling about the perception of the SWAPO among the !Xun farm workers: "They were there against the Ovambo bachochos who cut the people's throats."³⁰⁸

What was the impact of the independence and associated developments on the way Kashe moved from one place to another? According to him, some things with direct influence on !Xun mobility changed significantly: "Now you can move around, but you don't get a problem. You can go there (anywhere), visit people around, but it's nothing (you do not get into any troubles for going to that place). Up to now. It's not a problem." However, although Kashe retrospectively regarded the independence in this respect as the beginning of a new period, the dividing line was by no means absolute. Kashe, born in 1970, did not personally experience the pass system, and according to my informants in the Grootfontein area it had ceased to be strictly observed even earlier. But when moving from one farm to another just for the purpose of visiting the kin, it is essential, virtually up to the present, to ask the *eienaar* for permission to stay at his farm to avoid any potential conflict with him, despite the fact that, according to him, even in the era before independence it was often not a problem and the farmer often gave the visitor his consent. Kashe was convinced that the farmers could always

³⁰⁸ When pulling out of the territory the South African army called on the Ju/'hoansi in the Tsumkwe area to vote for DTA (Biesele 2000: 15).

ask the visiting workers about the farm where they were last employed and verify this information by phoning the other farm and asking for references for the visitor. Thus, up to now, Kashe did not regard visiting his relatives at a farm as a totally trouble-free matter.

There is a difference between the legal abolition of movement restrictions in the second half of the 1970s, which the !Xun were unlikely to have known about, and the removal of psychological barriers to moving. When Kashe and his father came to Grootfontein in 1987 and were moving around in its vicinity by bicycle to find a work and place to stay, they did not, according to Kashe, feel safe riding on the roads because of policemen and farmers: “At that time the !Xun were still afraid. It did not change since the old times.” Since independence, however, the !Xun saw that the farmers and policemen were no longer collaborating so closely as before.

Independence brought an important change regarding the work of the Namibian police, which was up to the independence regarded, certainly not only by the !Xun, as an arm of the white farmers. “Then (after independence) you don’t get the policemen, who come in the night and beat the people as in the old time. 1990 it is over.” When generally evaluating the changes after 1990, Kashe often said that white farmers stopped beating the Bushmen workers. But again, this was rather a question of scale. Kashe has never been beaten as brutally as at farm Klippan in 1994, four years after independence. And as we will see, when following Kashe’s life further, at Klippan it was not to be the last time he was assaulted by a farmer. Thus, while independence brought new legal sets for governing relations among people, the socio-economic setting and the deeply-entrenched cultural attitudes, be they inter-racial, inter-ethnic, concerning the employer-employee relations or gender relations, did not change rapidly and remain in many aspects the same as they were before 1990, even up to the present.

Finally, it should also be mentioned that when retrospectively evaluating his behaviour in this period, Kashe could be also quite critical of himself. Once he told me he regarded his stay at Klippan as a certain threshold and admitted that up to the end of this employment, when he was 24 years old, he was a problematic person. “I was a big problem. I fight. Then another day in the morning the police catches me to the prison.”

Grootfontein – drinking tombo in Single Quarters

In the reported period between 1987 - 1997 Kashe lived for some time at the plots and farms in the vicinity of Grootfontein, but the town itself remained a place which Kashe used only to visit. Neither Kashe nor any of his close relatives undertook any attempt to live in the town. The prerequisite would be being employed in the town, but they apparently lacked enough social capital to do so.

In the period after running off from Klippan at the end of 1994, Kashe stayed at the plots near Grootfontein but did not use to go to Grootfontein. There were several reasons for this. At the beginning, he stayed there because he was recovering from his injuries. He also did not need to go to the location to get alcohol, since it was easily available at the plots. And last, Kashe claimed he avoided going to town because he was afraid of encountering the farmer from Klippan, who often went to Grootfontein, where he had a house.

However, earlier, when he was staying at farm Strydfontein, he sometimes went to the town on one-day trips with his relative Elias and his wife to buy some basic foodstuffs such as bread.

Kashe also did not know any of the !Xun living in the Grootfontein location at that time and recalled that the !Xun from the surrounding farms visited the town mostly only on Saturdays, when they went to Single Quarters or the Damara location to drink *tombo*. He joined them occasionally, but allegedly not often since could drink at the plots. Kashe went to the location, mostly with Elias, when he stayed at farm Strydfontein. Importantly, Kashe said he actually just “went with him” (Ek gaan saam) and that he was in the town only an “incomer”. Elias had many friends in the location who were, according to Kashe, “Damaras”. Kashe was not that proficient in that language at that time. They used to go to Grootfontein in the morning with their bicycles and Kashe sometimes took with him some firewood, which he sold there for a few Rands with which he could then buy alcohol. However, he knew that if he were to drink too much he would struggle to ride back to the farm. However, sometimes he apparently did overdo it. Sometimes he became drunk in the location even before midday, fell asleep and woke up in the afternoon. Then he drank again and set out on the way back. He claimed to have drunk up to “ten” cups of *tombo* during his one day visit to the town. Kashe said he sometimes drank two three cups at one place and then went to another. “I drink the whole day. I drink, I don’t eat. I was hungry, but when I drink, I don’t get hungry.” According to Kashe, his father sometimes went to drink in the location as well, but, because of his employment at the farm, only at the weekends. There were times when Kashe did not manage to get back to the farm before dark and was forced to spend the night in the bush. Kashe also occasionally went by bicycle to Grootfontein from Strydfontein’s neighbouring farm Felsenquelle.

He sometimes travelled to Grootfontein by bicycle from farm Waldorf, when he stopped there on his way to visit the !Xun at Felsenquelle. When he did this, he usually went first to Single Quarters and after drinking some *tombo* there continued on his way to the farm. Later, Kashe also used to travel to Grootfontein with the farmer from Klippan in a lorry that also transported cattle from other farms. Kashe’s role as a *handlanger* was to check that the cows did not hurt themselves during the transport. They usually left Klippan on Sunday afternoons and came back on Friday evenings. During the week Kashe usually slept in the *buitekamer* at the farmer’s house in Grootfontein and did not go to the township at all. He waited until his return to the farm to drink alcohol. On Friday he bought all the necessary ingredients for making *tombo* in Grootfontein and prepared it the same evening. On Saturday he worked until noon and in the afternoon it was already ready to drink: “I had my last drink on Saturday in the night or on Sunday morning.”

Period III. (1997-2003) Move to communal area – Bushmanland and Hereroland³⁰⁹

In his move from the farms to the communal area, Kashe used the well-established path of entering an unknown environment: he followed the path of his relatives. It was first his father and mother who went to the western part of the former Bushmanland. Willem was asked by a Damara man called Hermea to look after his cattle at Kameelwoud settlement. The two knew each other from when they were working at a farm in the Grootfontein area. Hermea drove Willem and Maria to Kameelwoud with his car. Maria and Willem had never before been to Bushmanland, but its very western part was socially not an unknown setting for them. Maria may have been born at Kanovlei and there were kin, especially from her side, living in different rural settlements in this part of Bushmanland. Kashe's parents knew some of these relatives from the time when the latter were also employed at the farms. Furthermore, even though they did not know it before going there, they found out that the family of Kashe's father's relative Old Frederik was already living there. Interestingly, these !Xun arrived there in the same way as Kashe's parents. They were driven there by another Damara called Thomas to look after his cattle.³¹⁰

Kashe claimed that before coming to Kameelwoud he had been provided with some information about the place by his brother-in-law Otto. Otto³¹¹ visited Kashe's parents in Kameelwoud and when he decided to move there, Kashe, his brother Andris and other relatives went there together. The fact that Kashe's parents moved to Kameelwoud was a decisive incentive for Kashe to go as well. In 2010 Kashe told me that if his father had not gone there, he would hardly have contemplated living in Bushmanland at that time. Thus, they moved to Kameelwoud in a kind of a band-like way. Kashe claimed he wanted to leave the farm area also in order to avoid any conflict with the farmer of Klippan.

Kashe, Andris and their brother-in-law Otto were given a lift to Bushmanland in a lorry in May 1997. The lorry drove them to Omatako Valley Rest Camp settlement (by the !Xun called Rest Camp) and from there they walked to **Kameelwoud (61)**. Initially, Kashe "only stayed" with his family. His father was herding the Damara's cows and worked in his fields. Later, Kashe started to work for the Damara as well. However, he described the work as "helping" his father. According to Kashe, the Damara only occasionally gave him some food ration and when he received only 30 NS after his first month of work, he quit the work. He regarded this as unjust: most of the work he was doing - removing bushes from the ground - was, according to him, arduous. At the same time, Hermea objected to his allegedly not working much.

During this period, Kashe and his family also depended on government food drought relief. He recalled that the truck with food used to come to nearby Omatako village and he drove over there with a donkey cart to fetch the food for the people in Kameelwoud. When speaking

³⁰⁹ My !Xun informants called Hereroland in Afrikaans also *reservaat* (in English reserve) after the Otjituo reserve, which became part of (former) Hereroland West.

³¹⁰ Old Frederik's family lived during my field research trips to Namibia in Grootfontein at plot I number as No. 9.

³¹¹ Otto who used often to go with Kashe to various places committed suicide in 1997 in Kameelwoud. Otto hanged himself at a tree and was found dead by Kashe, Kashe's brother Andris and his brother. According to Kashe, who was rather hesitant to talk about it, the main reason was the bad relationship between Otto's wife Kristine and his sister. The latter was allegedly insisting on him to find another wife and they broke off. At the time when Otto committed suicide his wife Kristine lived at Klippan.

about life in Kameelwoud, Kashe described it as a “hunger time”. However, it turned out that especially in 1997 and 1998 the Bushmen often received quite significant quantities of government drought food relief (12,5 kg mealie meal, 2 cooking oils, dry fish, instant cool drink and sometimes also another food as well per person). “That time was nice good,” said Kashe. In fact, these were rather brief periods of food security in periods when there was “much hunger”. Kashe apparently did not get the government food every month: “The problem is, that when they (the government) give (the food), they do not come quickly back.” Kashe said that if the food did not come for a long time people often went to the !Xun Traditional Authority chief for Tsumkwe District West, John Arnold, and complained to him.

Willem and Kashe’s brother Andris went on to tend Arnold’s cows and Willem worked for him most of the time during his stay in Kameelwoud. However, both Willem and Maria felt exploited by him. He allegedly gave them some food rations, such as mealie meal, and they drank the milk of the herded cows. However, according to Willem and Andris, Arnold did not give them any money in all the years they were working for him. Willem often angrily repeated that he had built him a large cattle *kraal* but had not been paid for the work. He was allegedly repeatedly told by Arnold that he had been saving the money for him in a bank in Grootfontein and one day they would drive there and withdraw it. However, these promises did not materialise. Thus, the food situation in Kameelwoud remained precarious and Kashe’s family also had to rely a great deal on gathering bushfood. Hunger forced Kashe to use another economic strategy - he also started to hunt with a bow, but with only minimal success. I elaborate more on this activity in the “Conclusions” of this chapter.

Kashe also mentioned an alleged “government” project in Kameelwoud in 1997 that had the aim of easing the lives of the !Xun in the settlement. The project, however, failed. According to Kashe, they were provided with vegetable seeds, peach and lemon trees seedlings and wire to build a protective fence around the gardens. In 2008 Kashe told me the project had stopped because it lacked money to buy diesel for the water pump to water the gardens. However, when talking about it in 2009 Kashe blamed bad management for its failure. One Bushman called Tiki was tasked with selling the vegetables in nearby Omatako and another member of the community, an “Ovambo” woman married to another “Ovambo” called Karate (I do not know whether the project was designed only for the !Xun, but apparently non-Bushmen also took part in it), was the treasurer. In Kashe’s view, the project, the only one of its kind in which he has ever taken part, failed because Tiki kept the money from the vegetable sales for himself.

Later on Kashe was asked by a Herero, whose name was Djandero, to look after his cattle in Kameelwoud. In addition to his livestock in Bushmanland, the Herero had a rural farm in a village **Ozongune (62)** in former Hereroland West, where he owned a herd of cattle, goats and sheep. Having worked for Djandero for some time in Kameelwoud, Kashe moved to Ozongune and tended the livestock there. He was driven over in Djandero’s car. It was one of the few places where Kashe worked where he did not have any relatives prior to his arrival. However, Kashe went to Ozongune with his brother Andris’s son Willem and his sister Kristine’s son Anton, who were both *mannetjies* at the time and they helped him in caring for Djandero’s livestock. “It is not a lot of work,” was Kashe’s evaluation of those tasks. Twice he went (once on foot, once by horse) to nearby Okamatapati to where they drove Djandero’s cattle for auction. They stayed there for a year and a half until November 1999. “I live there quite well,” Kashe said when looking back on that time.

His employment at Ozongune was terminated by Djandero, who told him he had worked for him for a long time and could return back to his !Xun family in Kameelwoud. Djandero gave Kashe 70 NS each month and Kashe bought a mare, which gave later a birth to a colt, with the money. Kashe's ability to save some money at that time can be explained as a combination of several reasons. First, since he was provided with food, he did not have to buy any. Second, since he was isolated from his kin in Bushmanland, he was not made to assist them financially and, third, Kashe did not spend any money on alcohol because the Herero forbade his workers from drinking it and Kashe was afraid to disobey. "Alcohol brings you to places where you did not have to go. Then you get there problems yet," as the Herero used to say. He could remember that the only occasion he drank to excess was at the Christmas 1998 when he first waited until Djandero had gone to sleep before he went to drink with other Bushmen.

After returning to **Kameelwoud (63)**, Kashe stayed for a short time with his family. Kashe claimed that the distribution of drought relief food became more and more erratic. He was soon asked by Djandero to help him again to take occasional care of his cattle and promised him 100 NS per month. According to Kashe he was "helping" an "Ovambo" already working for Djandero. "This Ovambo was nice," claimed Kashe, but the work environment deteriorated in December 2000 after a relative of Djandero's called Kábie started to work for him as well. Djandero had given Kábie a calf and promised Kashe he would be given one later on as well. Kashe claimed Kábie had sold his own calf and insisted that his "uncle" would not give any animal to Kashe. Kábie had allegedly portrayed Kashe constantly in a bad light and advised Djandero to send him away. He reportedly kept on saying Kashe was selling the milk of Djandero's cows. According to Kashe, Kábie spoke about him so badly that people started to tell "various (negative) stories" about him: "People are jealous. There was a lot of milk." The tensions and quarrels between the two men led Kashe to discuss the issue directly with Djandero. Kashe tried to explain to Djandero the nature of the problem, but, according to him, Djandero did not grasp the situation well. In the end, they agreed that Kashe would leave his employment and Djandero gave him 40 NS. Later, Djandero allegedly invited Kashe to work for him again but he refused: "You cannot go back to a place where there is a problem."

It was not long before Kashe started to look after the cattle of another Herero called Sepi, who had moved to Kameelwoud with his herd from the Grashoek settlement. Kashe worked for him with some short breaks until 2002 when he decided to leave the communal area to try his luck in the farm area again. He wanted to find a job at farm Eldoret near the Red Line, where his brother-in-law Andris and sister Kristine lived. Kashe took the decision to leave the communal area because of economic strain. He could have gone on working for Sepi, but the money he was given was, to him, was too little to live on.

Nevertheless, there was also another strong incentive for Kashe to leave: he was engaged in a relationship with a !Xun woman Lucia, who was emerging from a turbulent relationship with her "Ovambo" man Simon, whose father was "Ovambo" Titus, who had brutally beaten Kashe's father at the farm Wackies (6). Both Lucia and Simon were heavy drinkers, with the latter allegedly constantly accusing her of having sexual relationships with other men and often severely beating her. I could see the consequences of this violent behaviour during my research several years later. Lucia had a permanently bent finger as a consequence of its being broken by Simon. She also had a long scar on her shin that was a result of Simon's attack with a knife and one of her upper incisors was missing after her drunk husband beat her one day with a hoe handle. That night she had to flee into the bush and spend the night there.

According to Kashe, these injuries were the results of Simon's attacks in the period between 2001 and 2002. Simon was also arrested by the police and faced imprisonment. However, he allegedly persuaded Lucia that he would not assault her any more if she withdrew the case. Nevertheless, after his release from the Moroelaboom police station, Simon did not change his behaviour. In October 2002 Simon allegedly expelled his wife and she left Kameelwoud with Kashe.³¹²

They went first to the nearby /Káandu (63a) settlement, where Kashe's brother Andris was working. Kashe wanted to inform him of intention of leaving Bushmanland and going to a farm and to ask Andris to care of his two horses. They spend only one night in /Káandu and the next day they went on foot to Swart Tak (63b). There they also spent one day with their relative (Piet, the husband of Kashe's niece Popi), Kashe borrowed a donkey cart from a !Xun pastor (a relative from mother's side) there and the next day they arrived at farm **Eldoret (64)**. But Kashe did not get the work he had hoped for and, thus, after passing the night at the farm they returned to Swart Tak (64a) with about 10 kg of mealie meal and some beans he had been given by his kin at the farm. They stayed there for a few days. However, one day when Kashe was visiting the farm Verskyn, Lucia's former man Simon went to Swart Tak and took Lucia back to Kameelwoud. Kashe soon went to **Kameelwoud (65)** as well. Lucia and Simon were still there, but soon they separated definitely. According to Kashe, a Damara man called Thomas (the employer of Old Frederik), who also had cattle in Kameelwoud, drove both Lucia and Simon in his car to Lucia's parents, who were living at farm Strydfontein near Grootfontein, where Kashe used to work in the past. Kashe said the Damara had seen Lucia suffering too much with Simon and he had insisted on Lucia's family making the decision as to whether or not it would be better that Lucia and Simon separated. Lucia then stayed at the farm and Simon went to his relatives in the Grootfontein township. Kashe's relationship with Simon remained, however, hostile. Kashe recalled a fight with him in Kameelwoud sometime in 2002³¹³, when Lucia was still living with Simon, and also an incident when they almost began to fight on the main road to Bushmanland in the farm area near the Red Line, but other !Xun prevented them from doing so. According to Kashe, Simon was still looking for a chance to fight and Kashe depicted it as a serious problem. He claimed, although maybe with some exaggeration, he knew that one day they could fight again and kill each other. As a consequence of this development, instead of his initial plans to move to the farm area with Lucia, Kashe stayed alone and kept on working for Sepi in Kameelwoud.

In December 2002 Kashe got a lift to from a Herero man (Klemis Kapuo) who had cattle in /Káandu and worked for the Namibia Water Corporation in the town. He drove Kashe to plot **Driehook (66)** near Grootfontein, where one of Kashe's "brothers" (his mother's "sister's" son) was staying at the time. Kashe claimed to have spent only one night there and then he went to his parents who had been meanwhile "taken" by his father's former employer Paul Spietkop from Bushmanland to his house in **Grootfontein (67)**.

Kashe stayed with his parents at the *buitekamer* for a few days. He felt he could not stay any longer: "Later on he (the Afrikaner) will ask me (what are you doing here all the time)?" Then he went back to Driehook plot. There he met with a friend who had also lived in Kameelwoud and they knew well each other. The man was probably a „mixed“ !Xun/Nama. Kashe said the

³¹² On the issue of gender-specific violence in Tsumkwe District West see Becker (2003).

³¹³ Kashe depicted him as de facto the winner of the fight. In his narration he did not have any weapon, but managed to take away from his rival subsequently his small *keirie* (stick), knife and panga and threw the tools away even though he could have used them against his rival.

Hereros had called him *Kakwéna*³¹⁴. Together they made their way to a **plot near Grootfontein (68)** whose Afrikaner owner was looking for workers and Kashe worked in its garden. The farmer offered Kashe a salary of 90 NS per week, but he left the work after a short period. In 2008 Kashe gave me two reasons for this decision. First “the owner controlled the people a lot” (the same reason given for leaving plot 26 and farm Rumara /46/) and, second, he felt he was distrusted by the farmer, who allegedly interpreted his rather reclusive behaviour negatively. “The *eienaar* thinks I am a *chochi* (robber). I did not speak with the people, I was quiet”. The other workers at the plot told him the Afrikaner had been inquiring about him and Kashe felt the farmer regarded him “as a *chochi* from Grootfontein who wants to steal”. Kashe was allegedly afraid of being accused of stealing something and so told the owner he would like to leave. However, as it turned out there was also another motive, which may have facilitated Kashe’s deserting the plot. He had heard that Lucia was looking for him at Driehook and the next weekend he visited her at farm Strydfontein. Lucia told him she wanted to go to Kameelwoud to collect the possessions she had left there. Thus, when Kashe started to have doubts about whether he should stay at the plot, the fact that he could be reunited with Lucia probably eased his decision. To illustrate the different motives behind Kashe’s decision to move, I may also add that when at the plot he was thinking of going to Bushmanland to check on his horses. Initially, Kashe planned to stay at the plot at least until the end of the month to ensure he was paid his salary. However, under the influence of evolving circumstances, he left the plot early and did not ask the Afrikaner for any remuneration.

In order to get transport to Bushmanland, he joined his relatives working at Driehook. The plot owner’s son drove them to a farm near the Red Line. From there it was easy for Kashe to walk to Omatako (68a), where he spent “two days” with relatives. However, he heard that Lucia was already in **Kameelwoud (69)** and so he headed there. Kashe arranged with his relatives that they would look after his horses and after about one week he went with Lucia to **Eldoret (70)**, where his sister Kristine lived. Kashe claimed they covered the distance in a one-day march. He arrived in Eldoret at the very end of December 2002 and on the 12 January 2003 the farmer employed him. According to Kashe, it was during his stay at Eldoret that Simon, the former husband of Lucia, set fire to his hut in Kameelwoud, since he could not prevent Kashe and Lucia forming a relationship. Kashe’s main task at Eldoret was building an enclosure for the kudu antelopes. Lucia was pregnant at that time and on the 9 April 2003 her health deteriorated so Kashe asked the farmer to help them with the transport to take her to hospital. The Afrikaner brought them from the farm to the Tsumkwe road, where they got a lift from another farmer to **Grootfontein (71)**. When Kashe was on the way to Grootfontein’s hospital, he thought they would come back to Eldoret.

³¹⁴ According to Kashe it was a term the Hereros apply for Namas, but later on we got to know from other !Xun that it was applied in Otjiherero for “mixed” Portuguese/Herero, !Xun/Herero.

Table 9: Period III: Move to communal area – Bushmanland and Hereroland (1997 - 2003)

	place	duration of the stay	work	ethnicity of the farmer/employer	ethnicity of the workers	kin (“family”) bf. arrival	reasons for coming to this place	reasons for leaving to another place	way of leaving
Kashe moves to Bushmanland									
61.	Kameelwoud	V. 1997-I. 1998	Y	Damara Herero					
62.	Ozongune	I. 1998 – XI. 1999	Y/N	Herero	Herero !Kung	No, but went with family	work	Herero told him he could go	with horse
63.	Kameelwoud	XII. 1999 – X. 2002	Y/N	Herero	!Kung Herero	Y	family	- conflict at the work - looking for work - family	by foot
64.	Eldoret	1 day	N	Afrikaaner	!Kung O/K Mbundu	Y	looking for work - family	found no work	donkey cart
65.	Kameelwoud	XI. 2002 – XII. 2002	Y	Herero	!Kung Herero	N	retuned to his home	family	hike
66.	Driehook	one day	N	?	!Xun + ?	Y	family	going to his parents	hike
67.	Grootfontein – parent living at farmer’s home	several days	N	Afrikaaner	!Kung	Y	family	looking for work	by foot
68.	plot by Grootfontein	several days	Y	Afrikaaner	Damara Kakwéna	No, but went with a !Kung speaking friend	looking for work	fearing the farmer	hike
69.	Kameelwoud	1 week	N	-	!Kung Herero	N	to take care of his property (horses)	looking for work	by foot
70.	Eldoret	XII. 2002 – 11.4.2003	Y	Afrikaaner	!Kung O/K	Y	family	Kashe’s wife to deliver a child	with the car of two different farmers
Kashe moves to Grootfontein									

Comments: working for the Hereros, draught food relief and foraging

This period of six years between 1997 and 2003, which Kashe spent mostly in the western part of former Bushmanland in the settlement close to the farm area and partly in Hereroland, was in many ways different from what he had gone through before. It is important to highlight that it was the non-!Xun, specifically Damaras, who enabled Kashe's father and also his relative Old Frederik to move to this previously unfamiliar environment. They offered the !Xun work for them in the area and transported them there as well. As so often in the past Kashe, followed his father's path. Importantly, he said that if his father had not gone there, he probably would not have done so either. Later it was other non-!Xun, mostly the Hereros, who employed the !Xun mostly as cattle herders and, thus, enabled them to stay in that area. Unlike his father, Kashe went to Hereroland as well. But again this was due to the work relationship to his Herero employer in Kameelwoud, who took him there.

In Bushmanland and Hereroland, Kashe entered in many aspects a different socio-economic environment from the white commercial farm area and its characteristics naturally influenced his mobility behaviour. Up to 1997 Kashe lived and worked only at white commercial farms, where the only viable long-term economic activity was working for the farmer. In Bushmanland and Hereroland, there was also effectively only one economic activity in which Kashe's family could engage for a long period – working for the non-!Xun, mostly Herero cattle owners. In Bushmanland this could be supplemented to various degrees, depending on the season, by foraging activities, which meant, in the case of Kashe and other !Xun, gathering bushfood.

When working in Hereroland, Kashe, like other !Xun, had to rely on the food or some cash provided by his Herero employers. He was totally dependent on his Herero master. When we look at Kashe's movements during the observed period in Bushmanland, we can see that even though he could move freely in the area and visit his kin, who lived in Kameelwoud, Omatako, Omatako Valley Rest Camp, Swart Tak and Grashoek, he stayed mostly in the Kameelwoud settlement, where his parents and other relatives also lived for periods. They all shared their sometimes meagre resources and all of them suffered from a lack of cash. Thus, according to Kashe's narratives, "hunger periods" (honger tyd) were followed by slightly better periods, when the government drought relief food arrived.

As a result of the importance of the relationships between the Herero employers and other !Xun for their life in Hereroland or Bushmanland, and also more or less directly on their movements, I describe below the nature of these relationships on the basis of Kashe's narratives.

The relationships between the Hereros and the !Xun (or other Bushman) groups were paternalistic as were those between the !Xun and white farmers, but differed in many ways. Kashe was treated by his Herero employers more equally in some ways than he was by his former white employers and the social distance between them was also significantly smaller. "The old Hereros take care nicely of the people (!Xun workers)," claimed Kashe. In his view, he received this kind of treatment from Djandero, Sepi and Sepi's father. In his relationship with Djandero, for whom he worked in Kameelwoud and Ozongune, he was in a certain sense regarded as belonging to Djandero's family ("We were almost like a family"), as his "son" or "child": "You are like a child at the house." This aspect of the relationship was manifested also by the way Kashe was provided with food by the Hereros. Kashe mostly did not

complain about the quantity of food. “You can eat any time you want to. Tea and also meat,” recalled Kashe of the time he worked for Djandero. The white farmer would hand over the workers food rations at a given time, once a week, a fortnight or a month, and they would have to eat them at their own households. When employed by the Hereros, Kashe often ate with them “from the same pot”, but this did not mean equality. When Kashe wanted to make tea in the morning, he put a tin can filled with water on the fire, but he had to ask the Hereros for the tea. If he wanted to make mealie meal, he again had to ask the Hereros for the foodstuff. In contrast to working for the whites he did not have access to the foodstuffs, but had to ask them for it each time when his food was finished. He cooked mealie meal in a large pot, but the food he cooked could be eaten by the Hereros as well. In Hereroland milk was available all the time and meat was often eaten. According to Kashe Djandero killed an old goat occasionally and the !Xun cooked it in a big pot. They could not, however, eat the meat as freely as mealie meal. It was distributed among the Bushmen by Djandero’s wife. The quantity of food provided by particular Herero also depended on each person’s wealth. Thus, in Bushmanland the Hereros mostly gave Kashe only mealie meal and milk, but in Hereroland he often received meat.

Importantly, in contrast to that with the white farmers, Kashe’s relationship to Djandero and Sepi was virtually conflict-free and he did not have to fear corporal punishment from the Hereros: “They don’t beat (you), they talk only.” Therefore, we can see that Kashe never had to contemplate moving to other place because he faced violent behaviour from the Herero farmer. Kashe seemed to value his relationship to both Djandero and Sepi highly even at the time of my research, since they had treated their workers well.

The difference in the relationship to white and Herero farmers also finds its expression the way the employers - employees and patrons - clients called each other. Whether Kashe called the white farmer *baas* or *meneer* and was called by them by his European name of Fritz, he called Djandero “uncle” in Otjiherero and his wife “aunt”. Djandero called him by his Bushman name. According to Kashe, the Hereros often called the San by their !Xun name but they left out the clicks, which do not exist in Otjiherero. The term “uncle” expressed, according to Kashe, respect and he himself was called this by some people in the Grootfontein township during my research. The terms *baas* and, to lesser extent, *meneer*, however, expresses subordination and obedience.

According to Kashe, the permanent supervision of the workers as experienced with some Afrikaners was almost non-existent with the Herero people. The very nature of “work” between the !Xun and Hereros was sometimes different. When working for Djandero in Ozongune, even though he was not much supervised, Kashe’s tasks stretched over the whole day, as at the white farms. However, after his return from Ozongune to Kameelwoud, Kashe did not describe his employment by Djandero as “work”, but as “help”. “I did not work, I helped only,” he said. The same applies to his subsequent work for Sepi. It was a loose kind of working relationship, during which Kashe, riding his horse, occasionally helped the cattle owner tend the herds or looked for the herd in the bush and brought it back to the *kraal*. He sometimes had to go as far as to Kanovlei when the cattle strayed along Omuramba Omatako during the rainy season. This “help” was frequently interrupted by his visits to other places in Bushmanland such as Omatako and Swart Tak, where he had kin. This arrangement seemed to fit both Kashe and the Herero cattle owner well. “I’m not a worker,” was how Kashe described this relationship. According to him, the Herero had, for example, one permanent worker and Kashe helped him only occasionally with tasks for which he could use his horse.

“We were only neighbours,” said Kashe about his work for Sepi. Kashe and Sepi lived next to each other and, if the need arose, Kashe, especially if he was struggling to find some food or money, did not have any reason to refuse to “help” him. Thus, when Kashe decided in November 2002 to leave Bushmanland and to find work at a farm, he did not tell his Herero employer Sepi about it. He did not perceive any need to because it was not a formal working relationship as with white farmers. After failing to find employment at a farm, he just returned to the Herero and went on working for him. “I did not leave the work,” explained Kashe. Sepi was also used to his frequent visits outside Kameelwoud.

There was another significant difference between working for the Hereros and the white farmers, which made Kashe finally leave Bushmanland and move back to a farm: engaging in wage labour for the whites meant significantly higher and mostly regular income than work for the Hereros. At the time when earned 70 NS from his Herero employer Djandero in Ozongune, the average salary at white farms was a few hundred NS. There were also Hereros from whom the !Xun only received food and, only occasionally, some small change. According to Kashe, he and other !Xun were constantly asking the Hereros for “two or three Rand” to have at least some cash with which to buy tobacco. According to Kashe, the Hereros often delayed paying them by saying they had had to wait until a cow could be sold: “But this is not nice. People must stay with money, we must buy small things, if you need them.” When I asked Kashe what exactly he meant by “small things”, he said, for example, sweets or tinned beef. When working for Djandero, Kashe did not suffer from hunger, but had to ask his employer constantly to give him food.

“There was work in Kameelwoud. But the money was small. Now I want to go to the Afrikaner,” was the reason Kashe gave for his decision to leave Sepi and Bushmanland. According to Kashe, Sepi had given him once 200 NS, and occasionally 10 NS or so and, instead of giving him money, advised him to sell his cow’s milk at Omatako Valley Rest Camp. In this way, Kashe could earn 10 NS for approximately five liters of milk. “The Boers pay at the end of the month. By the Hereros you must wait first, one month or some days. They are weak. Like me,” said Kashe about the Hereros. “White man stays all the time with some money in his pocket. The Herero is like Blikkiesdorp (the poor township in Grootfontein). But food you can eat (enough by the Hereros), but from the money’s side it is weak.” But even though Kashe knew the Hereros sometimes did not have money, he also suspected that they did not pay him because they tried to take the !Xun in: “Maybe they think I’m stupid.” Despite their financial weakness, Kashe seemed to hold the old Hereros” Sepi and Djandero in a good esteem even during the time of my research. He still regarded them as prospective employers and people who could also help him in one way or another - for example, with transport since they owned cars.

Violence or its prospect had a profound influence on Kashe’s movements in Bushmanland. Kashe had a very tense relationship with Simon, the then husband of Lucia. Moreover, he left the employ of the Herero Djandero because of quarrels with the latter’s son-in-law, Kábia. Kashe did not mention that he was often involved in violent incidents with other people in Bushmanland due to his/their drinking alcohol, but this remained a serious problem in this area. The relationship between Lucia and Simon was a relationship of two heavy drinkers.

It should be also highlighted that Kashe’s movements were influenced by his acquisition of two horses, which were very valuable property by !Xun standards. If not staying in

Bushmanland, he had to arrange for someone to look after them and from time he had to see them personally.

Kashe as hunter and gatherer

“The life in Bushmanland - you get there nothing. You must only look for the bushfood,” Kashe once told me. It was during his stay in Bushmanland that Kashe first engaged regularly in foraging subsistence activities. It was, however, rather a last resort when other economic activities, such as working for the non-!Xun cattle owners, were not available. Thus, he hardly ever gathered bushfood when he worked for the Hereros in Kameelwoud.

It was also Bushmanland where Kashe started, or the circumstances forced him, to hunt in a traditional way with a bow. Kashe talked about his attempts to hunt with this weapon as a “period of hunger”: If you don’t hunt you will eat things of other people.” Another time he put it in another way: “In Busmanland you’ll have to do something, you must try.” However, it took a certain time until Kashe and his close kin, who used to live at the farms, ventured on foraging trips into the bush. At first, they were not used to this kind of environment and were afraid of the wild animals allegedly living there, for example, leopards or hyenas, although they never saw any. However, later they found out that the dangerous animals were somewhat distant and, therefore, did not pose any significant threat. Kashe and his family relied mostly only on gathering bushfood and hunting played an almost negligible role. Hunting was prohibited in this area. However, in contrast to the time of my field research, the rule was not enforced, controlled or sanctioned.

By looking at the extent to which different members of Kashe’s family mastered hunting with bow and arrows, we can also observe that they showed various degrees of talent and motivation to learn it. Kashe’s father Willem and Andris tried to learn it, both at the farms and in Bushmanland, but without any success. Kashe seemed to be much more skilled. However, when compared with some of his other kin living in Tsumkwe District West, Kashe did not enjoy the status of a good hunter whatsoever. Therefore, during discussions about hunting Kashe was rather silent, only occasionally glossing his obviously more experienced colleagues. At the same time due to the fact that the illegality of hunting was being strictly enforced during the years of my research through the Nꞛa-Jaꞛna Conservancy and covering a substantial part of Tsumkwe District West, the !Xun were generally reluctant to talk about these activities openly.

According to Kashe, his parents knew which bushfood to gather and how to do so, skills they probably learned at the farms, but he and his siblings had to learn to do it. Kashe acquired a lot of information from the San who had already been living in Bushmanland for some time or from some of the !Xun born in the area: “I did not know it but there were people who know.” According to him, the Bushmen could gather *veldkos* throughout the year, but it was easier in the rainy season as some plants could be recognised by their footstalks and leaves. The !Xun, however, did not go on gathering expeditions lasting several days as was reported in traditional societies, when they the gathering groups consisted mostly of women. The !Xun groups moved out only for a day and included both men and women.

Kashe had some knowledge of hunting techniques before coming to Bushmanland. Interestingly, Kashe claimed he learned how to use a bow and arrow for the first time at

Nukhuwis (10) thanks to an “Ovambo” prisoner called Karate who gave him his bow. Some !Xun were already engaged in hunting with bows and arrows at farm Elandsplaagte (14). It was at this farm that Kashe was also shown by his father’s brother how to make the poison from one plant species. His father and other !Xun hunted wild pigs with spears at Olivantsput (11, 13). At that time Kashe was still too young to take part in these activities. However, when he was at Klippan (44, 50), he was more than 20 years old and hunted the pigs with the same technique his father used. At Kameelwoud he could thus capitalise on the knowledge and skills acquired at the farms and improve them.³¹⁵

Kashe claimed he went to hunt mostly to the area west of Kameelwoud. However, there were allegedly too many people hunting there. The /Turus from /Káandu started bushfires so new grass would grow and attract the animals. The /Turu Bushmen were, according to Kashe, generally better hunters than the !Xun who were often former farm-workers and had only limited or no experience of hunting with bows and arrows at the farms before coming to Bushmanland. However, some !Xun, especially those born in Bushmanland or who had been living there for a long time, were, according to Kashe, also very experienced hunters. The !Xun farm workers did not usually have bows and arrows at the farms because it could anger the farmer, who mostly regarded killing the wildlife at his farm as poaching. Thus according to Kashe, the !Xun who used to hunt in Bushmanland and wanted to visit their kin or friends or were looking for work in the commercial farm area near the Red Line left their hunting weapons at their huts or in the bush in Bushmanland.

The /Turus often made traps from oval-shaped wires attached to a slim tree trunk or a pole set in the ground and placed on a path used by the kudus. The wire then caught them by their feet. Kashe, however, was afraid of making these wire traps because if he did it without any assistance, he could get severely hurt. The /Turus also made traps by putting flat pieces of tin in places frequented by antelopes. These pieces of tin were cut in a star-shape way in the middle that cut into the leg of the animal stepping on it and since the animal could hardly walk with the tin sheet cutting into the leg, the hunters could easily track it down and kill it. He made only traditional traps with a string attached to a rod to catch guinea fowls. In the whole of his stay in Kameelwoud he was able to kill only one kudu with his bow and arrow. As the main reason for this poor return he said that the kudu became shy and went far away from peoples’ settlements. In Kashe’s case, the hunting trips took one day and he could recall only one instance when he slept in the bush. He went from Kameelwoud with an old and experienced !Xun hunter to Kanovlei, where they wanted to kill (but did not succeed in doing so) an eland, many of which were living in this area.

He claimed the best time for hunting was between 12 and 15 p.m. when the sun burned the most strongly and the animals lay in the shadow under the trees. He went into bush normally dressed, but emphasised, he could not wash with a soap the day before so that the animal could not smell him. If spotting an animal, he was careful to go along and not against the wind. He could check it by taking in his palm sand and letting it fall to the ground. When he saw the animal he took off his clothes except of his underwear in order to avoid making rustling sounds which would startle the pray. According to Kashe the hunter should generally also avoid that his wife sees the arrows, because it could affect his hunting success.

³¹⁵ Guenther reported that the knowledge of how to hunt and how to gather plants was retained even by the „highly acculturated“ Nharo (Guenther 1986: 234).

Some !Xun, for example, from Grashoek, used to hunt warthogs near the Red Line into the Kavango region with dogs and spears. However, for the !Xun living south of Grashoek, this was allegedly too far and they also did not want to get into trouble with Kavangos from that area. Kashe did not go there even when he lived in Grashoek. Some !Xun in this part of Bushmanland used to hunt at night and used torches, with which they blinded the animal and then killed it with a *kierie*.

Grootfontein: not an option

In this period Grootfontein did not play a significant role in Kashe's life. Settling down in Grootfontein was not a considered option for him. His parents moved there later and lived in the *buitekamer* of the policeman Spietkop, for whom they did domestic chores, but they could not take their kin there for lengthy periods. Kashe also did not succeed in finding work at a plot close to the town. It is noteworthy that, despite limited experience of living in the urban environment, the Afrikaner plot owner suspected Kashe was a "*chochi from Grootfontein*". Kashe was also not very motivated to stay in the town because he might run into the farmer from Klippan, who he still feared. The fact that he went with his pregnant wife from a farm far away near the Red Line to Grootfontein hospital reflects a general trend: that the !Xun knew giving birth in the town hospital was a far safer option than doing so at the farm or in the communal area.

From Total petrol station to "traditional village"

When Kashe came from Eldoret to Grootfontein with the pregnant Lucia, he thought they would return to the farm after the birth of their child in the hospital. Events, however, took a different course. There were several factors involved. After spending some time in Grootfontein, Kashe visited the owner of Eldoret at his house in the town to talk about his coming back after the birth of the baby, but he had the feeling that the farmer "was not satisfied" with him. Kashe recalled that the farmer told him: "If you want to, you can come back!" Kashe understood these words as a threat. According to Kashe, if the farmer really wanted to have him back he would have said: "You must come." The Afrikaner also requested that Kashe return his overalls. At the same time, Kashe wanted to stay in Grootfontein until his child was born, since he did not want to leave his wife unattended. Kashe allegedly also regarded how he would get back to the farm with his wife and the newborn without being there transported by the farmer as problematic.

However, Kashe's decision was also significantly influenced by the fact that, for the first time, there was a place in the town, where he could live without having to work for a white employer and live at his house. The place where Kashe and his wife found shelter was the "traditional village", part of the Multipurpose Community Centre, the cultural centre next to the then regional governor's office, and about 10 minutes walking distance from the Grootfontein commercial centre, where the town's shops and malls are concentrated. It was at the "traditional village" where Kashe literally found his parents and many other relatives when he got to Grootfontein from Eldoret. Since allowing the San to live in the "traditional village" had brought about important developments which had also an impact on Kashe's life and his movements and also many other !Xun from this area, I will describe it in more detail.



Picture 6. Waiting at the Total petrol station in Grootfontein for a lift to Bushmanland.

According to the narratives of the !Xun who lived there, they had moved to the “traditional village” in the first months of 2003, but, in fact, this happened several months earlier. According to the then Otjozondjupa regional governor, Grace Uushona, with whom I talked about it in December 2011, this had already happened during the winter of 2002.

How and from where did the !Xun come to the “traditional village”? Uuushona told me the !Xun were chased out of the farms and were found “empty-handed under the tree” at a site on the Grootfontein – Rundu road. In a compassionate gesture they were offered a place to live in the Multipurpose Community Centre, where they also received blankets, in what was a sincere attempt to assist them. This narrative, however, did not correspond with what I was told by some of the !Xun who lived there. According to their version, it rather seemed that during that time in Grootfontein a large group of impoverished homeless Bushmen !Xun turned up in the town and started to live at the Total petrol station, which had been built in 2000 on the northern edge of Grootfontein. They also squatted in the centre of Grootfontein under the trees opposite the SPAR supermarket near the town’s shopping centre. Since they had nowhere to go, they were allowed by the governor to stay in the “traditional village”, which they called “gabana” (a corruption of the word “governor”).

The !Xun version seemed to me to be more realistic. From the life histories of the !Xun I talked to, it was evident that after leaving a farm they would follow their kin and stay with them, be it in the farm, urban or communal areas. Squatting for a long time by the road in substantial numbers would make no sense since they would not be able to acquire food there. Thus, they would rather disperse among their relatives. If it is true that the !Xun really were found “under the tree”, I think it is possible that some of them gathered there only for a short

time, a few days or so, and would soon have left for the farms, or they were already on their way to the farms.



Picture 7. Some !Xun got a lift from Grootfontein to Bushmanland at the Total petrol station.

It seems probable that the !Xun would have hardly appeared in the town in such conspicuous numbers if the Total petrol station had not been built. According to my informants, the construction of the Total station, officially named the Transcaprivi Service Centre and which was opened on 29 September 2000, had a significant impact on the way the !Xun travelled in and out of Grootfontein and also on the time they spent in the town. Before the construction of the Total station the Bushmen without having somewhere to sleep in the town: 1) had to overnight either on blankets under the trees opposite the SPAR supermarket, but it did not provide them any protection in the rainy season, or 2) had to move for the night to their relatives in the township, if there were any there, or 3) had to go to their kin at the plots near Grootfontein, which was quite distant. At Total station, however, there were two places where the !Xun could overnight even when it was raining: one was the banks protected by a sheet originally designed for people wanting to take a rest at the station. The other place was at the other side of the station, where the sheet protected parked vehicles. Before building the Total petrol station, there was another gas station nearby, but it did not have a site where the !Xun could dwell also in the rain season. If it was not raining, the !Xun slept on concrete next to one side of the Total petrol station or sometimes in the bush behind it around a fire.

The Total station started to serve as an important transport node. Drivers of cars, pick-ups or lorries heading to the north or northeast, whether to the farms, Bushmanland or the northern communal areas, often stopped there to fill up before embarking on their journey. People without their own means of transport and from various ethnic groups, including the !Xun,

who wanted to get to Bushmanland had to wait there for a lift. This sometimes took even several days, depending on whether there was a car going in the desirable direction or if they had some money to pay for the lift. According to the employees of the petrol station, in the beginning the Bushmen did not stay at the station for long. However, this changed after a “year” or so, that is in 2001 or 2002, and the petrol station apparently became a place where some !Xun spent a longer time than just few days, and some of them started to live there for long periods. There were, thus, !Xun who were only visiting in the town for several days and waiting for a lift to Bushmanland or a farm and those who wanted to stay in the town for some time. The town’s authorities could hardly have known the individual reasons for their staying in the town and the influx of the Bushmen squatters must have made them nervous. In addition to protection from the rain, at Total there was also a water tap at the station which the !Xun could use at any time. The place offered a certain security for the !Xun because the premises of the station were guarded by private security officials. The poor-looking Bushmen were also occasionally given some food and small change by compassionate passing drivers. Staying at Total also played an important role for the !Xun from the *erven* numbered 1 and 2, and with whom I spent most of my time, in their “sliding” into the town.

Allowing the !Xun to stay in the “traditional village” soon proved to be disaster, which also attracted the attention of the *Republikein* (2003a) daily newspaper. The original aim was to build traditional huts representing the material culture of various ethnic groups living in Namibia at the Multipurpose Community Centre and that the site would become a place which would attract tourists heading to the region and market it. “What began ... as a compassionate gesture of the Governor of the Otjozondjupa Region, Ms Uushona, degenerated now in a social nightmare,” wrote the *Republikein* in September 2003. Kashe told me that the !Xun soon occupied not only the traditional Bushmen huts, but also those typical for other Namibian peoples. Thus, the envisaged multicultural “traditional village”, which should have presented Namibian ethnic diversity, quickly became an ethnically homogeneous unit, a !Xun “island” in the town. The town’s administrators, however, obviously did not regard the living conditions in the huts as safe and dignified. Uushona told me that the idea was that the Bushmen children and their mothers would sleep in a room inside the facility, but to their surprise all the San decided to sleep in the huts in the yard. In fact, the !Xun apparently occupied the dwellings in nuclear families as they would anywhere else.

Many of the people living there were Kashe’s relatives, the most numerous the !Xun I found during my first field research in Grootfontein in 2007 living at plot No. 2 in Blikkiesdorp. At the time Kashe’s father Willem and mother Maria were living in the *buitekamer* at the house of the Afrikaner Paul Spietkop, which was near the village. When I asked Willem why he had left Spietkop’s house and moved to the yard, he claimed the space in the *buitekamer* was too small. According to him, Spietkop was preparing himself to move to Otjiwarongo and placed the things to be taken there in the *buitekamer*. Willem said it had been his initiative to move from the *buitekamer* and he was by no means forced to do so by the Afrikaner. He moved into an Ovambo-style hut in the “traditional village”, which he found a better and larger place than the congested room at the Spietkops’. Generally, there was probably amount of information confusion among the !Xun regarding the “traditional village” project and its purpose. Willem told me he went there because he had heard the people saying “all the Bushmen in the town have to leave the *buitekamers* and go to the governor.” The !Xun staying at the “traditional village” were not, in fact, a homogenous mass of people intending to stay in the town. It seems that all of them were former farmworkers, but so far as I could

discover there were some who did not want to work any longer at a *plaas* and hoped to find some work in the town and others who regarded their stay there as only temporary until they were able find work in the farm area or maybe former Hereroland. There were also some older people who were no longer able to work at the farm and, in the case of Kashe's parents, who were also unable to cope with life in Bushmanland. The information about the "traditional village" spread among the !Xun in the area and if some of them came to the town they automatically went to this place. Most of the !Xun who went to "gabana" were unemployed. However, Willem kept on working for Spietkop and also some of the other !Xun found some employment, mostly as yardworkers. The "traditional village" also became a temporary refuge for Bushmen who came from Bushmanland to the town, but could not get a lift back. In the past they would have slept at the Total petrol station, but when the possibility of being at the Multipurpose Community Centre arose, they moved in.

Kashe told me that due to the influx of people the "traditional village" had soon looked "almost like a small location". The "traditional village" must have been attractive for the landless !Xun for several reasons: not only did they have roof above their heads, but they also had easy access to drinking water because the toilet and bathroom at the office was open 24 hours a day for them. Kashe recalled that from time to time they were provided with food such as mealie meal, dried fish or cooking oil, which they regarded as a reward for their occasional yardwork at the centre. Moreover, the site was immediately adjacent to the governor's office and fenced off, and, thus, relatively secure. The location was also good as it was in a secure residential area, inhabited apparently by better-off people, often whites, several kilometres from the township. It was 10 walk from the town shopping centre and, for those who were looking for a lift, also quite near to the Total petrol station. "The life was difficult but not so much," as Kashe summarized his feelings about that time. Kashe found work in the town (although it was badly paid) but when he was unemployed he depended on looking for empty bottles. For the little money he earned, he could buy some basic food stuffs and necessities such as soap and vaseline for little Anton, who had been born to him and Lucia on the 27 May 2003 at Grootfontein hospital. He could also rely, to some extent, on the help of his parents, who were already receiving their pensions, to which all Namibian citizens older than 60 are entitled.

According to the information in the Republikein, the town's authorities regarded the !Xun's stay at the cultural centre as a temporary emergency measure until a long-lasting solution to the problem would be found. However, the way the situation evolved made the town officials change their mind and move the Bushmen out of the compound. What made them act was the growing number of Bushmen living in the "traditional village". "The problem was that they were drinking and more and more of them were coming," recalled one man who I talked to and who worked at that time in the town as a social worker. According to him, the !Xun did not fight each other, did not quarrel, were very polite, and they treated other people with respect, "but another three or four of them arrived every day." The last claim was probably an exaggeration, but, nevertheless, reflects certain consternation on the part of the town's officials. According to Uushona, as cited by the Republikein, initially there were just five San families at the centre, but their number increased rapidly. In the article it is said that there could be between 80 and 100 Bushmen living at the site. However, since I saw the empty huts in 2007 (later on they were removed), I found it hard to believe that 100 people could have lived in the relatively small compound, and that, rather, it must have been several dozen people. Uushona told me that initially there may have been around 15 people, but later around 45 people lived there. Many of the people I met at plot 1 and 2 during my first research trip in

2007 had lived there as well. As well as Kashe and his parents, his brother Andris, who met his future spouse Angoste there, Kashe's sister Kristine with her man and children, Kashe's grandparents, Emma and Anton, and his "brother" Max and his disabled wife Erika with their numerous children and grandchildren all lived there.

The Republikein article mentions that all around the cultural centre lay empty bottles. However, when I talked about this with Kashe, he said the !Xun had drunk a lot, but only outside the compound, especially in the Single Quarters in the township, because they were afraid of being expelled from the centre if caught with alcohol there. However, encountering drunk San apparently lead other people to think the Bushmen were spending their time in the "traditional village" consuming alcohol.

The social workers said that the San in the compound had not destroyed anything and that the huts had remained in a good state. This, however, contradicts the information of the Republikein article, which in September 2003 wrote that "the cultural centre has been plundered almost to the ground". It stated that the San used the branches from which the huts were built as firewood and they used for the same reason also the door of the toilet. I suspect that these !Xun in their ragged clothes, most of them former farm workers, could in the end hardly meet the notion of what the "real" Bushmen *should* look like and the governor and the municipality may have had.

The situation at the "traditional village" became so unbearable that the governor decided to move the Bushmen away. I have tried to find out as much as possible about this process. Uuushona told me in 2011 that since the Bushmen were originally from Bushmanland (as we saw almost none of them were born there), she strived to relocate them to that area. "You can see, that these people have to live in their typical environment," she said. For this reason with the assistance of the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement and the Ministry of Agriculture, they found a place for their relocation (I did not succeed in locating the precise site) in the area of Omatako in Tsumkwe District West and allegedly took them there in two lorries. They were supposed to engage in agriculture in Bushmanand and were also given blankets and food at the beginning. In Uuushona's version, the majority of the San were determined to start a new life there. In her view, the Bushmen could not live in the town, where it was possible to live only with money: "How do they survive (in the town?)," was her concern. In her narrative of the events, transporting the Bushmen to Bushmanland was the best and most logical solution: "We integrated them back into their own society." When I talked about the transport of the !Xun to Bushmanland with a relative of Uuushona's in 2010, someone who worked at the municipality and was involved in the operation as well, he insisted the Bushmen were transported to Mangetti, another settlement in Tsumkwe District West. He also had the notion that most of them stayed in Bushmanland.

However, according to the relocated !Xun, only a minority of those who were transported to the area of former western Bushmanland remained there. According to Max, the "owner" of plot 2 in Blikkiesworp, the !Xun were brought by truck to a place called Olivantspos. There was allegedly "nothing" there, not even water. Max claimed that they were told there would be water, but after arriving there there was allegedly only an empty water tank, to which lead a pipe, but he did not know where that lead to. According to him, Olivantspos was a long way from the nearest village and since none of them knew the area or the Bushmen living there, they left and hitchhiked back to Grootfontein. This story was still well-known among the adult Bushmen I talked to in Grootfontein during my research and it was recalled as a very

negative experience. This applies also to Kashe and his father, who did not go to Bushmanland that time. The !Xun who had only mediated information about it talked about their kinsmen having been dropped at some place in the bush whose name they did not know and initially being provided with some food. However, after eating it all and staying there for several weeks, they expected they would be provided with food again. However, this did not happen. “They almost died,” one !Xun who was told the story by his relatives transferred to Bushmanland told me with a typically emotive expression. In Bushmanland there was allegedly “nothing, only the bush”. According to Kashe’s father, “the government lied” about better life in Bushmanland and thus the Bushmen had no option but to return to Grootfontein. The transferred !Xun apparently expected they would be supported by the state to a much greater extent.

The Republikein daily wrote that most of the Bushmen at the cultural centre in Grootfontein refused to be moved to Bushmanland and that a group of only about twenty of them went to the area. Those who stayed behind were especially women with children and old people. I surmise that some of the !Xun men went to Bushmanland on something like a reconnaissance mission. The Republikein added that those who refused to move to Bushmanland claimed they were not from that area and knew nothing about it. However, according to the article, they were then moved not to the western part of Bushmanland, but to Tsumkwe, in its eastern part.³¹⁶ This was conformed to me by some !Xun. Thus, the !Xun squatters were moved out of Grootfontein in at least two waves and to different places. Tsumkwe is the biggest settlement in the region traditionally inhabited by the Ju/’hoan San. None of the !Xun I encountered in Grootfontein during my research was born in former eastern Bushmanland and only a few of them have ever visited the place. What happened in Tsumkwe?

I was told the story of the transport of the !Xun from the Multipurpose Community Centre in Grootfontein to Tsumkwe by Hermann, the “brother” of the wife of Kashe’s brother Andris and a disabled, one-legged !Xun called Stánsón who lived at the *erf* next to plot 2 during my research. According to them, after coming to Tsumkwe they were provided with some food such as mealie meal, cooking oil and dry fish in order to overcome the initial difficulties of life in a new environment. According to Hermann, the !Xun slept inside the office of the Ju/’hoansi chief Bobo and some of them did some yardwork. Hermann did not talk about any agriculture activities. However, according to him, their stay there soon became badly affected by the fact that two men from the group broke into one of Tsumkwe’s food shops at night and stole some money and food. Police allegedly found only empty meat cans on the roof of the shop the next day, which the two hungry burglars had eaten, and caught them soon afterwards. The representatives of the Ju/’hoan Traditional Authority behaved pleasantly to the resettled !Xun, but after the break-in the relations with the Ju/’hoan community took a turn for the worse. “They say we come to kill them, we aren’t looking for help,” recalled Hermann. There was also some problem with communication, since the !Xun and Ju/’hoan, due to the strong dialect differences, often could not understand each other. As a result of this negative climate, combined with the fact that there was no prospect that they would have a better life in this area, the resettled !Xun left Tsumkwe. Some of them first went to the resettlement scheme Appelpos, where they had relatives and then hitchhiked back to Grootfontein.

Looking back at the time in Bushmanland, Stánsón complained that the !Xun struggled to obtain some food: “There was no life.” Hermann recalled that one !Xun couple went to their

³¹⁶ Tsumkwe mentions also another article (Republikein 2003b).

kin at Omatako settlement, but the others went back to Grootfontein. “We are not used to that side. We are used to Grootfontein,” claimed Stánsón. According to him, they knew that in Grootfontein there would be relatives who would help them and they also knew how to earn a living in this environment. Stánsón claimed they spent about “three weeks” in both Tsumkwe and Appelpos. Stánsón said the !Xun who had not succeeded in starting new life in Bushmanland and came back to Grootfontein would have wanted to live again at the “traditional village” in Grootfontein. However, this was no longer possible and so they ended up at the Total petrol station and under the trees opposite the SPAR supermarket. Thus, paradoxically, they ended up at exactly the same place they had lived in before going to the cultural centre. They joined there their kin who had not wanted to go to Bushmanland and had moved to Total station and SPAR area directly from the “traditional village”.

Kashe, however, was not among them. He lived at the “traditional village” from 9 April until the beginning of June 2003. After Lucia gave birth to their son Anton³¹⁷ they spent only a few days at the regional governor office compound before going to former Hereroland West. Finding out what had happened to Willem after he had to leave the cultural centre was very difficult. It seems he ended up squatting at Total and SPAR for some time as well, nevertheless, he was later able to find a place to stay in a small room next to the Blaauwberg company opposite the SPAR with Old Frederik, who had lived near Willem’s family in Kameelwoud (61). Then he left with his wife Maria to Bushmanland, but after several months he was taken by the Spietkops family back to Grootfontein to work for them.

The problem with San squatters in Grootfontein had not been solved and, according to Republikein, the governor felt certain bitterness about this, but could only state that the town’s authorities had done their best to help the Bushmen.

The appearance of the homeless !Xun by Total station and opposite SPAR attracted the attention of the Grootfontein Lions Club, which, together with the municipality, and apparently some farmers, decided to move them to the newly-built New Blikkiesdorp township. “We could see the small Bushmen children running all the time across the street, so we decided we have to do something about it,” said a Grootfontein Lions Club member who worked at that time at the Meteor hotel on the main road, from where he could often see the Bushmen squatters. The municipality then gave the Bushmen several plots in Blikkiesdorp. It was the first time ever that several *erven* were deliberately allocated to Bushmen. In managing the whole process some of them were significantly assisted by the Afrikaners for whom the !Xun were working or had worked for in the past. In the case of Kashe’s father and mother, it was Paul Spietkop who dealt with the municipality to provide the plot for them and after Willem erected a shack on the plot Spietkop drove their belongings there from his house. Another farmer gave Willem some planks and other materials to build the shanty. Willem’s plot is recorded at the municipality rent slips as belonging to the “Saan” since March 2004. The Grootfontein Lions Club, with the help of one Belgian national, who felt sympathy for the Bushmen, built two houses from new corrugated iron sheets for the !Xun at *erf* 2 next to Willem’s plot. Max, the “owner” of this *erf*, was assisted by his employer as well. It can be still recognised on the name on the the registry of the township dwellers: Max was added the surname of his Afrikaner employer, Max van der Merwe. However, in the beginning life for Max’s family in Blikkiesdorp was difficult since there was no shelter at their plot and during the rainy season they had to sleep under a nearby tree. Later, they were given a lorry canvas

³¹⁷ Lucia had already three children before giving birth to Anton, two with her former husband Simon and one with another !Xun man. But I never saw them staying with Lucia and Kashe during my research.

by a woman from a neighbouring Hai//om family. Only then did the Grootfontein Lions Club build the new houses.

The fact that Kashe's father acquired an erf in the township was to change Kashe's movements significantly in the future. Before describing Kashe's movements after leaving the "traditional village", it is necessary to mention that he obtained his first job (A)³¹⁸ in the town during his time at the village. Kashe learned about this work opportunity from a "Damara" woman, who was a friend of his, and told him to ask the "Baster" man who employed her in his kitchen for a job. Kashe started to work for him at two places - at a yard of his house in the town and at a church yard in the Coloured location. He worked from Monday to Saturday and he always worked only half a day. He was promised 150 NS per month and was also given some food. However, according to Kashe, this was only enough for his own consumption and he could bring nothing home to his then still pregnant wife. 150 NS was also a small amount of money. The Baster reportedly promised Kashe he would ask the people at the church to give him another 150 NS but nothing came of this promise. "They were misusing me," was how Kashe summed up his first experience of work in the town. When talking about it with Kashe, it turned out that he decided to leave, but did not find the courage to tell employer the whole truth and asked him only for some time off to go to Bushmanland to see his horses. However, he thought, if he could not find a better job, he might go back to the "Baster", especially if he would add the promised 150 NS to his wage.

Comments: from squatters to township dwellers

The crucial moment for Kashe and his relatives for staying on a longer basis in the town was the provision of a place to live. In the beginning, this function was to some extent fulfilled by the Total petrol station, and then by the Multipurpose Community Centre. After the largely unsuccessful attempt to resettle them in Bushmanland, many !Xun returned to live at the Total petrol station and under the trees opposite the SPAR supermarket. Finally, the municipality allocated them plots in Blikkiesdorp. During South African rule a native could rent a plot in the location only if employed and, thus, able to pay the rent. However, although the dwellers in Blikkiesdorp, Bushmen or not, were also formally obliged to pay, they soon found out that, the municipality will not resort to coercive steps against non-payers and that they would not be evicted.

The final allocation of plots to some of the !Xun families was the result of sympathy from local state institutions and private citizens and organisations towards the plight of the Bushmen. The fact that members of the Afrikaner community in the town (white farmers and their relatives in the town, Grootfontein Lions Club members, town officials) often knew each other seemed to have eased the provision of assistance to some of the !Xun. This applied to the !Xun at *erf* 1, and especially at *erf* 2.

The fact that before being offered some plots in the township some of Kashe's kin had to sleep for some time at the Grootfontein Total petrol station proves that they had no close kin living in the town who could provide them with shelter and that there was no space in their dwellings. Eventually, some of the !Xun may have preferred to sleep closer to the town centre, where they could find empty bottles and ask for some assistance from their relatives coming from the township or farms. There they could also easily buy alcohol, the drinking of

³¹⁸ I will mark each subsequent employment of Kashe in Grootfontein with capital letters in alphabetical order.

which many of them indulged in. At the same time, it must be stressed that the very fact that the !Xun had a roof above their head, as happened with the provision of the huts in the “traditional village”, did not automatically make staying there a desirable long-term option for all of them. The San pensioners had a permanent income of money, but for others employment opportunities were limited. Thus, many of them would have to depend on collecting and selling empty refundable bottles or scrap metals. Finding a job with a decent salary in the town was difficult for the !Xun, who generally possessed skills of only limited marketability in the urban environment.



Picture 8. Plot No. 2 in Blikkiesdorp. The !Xun were allocated this plot after they started to squat at the town’s main street. The Grootfontein Lions Club built two new corrugated iron shacks for them. (Pictures provided by J. Snyman)

Since Kashe did not manage to find work in Grootfontein with which he could sustain his family, he left the centre and went to work in former Hereroland. Similarly, his brother Andris went from the town to a farm. Leaving the town and acquiring a decent employment was more urgent, the more dependants a breadwinner had.

Kashe’s parents, however, stayed in Grootfontein. Willem was still working for his Afrikaner “patron” Spietkop and later acquired a plot in Blikkiesdorp with his help. Thus, Willem could once again capitalise on his personal bonds to the Spietkops. The fact that Kashe’s parents stayed in the town was to a significant extent generation-based. Willem and Maria were old and physically no longer able to perform the tasks of the farmworkers and they regarded life in Bushmanland as too strenuous. Willem could hardly go on on working as a cattle herder and neither of them could look for bushfood any more. Willem was almost blind in his right eye. Despite all the attendant difficulties, for them staying in Grootfontein meant in some important aspects an easier life than life at the farms and in the communal area. Although it was not explicitly mentioned by Kashe’s parents as a reason for staying in the town, I am convinced that a crucial role also played their receiving pensions. In fact, his father started to receive the pension in 2001 and his mother in 2002, when both of them were living in Bushmanland. Since there is no bank facility in western Bushmanland, Maria went each month to the Omatoko Valley Rest Camp settlement to collect her pension from the United



Picture 9 - 10. Plot No. 2 in Blikkiesdorp after the !Xun squatters moved there. (Pictures provided by J. Snyman)

African Pension Paymasters delivery company (known to the !Xun as “junita”), but Willem travelled each month to Grootfontein to withdraw his money at the NamPost. At the beginning of the 2000s he did not have to hitchhike, but he could use a regular minibus service connecting Grootfontein and Bushmanland. This was, however, later stopped, allegedly because of its unviability.³¹⁹ When coming to Grootfontein, Willem used to overnight with Old Frederik, who had moved to the town from Kameelwoud and lived at that time in a *buitekamer* of the Blaauwberg company for which he was working.

Staying in Grootfontein meant easier access to the pension, which they could withdraw when they wanted at NamPost. Having a regular income, with which they could acquire food and other necessities such as clothes, also made them independent of their kin to some extent. In Grootfontein, with its state hospital and clinic, they could also easily access medical services.

During the attempt to resettle the !Xun in Bushmanland, it is apparent that the !Xun became victims of their automatic primordial categorisation by the non-!Xun local state authorities: as “Bushmen” they were expected to start a new life in “Bushmanland”, which the non-!Xun regarded as their natural environment. From the discussion with former governor Uushona, it was clear that she was convinced that the !Xun in Grootfontein and its farm area must have been originally from Bushmanland and, thus, taking them there was the most desirable way to help them. However, as we saw, the !Xun that were brought there felt alienated from the life style and people of Bushmanland. The alienation was even stronger in Tsumkwe, the majority of whose inhabitants are Ju/’hoan Bushmen, who differ from the Grootfontein area !Xun linguistically and are not connected through the kin networks to them and have gone in some ways through different historical processes. However, from the point of view of the town authorities the Ju/’hoansi were apparently the “purest” Bushmen associated with the traditional hunting and gathering life and, thus, a people with whom the Grootfontein Bushmen could “naturally” be integrated best.

Period IV.: Moving between Grootfontein, farms, Bushmanland and Hereroland (2003 – 2007)

During Kashe’s stay at the “traditional village” between April and June 2003 there was in fact still no indication that he would settle for a longer period in the town. Throughout the stay, Kashe was planning to go to Bushmanland to check his horses. Already at the time when he worked at Eldoret he had heard people saying one of the two horses had died. At the same time he was also looking for a job that would enable him to provide for his family. For rather coincidental reasons after Kashe’s wife gave birth at the Grootfontein hospital and they spent a few days at the “traditional village”, they went once again to Hereroland. Kashe started to work there for a Herero called Chezao, who was, according to Kashe, employed at the Grootfontein municipality. One of Kashe’s relatives also then living at the “traditional village”, his “uncle” Emil, who had previously work for Chezao, recommended Kashe to him. Kashe claimed to have accepted the offer because he needed to earn money for basic foodstuffs and necessities such as soap for Lucia and also for the baby boy. He also claimed he did not want to disobey his uncle who found the work for him: “He is my uncle.” Emil told him he would join him later in Hereroland and they would work for Chezao together.

³¹⁹ The bus service, which ran from Grootfontein to Gam via Tsumkwe, stopped operating probably in the beginning of 2004 (Namibian 2004)

Chezao, who was a friend of Djandero, Kashe's former employer in Bushmanland, took him, Lucia and Anton by car to **Katomama (72)** settlement in Hereroland. Interestingly, Kashe had "family" in Katomama but he did not know about them before arriving there. However, his uncle Emil did not come since Chezao did not want to employ him anymore. When Kashe touched upon this in conversation with the Herero, he allegedly told him: "No, this man drinks too much!",

It was in Katomama that Lucia revealed to Kashe that Anton's father was her former partner Simon, his erstwhile rival, which Kashe accepted and did not regard as a substantial problem for their relationship or his attitude towards the newborn.³²⁰

In Katomama Kashe's main duty was to look after the goats. The Herero promised him 150 NS per month plus food rations. But, according to Kashe, he did not keep his promises: "The man is very bad." The first month he gave Kashe allegedly only 20 NS and only another four months later 70 NS: "Then I see it will not work. The problem of the man is he doesn't pay."³²¹ The food rations were, according to Kashe, also insufficient. When they went to Katomama, the Herero bought 50 kg of mealie meal. This should have lasted Kashe's family for weeks, but Kashe also had to use the food also to feed twice a day two Chezao's dogs: "I eat, the dogs eat, I eat, the dogs eat, Lucia eats and mealie meal is finished." At that time Kashe decided to leave Chezao but he did not tell it the Herero in a straightforward manner. Instead, he told him once again he needed to check his horse in Bushmanland and he would return to Katomama. When I asked him why he did not tell him he was going to quit the job, he said he had been afraid the Herero might take revenge on him. Kashe gave me as an example that Chezao might take two of his goats, place them elsewhere with his family and accuse him of stealing them. Then, Kashe could have ended up in prison. Kashe said he had heard about one case when Chezao had gone to the police station in Otjituo and falsely accused a !Xun of stealing. It was Djandero who arranged for his Herero friend to drive Kashe from Katomama to Grootfontein. The circumstances of Kashe's travelling from Hereroland were telling: he recalled that after receiving the 70 NS both he and his wife drank excessively and "when I got to the car I lay down. When we got to Total (petrol station in Grootfontein) and Lucia woke me up, I thought we were still in Otjituo. Kashe did not try to find out if his parents were still in the town and went directly to Bushmanland. He got a lift to Kameelwoud with the brother of "Kakwéna", who worked with him at a plot near Grootfontein (68) and walked to nearby /**Káandu (73)** where Kashe's brother Andris worked.

It was Andris who had been tasked by Kashe to look after his horses. Kashe found out one of the horses had disappeared, but did not know precisely what had happened. Kashe stayed in /Káandu for about "two months" between November 2003 and January 2004. Like many !Xun people in the area, Kashe cut the trees for a white businessman who was buying wood from death camelthorn trees to sell to South Africa as firewood. During the rainy season the work stopped because the Afrikaner had to use his tractor for ploughing at his farm. The tractor was used to pull the cut wood from the bush to the road, where it was loaded into sacks and onto trucks. Kashe remembered he got precisely 386 NS for this job. Shortly before Christmas Andris went to Grootfontein to buy gifts for his family, Kashe waited for him for some time, but because he did not return, he decided to move to his kinsfolk in Grashoek, another village in the western part of Bushmanland.

³²⁰ In the following I will refer to Anton as Kashe's son as this is how Kashe strongly felt about it.

³²¹ In 2010 Kashe told me Chezao had promised him a salary of 100 NS, but gave him only 40 NS. Even though the figures are slightly different, it does not change the fact that the money was few.

From /Káandu, Kashe, Lucia and Anton went first to Omatako Valley Rest Camp (73a). Kashe walked and his wife and their son rode on the horse. At Rest Camp Kashe borrowed a donkey cart and one donkey from his relatives, inspanned his horse and returned to /Káandu (73b) to fetch their belongings. The same day he came back to Rest Camp with their property where they spent the night. The next day he inspanned yet one donkey (both of which belonged to his brother Andris) and they went to Swart Tak (73c). In Swart Tak, where they stayed one night as well, Kashe exchanged the donkey cart for another one owned by a !Xun pastor, who was his relative, and then they went to **Grashoek (74)**. Later he brought the donkey cart back and rode to Grashoek on his horse. Kashe stayed in Grashoek for several months, probably until August 2004. According to Kashe, he went to this settlement only because of the presence of his mother's "sister" and erstwhile foster mother Emma and her husband Otto, who had moved to Grashoek some time before him, and because of his mother's brother, who had lived there for many years.



Picture 11. In the Living Museum in Grashoek the Ju/'hoansi show the tourist their „traditional“ culture. Kashe was not allowed to take part in the performances.

Kashe gave me a number of reasons for deciding to leave Grashoek. First of all, it was hard to acquire food there. “We suffered a lot,” remembered Kashe. He could rely on the support provided by his relatives, to a certain extent. From time to time he also did piecemeal work for Kavango or Ovambo people in Rooidag, a settlement about seven kilometres away on the border between the commercial farm area and communal area. There he earned for one day's or half a day's work of cutting the bush to prepare the land for planting about five kilograms of mealie meal or a few (five or so) NS. There was no shop at Grashoek at that time and therefore Kashe had to buy all his foodstuffs at Rooidag. Sometimes the food situation in his family was improved by the government drought food relief consisting mostly of mealie meal, dry fish and cooking oil. Up to 2010 I thought Kashe's life in Grashoek was one of the

periods when he suffered the most from hunger. When I asked him about the food situation again that year, I could not believe his answer: “Food was no problem in Grashoek. We get the government food.” However, it turned out that in fact the food situation in Grashoek was similar to Kameelwoud. There were rather untroubled periods when the drought relief food was still not eaten followed by hunger periods when it was eaten and Kashe struggled to find any income. He recalled both he and Lucia received 12.5 kg mealie meal each in drought relief food. However, according to Kashe, the food did not last for a long time since many people were sharing it: “We eat together.”

Since in Grashoek there were no Bantu people with livestock to work for, except for the casual work with the Ovambos and Kavangos at Rooidag, the only way of acquiring food in times when the government mealie meal was all eaten was to look for *veldkos* as the mangetti groves were nearby. But, according to him many inhabitants of Swart Tak engaged in gathering activities and, thus, the wild fruits, tubers and berries were scarce in the village surroundings. “You had to go far away, maybe 20 kilometres,” claimed Kashe. Once again he tried to hunt with a bow, set traditional traps for the guinea fowls and metal traps for kudus and springboks. He had little success only once catching a small antelope (a steenbok or springbok) in this way. According to him, the Ju/’hoansi living at the village also hunted at that time and it made the animals vigilant and kept them away from the traps. Thus, the only meat he acquired in the bush was turtles which he often found in the rainy season. Kashe also planted in Grashoek some vegetables, mainly water melons, but only a few bore fruit and, therefore, had a negligible impact on his family diet.

In addition to his bad economic situation, another reason for Kashe to leave Grashoek was his tense relationship with the Grashoek Ju/’hoan Bushmen who comprised the majority of its inhabitants. Kashe moved to Grashoek at an important time in the further development of the village. It was then that a “Living Museum” tourist project was started with the Ju/’hoan San which quickly became successful, in the sense of attracting the interest of tourists.³²² The idea of the project was to set up a “traditional village” near Grashoek where the Ju/’hoan Bushmen, who were (are) in Namibia generally viewed as the most traditionally living Bushmen group, would present their traditional lifestyle. Kashe also tried to capitalise on the project. He wanted to take part in the presentations for the tourist, but gave up allegedly due to the “jealousy” he perceived on the side of the Ju/’hoan people, who reportedly wanted to keep the project only to themselves and did not want to collaborate with the !Xun. Kashe thus confined himself to producing necklaces for the tourists. According to him, he manufactured in total about three pieces and gave them to one Ju/’hoan woman for selling them. But the Ju/’hoansi allegedly sold them and “ate up the money”. Kashe told me he was supposed to have been given 10 NS, from my perspective a negligible sum, but Kashe apparently felt he had been done a great injustice. Kashe claimed the problems with the Ju/’hoan intensified when they drank alcohol: “We have almost scuffled. We did not understand each other.” Later, when I talked with Kashe about this problem again, he added that the Ju/’hoan woman later gave him a large necklace in place of money, which he wore. Some time later when he was in Grootfontein and drinking in Single Quarters, he sold it to a drunk Coloured for 15 NS.

Staying in Grashoek became difficult for Kashe also because of his quarrels with his “brother” Faleke, who had a Ju/’hoan wife regularly participating in the show for the tourists. “He is not Ju/’hoan, but he grew up with these people. They work together,” was the explanation provided by Kashe. According to Kashe, there was not a particular reason for

³²² I visited the project already in 2005 during my private trip to Namibia.

them to quarrel. The problems arose only when they indulged in drinking: “Me and Faleke, if we drink, we cannot be with each other.” Kashe recalled an incident that made their relationship very tense. One day Kashe bought alcohol for 10 NS in Rooidag and wanted to drink it with Faleke. Faleke insisted on inviting other friends, who were, according to Kashe, Ju/’hoansi, to join them. The quarrel started after Kashe refused to share it with them. Kashe claimed that the tensions with his “brother” became so serious that it was only a question of time before they fought and so he followed the advice of his grandmother Emma and grandfather Anton and moved to relatives in Swart Tak.

Kashe, Lucia and their son went to **Swart Tak (75)** on Kashe’s horse. They slept first at the house of Kashe’s “brother in-law” Piet (husband of Kashe’s niece Popi). Later Piet’s father, the owner of the plot, allowed Kashe to “make his land” (land maak) next to him and to build his house there. Thus, Kashe had his “own” plot for the first time in his life. The process of acquiring it was, according to Kashe, easy because it required only the consent of Piet’s father. However, already during the first year Kashe found out that engaging in subsistence agriculture in this part of Bushmanland with its erratic rains was difficult. He planted some maize, beans, melons and pumpkins. He received the maize and bean seeds from the Bantu people at Rooidag for casual work at their fields, and the melon and pumpkin seeds from his mother’s “sister” Emma and her husband Anton, who brought them from a farm. Kashe claimed in 2010 from all the planted plants all he had was a good beans harvest of approximately 10 kg, which his family ate in “one month”. The maize produced no harvest at all. He planted the seeds too late (probably at the beginning of 2005) and they did not grow properly. According to Kashe, this was also due to strong rains and insufficient sunshine. The melon and pumpkin plants were, Kashe said, eaten by insects. Thus, Kashe’s first attempt to live from subsistence agriculture on his own land was not successful.

In Swart Tak he received some government drought relief food, but it was rather erratic and not enough to cover the needs of his family in the long term. There was not a single economic activity he could totally rely on. He occasionally did piece work for the Bantu people at neighbouring Rooidag. He also often gathered bushfood and managed to kill four duikers and one kudu with bow and arrow in the vicinity of Swart Tak. Although this was Kashe’s biggest ever hunting success, the meat from the four small and only one large antelope did not mean a significant improvement in his family’s diet. Kashe was primarily gathering bushfood and had only taken the hunting equipment with him only on the off-chance that he would find an animal to kill.

When talking about the difficulty of hunting in Bushmanland and the bleak prospect of success, Kashe claimed it was better to ride to his relatives at the farms and take some food from them. He went, for example, to Alvyn where his sister Kristine lived: “I went always to the farms, there I get a bit of mealie meal.” Swart Tak, which was nearer to the farms with his kin than Kameelwoud, made this easier. Kashe knew the days when the !Xun were given at particular farms with their kin food rations. If he visited several farms, he could eat at each place and would be given some mealie meal everywhere: “I *zula* mealie meal and sugar at the places.” According to Kashe some farmers used to shoot wild animals in winter and the workers would make biltong from the meat: “You can eat there and than lay in Bushmanland.” However, if visiting his family at the farms on workdays, Kashe was expected to help the other !Xun in their daily tasks. In order to avoid any problems with the farmer, he paid visits to his kin at the weekends, when the farm labourers did not have to work. Nevertheless, he could rely on the help of his relatives at the farms only occasionally and this

did not change the constant problem he faced in Swart Tak: having a source of income or food of a permanent nature, which would ensure food security for his family. Kashe stayed in Swart Tak until May 2005. “I lived nicely there. The problem was only hunger,” was the way Kashe summed up his first stay at his own place in Bushmanland. It is important to emphasise that Kashe left Bushmanland at a time, when life in this area started to be at its most difficult for him. Unless he had a substantial harvest to live on or was employed as a herder of the Bantu people’s livestock, it was extremely hard to provide for his family. When the rain stops in May, the people must wait until March, April or May of the following year for the next harvest. There is also less piece-meal work on the fields of the Bantu people, since they often start to prepare the land for the planting season only in December.



Picture 12. The Swart Tak settlement.

Thus, Kashe moved with Lucia and Anton to **Grootfontein (76)**, where he built a temporary shelter from plastic sheets and poles at his father’s plot in Blikkiesdorp. This was the first time that Kashe had moved to his parents’ plot. The prerequisite was, however, just constructing his own “house” there because there was no more space at his parent’s shelter. Why did he go there? There was a mix of reasons behind the decision. 1) He could not provide for his family in a Bushmanland entering the dry winter time. 2) He knew there was a place in Grootfontein where he could stay. 3) Staying with his parents meant he could to some extent rely on their help since both of them were receiving pensions. 4) Kashe also knew he could always live on selling empty bottles in Grootfontein.

Kashe could move to the town only because his parents were already there.³²³ He could theoretically have asked for permission to build a shack on the plots of other !Xun and paid

³²³ Kashe’s parents and Kashe struggled to recall how the events during the period preceding their movement to Grootfontein evolved. When their ways separated, Kashe often did not know, where this parents actually were. According to the information we put together and it was quite complex. In 2002 went Willem and Maria from Kameelwoud settlement in Bushmanland to the Grashoek village in the same area, where they had relatives. Kashe recalled to visit them once with his horse and got from them also some food, because at that time they were already receiving pension. They must have returned to Kameelwoud the same year, since Kashe

them a small monthly rent, but this would have been more complicated since he did not have such a close relationship to them as he did to his parents and he could not so easily rely on their assistance.

Having a place to stay in Grootfontein did not mean that Kashe regarded the town as a place he wanted to settle in permanently. However, he knew that during the dry winter period in Bushmanland it would be easier to acquire a work in the town. Thus, he soon started to work at farm **Meteorit II (77)**. His relative Max, the household head of plot 2, who worked that time as a tractor driver at the farm, knew the *eienaar* was looking for manpower and recommended him to go to Blikkiesdorp to collect one of his relatives to work for him. Thus, Kashe gained a job. His task was to remove stones and bush from the land so that the farmer could easily cut the grass to make fodder for the livestock. According to Kashe, the Afrikaner was very satisfied with him, especially because of his technical skills and ability to help with the repair of the tractor. Kashe claimed that he received at that time a wage of 300 NS, more than he had earned before. Yet he stayed there for only one month. He told the farmer he had to assist his wife's old aunt in applying for a pension in **Grootfontein (78)** and promised to return to the farm as soon as the paperwork was completed, but he stayed in the town. Kashe gave me two reasons for this. One was that Meteorit II. was near a farm which Luis Grobbelaar from Klippan had recently purchased and he was still afraid of encountering him. According to Kashe, his initial plans to return to farm Meteorit II. were changed to an even more significant extent by his and Lucia's addiction to alcohol. After Kashe received the 300 NS, Lucia and he drank heavily and stayed in the township.

Kashe recalled that always when they were in Grootfontein he and Lucia spent most of their money on alcohol. In 2005 Lucia found work in the town, she worked for approximately a month at the homestead of a "Baster" in the Herero location. According to Kashe, who helped the "Baster" with yardwork (**B**), she was given food rations and a salary of 100 NS per month. However, instead of buying food they spent the money on *tombo* in Single Quarters or they

remembered that when he had gone to farm Eldoret at the end of 2002, his parent were still in the said village. However, when he went with his pregnant wife from Eldoret to Grootfontein in April 2003, he literally found his parents at the "traditional village". He did not know that his parents were in Grootfontein at all. The Spietkops must have brought Kashe's parents to their house and employed them as domestic workers sometime at the end of 2002 and beginning of 2003. The Spietkops nad Kashe's parents could have met occasionally, when the latter went to the town, where the Spietkops had their house. Since 2001 Willem started to travel to Grootfontein every month to withdraw his pension. He recalled also that once he met there the wife of P. Spietkop, who told him, that if they needed they were welcomed at their house in Grootfontein. The Spietkops met Kashe's parents also occasionally even in Kameelwoud. They used to greet them when visiting their relative, the principal at the primary school in Omatako settlement, which lies on the road passing through Kameelwoud. I did not manage to find out exactly when it happened, but the Spietkops probably provided Kashe's parents also once with accommodation, when Willem got malaria in Kameelwoud and was treated in Grootfontein's hospital. When Kashe left the "traditional village" in Grootfontein to Katomama in Hereroland, he left his parents behind there. When he came in October 2003 from Katomama to /Káandu in Bushmanland to see what had happened to his horse, he was told by his brother in that village that their parents had been short time ago in Kameelwoud. Kashe did not have any detailed information about what happened with the !Xun in the "traditional village" in Grootfontein and did not know what happened with his parents either. Kashe's father told me that after the !Xun had to leave the "traditional village" many of them ended up at Total petrol station, including him. It was here, where he and his wife met the Damara Thomas, for whom Willed had worked in the past as cattle herder in Kameelwoud, and the Damara drove them again to Grashoek. From there they allegedly went to Swart Tak and again to Kameelwoud, but before Kashe came to nearby /Káandu, they came back to Grootfontein. Even this time they were brought there by the Spietkops, who employed Willem again as yardworker and whose role seems to be crucial in helping Kashe's parents to get a plot in the Blikkiesdorp.

bought expensive Vodka Pushkin, Clubman or Rhumba in Etosha supermarket. “When I get money, I drink every day,” claimed Kashe. According to Kashe, small Anton was going to Single Quarters with them. Once when Kashe and Lucia went drunk from the town’s commercial centre to Blikkiesdorp, they started to quarrel so heatedly that they were arrested by the officers who had been in a passing police car. That night they spent in the cell of the police station. Drinking alcohol also worsened Kashe’s relationship with his parents, who at that time became dedicated church-goers and stopped drinking alcohol.

Instead of moving back to farm Meteorit II., Kashe, Lucia and Anton went again to Hereroland. Emmanuel Chezao, the Herero Kashe had worked for in Katomama, came to Blikkiesdorp and asked Kashe to build him a cattle *kraal*. “You can work only temporarily and you will get your money immediately,” he was allegedly told by the Herero. Kashe accepted and went to **Katomama (79)** for the second time. I wondered why he started to work again for somebody who had mistreated him in the past. “He persuaded me. He lied to me. I will only try. Maybe he says the truth,” recalled Kashe of his thoughts at that time. Another time Kashe said of the Herero: “When he speaks, when you listen to him, he is nice, but he is a big problem.” When all the big poles for the *kraal* were already fixed in the ground and Kashe cut the small ones which would attach with wire to the big ones, he asked Chezao for money. But the Herero claimed he had none: “He turns around, he turns around” (Hy draai, hy draai). Kashe requested 1500 NS for the whole *kraal* but Chezao claimed it was too much. Thus, Kashe went down to 800 NS, about half of the money he had asked for initially. However, for Chezao, this was still not acceptable. “Then I told him, in 2003 I worked for you and you gave me 70 (NS), then I work for you again and you give me nothing.” According to Kashe, the Herero claimed he had no money and he would pay once he would receive some. After “three months” in Katatoma during which he was given only food, Kashe decided to leave. However, still hoping to see the salary or at least part of the money, he did not reveal his real intentions to Chezao. Instead, he told him he would have to assist his wife’s aunt in Grootfontein to ensure her application for a pension would be processed smoothly and also to check his house and belongings in Swart Tak in Bushmanland. According to Kashe, Chezao said that after returning from Bushmanland he should go back to Katomama and collect his money. On another occasion, the Herero allegedly claimed he would give it to him in Grootfontein. Kashe had a lift to **Grootfontein (80)** from a relative of Chezao’s. However, he did not return to Katomama again. He first stayed for a short time at his makeshift plastic shelter at his father’s plot in Blikkiesdorp and waited for Chezao and to be given the money. He visited Chezao at his home in Grootfontein but was told again by the Herero that he did not have any money.

Then he turned for the first time to a state institution to request assistance: the “Labour”, the local branch of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare in Grootfontein. Nevertheless, it was all to no avail. “Now the labour (Labour Office official) is Herero and he (Chezao) is also Herero,” was Kashe’s explanation of the problem. The day he was summoned to Labour office, Chezao argued that Kashe had not yet finished the whole *kraal*, the demanded 1500 NS or 800 NS had been too much and he had substantial expenses with regard to the provision of food for Kashe and his family. The female Herero official at the Labour office finally concluded Kashe could not be given anything because he could not submit a written contract with specified terms of employment: “She said I hadn’t seen the paper of the tender, the price list, with a stamp. How can I know on what you both agreed?” Kashe just retorted: “No, I worked there!” but this was obviously not regarded as sufficient. Kashe thought the two Hereros agreed on a common position before they started to talk with him about the matter. According to Kashe, when they came to her office, she first called the Herero farmer inside:

“I don’t know what they talked about.” Kashe’s disillusion and feelings of powerlessness were further strengthened by his conviction that Chezao supported his cause by giving the Herero woman a goat as a bribe. “I loaded the goat in his (Chezao’s) car (at the time when he worked in Katomama)”, Kashe claimed. However, he did not witness the very act of the animal being given to the labour official. Chezao told him he would sell the goat.

I should also mention that it was probably sometime during Kashe’s stay in Grootfontein in 2004 that he managed to somehow reduce the threat which he saw in Lucia’s former husband Simon, who according to Kashe could not forgive him for taking his wife. When Simon stayed with his relatives in the township and continued to verbally assault Kashe, the latter went to police station and took policemen one morning to the place where Simon stayed. The policemen then asked Simon, Kashe and Lucia to come to the police station for a joint hearing. However, this did not happen since Simon, apparently scared, fled back to Bushmanland and stopped threatening Kashe. However, Kashe avoided going back to Kameelwoud.

From Grootfontein, where he stayed only for a short time at his parents’ plot, Kashe went with his wife and son to **Swart Tak (81)** to prepare his land for planting before the start of the rainy season. Thus, obviously he regarded at that time the option to stay in Bushmanland, where he still had his horse, as in at least in some aspects better than living on collecting empty bottles and scrap metal or doing yardwork in the town.

Despite his previous attempt with agriculture, Kashe wanted to plant some crops again. He stayed in Swart Tak for several months, approximately from the end of 2005 until May 2006. As he had already tried at the end of 2004 and in the first months of 2005, Kashe had to combine several economic strategies to provide for his family. He planted mealies and beans and in December 2005 he started to work for a Herero woman called Eben. She was the wife Djandero’s brother and Kashe knew her from the time he worked in Ozongune in 1998 - 99. However, she spent most of her time in Grootfontein where she owned a shop selling traditional Herero attire and so she needed somebody to tend her cows and goats at her Swart Tak plot. Kashe worked for the Herero woman for about three months. According to him, she paid him poorly, approximately 100 NS per month. Tensions arose when he built a goat *kraal* for her and expected her to pay him 1500 NS, the amount she had allegedly promised to give him.³²⁴ Moreover, the maize brought no harvest. However, the bean harvest was good (probably similar to the harvest the year before):³²⁵ “When the beans start I stay only at the house and eat the beans.” Before the harvest he was able to live on some government drought food relief, he worked occasionally for the “Kavangos” at Rooidag, gathered bushfood and went occasionally on horseback to his relatives at nearby farms, where he usually obtained some mealie meal and sugar. As during his first stay at his plot a year earlier, he struggled to provide for the basic needs of his family and, after several months in Bushmanland, he decided to leave. This time he went to farm **Alvyn (82)** where his sister Kristine and her second husband, Andris, lived.

The attitude of the !Xun workers towards the Alvyn farmer was generally rather negative. According to Kashe, the farmer was responsible for the death of his son in-law and namesake

³²⁴ He built the *kraal* with Willem, the brother of Paul, the „owner“ of a plot in Blikkiesdorp during the time of my research in Namibia. Willem allegedly received only 50 NS.

³²⁵ Kashe and I were unfortunately unable to find out precisely what Kashe had planted in 2005 and what in 2006. Thus, it is possible that some data given for the first year count for the next year and vice versa. Nevertheless, in both years the harvest was not sufficient to provide for Kashe’s family needs.

Kashe earlier in 2006. According to Kashe, who was told the story by his relatives, the drunk farmer drove the workers in his *bakkie* at high speed on a grooved road whose depressions were full of water. Kashe said the farmer had been asked to slow down by the foreman (his brother-in-law Andris) but to no avail. The truck overturned and the child was killed.³²⁶ The farmer reportedly suffered some minor injuries (broke his hand) but, according to Kashe, he recovered swiftly. Kashe said the farmer had not been sent to prison. Kashe recalled the burial of the boy took place at the farm on 1 April 2006.

“I worked there only because the life in Bushmanland is so hard,” said Kashe about his motivation to go to a farm whose farmer had such a bad reputation. Kashe’s stay at Alvyn lasted several weeks. Kashe cited me two incidents with the owner as a reason for leaving the farm. First, he was assaulted by him. According to Kashe, this happened on 1 June 2006 when they worked together and the farmer asked him to fetch a number 13 spanner from the garage. Kashe did not know the place well, since it was the first time he had assisted the farmer in the garage, and he could not find the tool. He recalled the farmer did not explain where to find it. He allegedly just said: “Go and find it, the spanner is there!” After telling the farmer he did not know where to find it, the farmer struck him on the head and in his stomach and Kashe ran away. Kashe has a scar on his head from this attack. Despite this incident, Kashe stayed at the farm. He left only after a dispute with the farmer about food rations. According to Kashe, the farmer went to “Ovamboland”, where he worked with a bore-machine, and promised the workers they would be provided with mealie meal on his return. However, after coming back on a Friday, the farmer did not give them anything. According to Kashe, the workers were in dire need of the food because their own reserves were finished. The farmer vowed to give them the food the next day, on Saturday. However, according to Kashe, he again did not keep his promise. On Sunday, before the farmer could give them the food, Kashe and some other workers (including Small Willem, the son of Kashe’s brother Andris) announced they would leave and asked him for money for the days worked. The farmer retorted that it was not the end of the month yet. Kashe did not argue with him: “We cannot argue. If you argue, he will beat you. Therefore, we just went away.”

Kashe, however, did not give up. He got a lift to Grootfontein and asked once more for help at the Labour office. He came back to the farm in a car with two officials from the Labour office (one “Ovambo” man and one Herero woman) and another man, probably from a trade union (Kashe claimed he was not from the Labour office but we could not find out more about him). The officials persuaded the farmer to give him 150 NS and Small Willem, 160 NS. But, according to Kashe, the Afrikaner had managed to talk them round a little because the sum the farmer owed to him was allegedly higher. Kashe did not feel any gratitude to the Labour officials because, according to him, he had obtained the money thanks to the fervour of the “trade union” employee. Even in 2010, when I talked with Kashe about the owner of the farm, Alvyn, his feelings towards him seemed to be a mix of anger, bewilderment and bitterness: “He’s the only Boer, about who I say he beats (workers) for no reason”. According to Kashe, after he left the farm, the farmer beat his brother-in-law severely, who reported it to the police and left the *plaas*.

The car with the Labour officials went on from Alvyn to Tsumkwe and dropped Kashe, Lucia and Anton off at Swart Tak (82a). They spent few days there before being given a lift back to **Grootfontein (83)**. Both Lucia and Anton were sick and needed to go to hospital. However,

³²⁶ The father of the killed boy was not Andris, the husband of Kashe’s sister Kristine, but her previous man Otto, who as mentioned above committed suicide in Kameelwoud in 1997.

Kashe's father had meanwhile used the material from his makeshift shack in Blikkiesdorp for other purposes and there was no place for him to sleep at his father's erf. His parents' shack was, according to Kashe, too small and he regarded occupying the same house as his parents as a problem. "It is somehow bad," claimed Kashe. According to him, it was usual for grandchildren to sleep together with grandparents but for an adult man to do the same was not at all common. Kashe claimed that adult people (groot mense) are expected to sleep in their own house and not with their elders. Kashe could have erected his own shack at Willem's plot, but did not have any building materials. Thus, Kashe, his wife and Anton slept at the Total petrol station (83a) at first. However, after a violent incident at the station, he decided to move to a different place. One evening when the !Xun at Total station were drunk a quarrel erupted between Kashe and two !Xun men, a father and son. Subsequently, the son kicked Kashe in the head from behind. Kashe went to hospital where he was treated (according to the record in his health passport, this happened on 15 July 2006). Kashe remembered he went from the hospital directly to the police station to report the incident and demanded that the policemen arrest the attackers. However, they saw that he was drunk and did not trust him: "We don't know. Maybe you were drunk and you started (the quarrel)." Kashe claimed he did not want to fight back after being attacked: "Fighting is problem. You will sit in the prison. Then your children will be alone." After returning from the hospital, the !Xun men allegedly wanted to pick up the fight, but Kashe went to sleep to other side of the petrol station to avoid this. Then, he decided to solve the situation by moving from the Total petrol station with Lucia and Anton to the yard of a house owned by the Herero Eben (83b), for whom he had worked in Swart Tak. I should stress that Kashe was not offered a place to stay there by the Herero, it was he who asked her for this help. The house was next to the railway, opposite the SPAR supermarket, and it had been the old railway station. The family had to sleep in a makeshift shelter: under a car canopy behind the house, in a space, which I estimate, was hardly three square metres in area and less than one metre in height (see picture 13).³²⁷

"That time I almost did not go to Blikkiesdorp," said Kashe about the weeks he spent at Total petrol station and at the house of the Herero. It was quite far away from his parents' shack and when he could not stay there, there was no substantial reason for going there every day. Kashe did some piecemeal work for the Herero such as cleaning the yard, cooking or she sent him to the shops to do her shopping (C). At the same time, he continued to collect and sell empty bottles and firewood. The Herero house lies next to the high trees opposite the SPAR supermarket under which local women have stalls selling vegetables and Kashe and Lucia also used to gather the discarded pieces of vegetables and cook them. During the day he was often together with Lucia and Anton in Single Quarters, where they drank *tombo*, and in the evenings they went back to Eben's home. However, he did not feel very safe there either. The fenced off space around the house had a small gate that was open all day and which anybody could enter it. One day Lucia started to fight with a female relative of the !Xun man who had attacked Kashe, as just described above, at the Total station, and the two men started to fight as well. Kashe claimed he had badly beaten his rival up. However, he did not want to stay at the Herero house, since it was too close to Total petrol station and soon he would fight with the drunk !Xun hanging around this area again. Later, Kashe managed to find discarded materials such as plastic sheets and metal plates for constructing a new shack at his father's plot and after a "month" under the car hood they moved there (83c). Thus, during this stint in Grootfontein, which may not have lasted more than two months, Kashe lived at three different places and we can observe significant intra-urban movements.

³²⁷ In 2009 the cabin was still there.



Picture 13. Car canopy inside which Kashe slept with his wife and older son in Grootfontein in 2006.

Before the end of 2006 Kashe also went a few times from Grootfontein to **Swart Tak (84)**³²⁸ in Bushmanland. He gave me two reasons for his going there. First, his horse was still in Bushmanland and second “my house was there”. Thus, Kashe’s moves to Swart Tak were motivated by the need to check his property. I did not find out how many times Kashe moved between the two places, but Grootfontein was apparently his “base” during that period. Kashe only spent a short time in Swart Tak because “there was no food”. Moreover, and this seems to be important, Kashe’s partner Lucia seemed to feel more comfortable in the Grootfontein township than in Bushmanland.

During the period when Kashe stayed in Grootfontein and sometimes visited Swart Tak, he also worked briefly at a plot called **Lemoentjie (85)** near Grootfontein. A “Damara” woman employed at the Grootfontein state hospital, who was the mother of the wife of a “Coloured” owner of this plot, and knew some of Kashe’s relatives from the past, was looking one day for workers in Blikkiesdorp at *erf 2*, whose dwellers recommended Kashe from the neighbouring plot. He also knew that some of his relatives such as Hans³²⁹ were already working there. Kashe was employed there as a yard worker, and admitted to me it was not very demanding. Kashe was given regular food rations but he did not set in advance the salary with the “Damara”. He was allegedly only told he would be paid at the end of the month. He expected to be given about 200 NS per month, but the other !Xun allegedly warned him he would not receive more than 100 NS. However, finally he stayed at Lemoentjie only two or three weeks. One day Lucia suffered from toothache and he wanted to accompany her to the Grootfontein hospital, because she was usually too shy to go there alone: “Sometimes she doesn’t speak

³²⁸ I will mark these movements to Swart Tak with one number.

³²⁹ He had during my research also a shack in Blikkiesdorp at plot I numbered No. 3.

(with other people). We !Xun are only so.” Thus, he asked the Damara to give him 10 NS to pay the hospital fees, although if these were not paid, they would not be sent away. Nevertheless, Kashe was convinced it was not possible “to take always the medicine, but pay nothing”. Kashe also thought that no payment meant worse treatment: being given Panadol. According to Kashe, the Damara woman refused to give him the 10 NS because she allegedly did not have the money at that moment. She allowed him to go to the hospital but Kashe did not return. This decision was supported by the claims of other Lemoetji !Xun workers that the Damara woman did not pay her employees well. From the hospital, where Lucia was prescribed pain-killers, they went to Single Quarters in the township to drink alcohol. Sometimes they could drink there even without money: “Sometime when I came there, there were friends from the farms who had money.” Then, they stayed in **Blikkiesdorp (86)**.

On the 4 December 2006 Kashe started to work at farm called **Brandberg (87)** near Grootfontein. The farmer was looking for workers at *erf 2* and was sent by the !Xun living there to Kashe. The way Kashe acquired the work was the same as when he had been taken to Lemoentjie. The farmer from Brandberg drove Kashe, his wife and the small son to the farm on the same day.

It was in two ways a turning point for him. First, at Brandberg he stopped drinking alcohol. According to Kashe, once in January 2007 when he was drunk he dreamed he was lying on the ground and a young Afrikaner man was standing over him and looking at him. The white man did not say anything nor did he make any gestures. Kashe then woke up: “From that time on I lost the appetite to drink and when I smell alcohol I feel like vomiting.” Kashe believes it must have happened on the intervention of God.

Second, his employment at Brandberg was the last time for many years to come that Kashe would work at a farm. A combination of a number of problems meant that Kashe only stayed at Brandberg for approximately four months until the beginning of April 2007. First, he started to suffer from problems which were later diagnosed in the Grootfontein hospital as gastritis. The symptoms were pains in his belly which always intensified when he had to work hard. Kashe’s explanation was the pain was caused by the food they were getting at the farm. According to Kashe, it came from kitchen of the Omulunga primary school in the Grootfontein township where the farmer’s wife worked at that time.

Furthermore on the 8 April 2007 an insect bit Kashe on the back of his head. He felt sick but kept on looking after the livestock for several days. Then, the farmer drove him to the hospital in Grootfontein, but he insisted to Kashe that he claims he had come to the health facility from the Blikkiesdorp township and not his farm, since he was afraid he could be blamed for his health problems. After a few days, Kashe was released from hospital and the farmer visited him in **Blikkiesdorp (88)** and tried to persuade him to come back to his farm and go on tending his sheep. Kashe refused, arguing he was still feeling sick and would not manage to work a full day every day. A few days later Kashe went to the township school where the farmer’s wife worked and inquired about the money the farmer was supposed to pay him for the days worked. The “next day” the farmer’s wife drove to his house in Blikkiesdorp, swore at him and shouted he would not see his salary unless he returned to the farm. Several days later the farmer from Brandberg came again to Blikkiesdorp and gave Kashe 100 NS and the latter recommended one man from plot 2 to work instead of him at the farm. Several days later the farmer gave Kashe another 100 NS. But, according to Kashe, he was not paid for

March and April and the 200 NS he was given by the farmer was reportedly money which he had saved and deposited for him.



Picture 14. Plot No. 1 where Kashe lived in 2007.

Kashe felt frustrated. When I talked with him about this event he claimed to have worked at the farm “every day” including the holidays and that the farmer promised him a salary of 600 NS for April (in February he allegedly received 200 NS and in March, 300 NS). Kashe also claimed that the food they were given was sometimes “too little”. According to him, he was given his last food ration in the middle of February. Kashe sometimes had to slaughter the sheep and expected the farmer would give him at least the heads, legs or entrails of the animals, but he was given the intestines at most and so he regarded the farmer as being stingy. Furthermore, Kashe also learned that his horse in Swart Tak had died. He also blamed the farmer for this since he had purportedly not allowed him to go Bushmanland to inoculate the animal: “If I had gone there early, the horse would not have died.”

As in the other stories about leaving a farm, I present mostly only the !Xun, that is Kashe’s and not the employer’s, perspective. It is not possible to find out whether the farmer was generally satisfied with Kashe as a worker. Kashe indirectly hinted that this may not have been the case completely. The only other worker at the farm was David, who also belonged to his “family”. Kashe said their collaboration had been bad because David was allegedly jealous that Kashe was the foreman. According to Kashe, David got up late every day, he had to wait for him and consequently they did not always manage to complete their work properly. The farmer then asked: “How is it possible that you are two and you haven’t done your work yet?” But the farmer did not know that the second worker was, as Kashe thought, sabotaging the success of the foreman. Kashe reacted by increasing his activity to fulfil farmer’s expectations, but sometimes could not cope with all the duties. At the same time,

according to Kashe, you cannot go against your colleagues and inform on them to the farmer because it could lead to conflict among them and make the stay at the farm unbearable.

After returning from Brandberg in the middle of April 2007, Kashe was unemployed for more than one month. On the 23 May he got a job (**D**) in the town and one day later he also found the same work for Lukas from *erf 2*, the “brother” of his brother’s wife. Their tasks consisted of excavating the bush in a yard near the township where a new regional councillor’s office was being constructed at that time. They were promised 20 NS per day for the work. “But the problem was hunger,” Kashe told me. He did not have any money at all and could not wait the whole month for the salary. He was working the whole day and, therefore, had no time to generate some income by collecting and selling empty refundable bottles. As a result, he could not provide for Lucia and Anton. He was given some bread at the worksite, but, according to him, this was enough only for him and he could not bring anything back home. Therefore, Kashe persuaded the “Damara” “foreman” who had hired him to give him 150 NS in advance. Unfortunately, the family could not live on this for long: “Look, when I bring home 10 kg of mealie meal, then there are also Willem, Maria, (Maria’s “sister”) Emma...” Thus, Kashe asked the “Damara” foreman soon for another 100 NS: “There is not food in the house.” However, the Damara said he had to wait until the end of the month.

Kashe finally managed to convince him to buy basic foodstuffs for his family. They went to Hakahana shop in the township and Kashe put, in his words, all the necessary goods in the trolley. When the Damara saw it was full, he claimed it would cost too much and refused to pay for it. The “Damara” said Kashe would have to ask the “subcontractor”, who was an “Ovambo”, for the money. “If you behave like this you want that I work with hunger,” objected Kashe. “Then (Kashe said to the ‘Damara’) give me the money for the days when I already worked. But he wants not to. So I say ok, I will leave the work. Then he says, ok, you can leave the work.” Kashe reacted by going to the Labour office again. The official he talked with, an “Ovambo” woman, asked him to bring her the phone number of the “Ovambo” from the company. However, he did not manage to find this number. Thus, the Labour office arranged that they would drive to the “Ovambo”. When they met him he allegedly promised to give Kashe the money on or before 20 July, 2007. On 16 July Kashe’s wife Lucia gave birth in Grootfontein hospital to their second son, of whom Kashe was the biological father. Now, there was a third person to provide for. When Kashe came on 20 July to the “Ovambo” to fetch the promised money he was told he “had left the job”.

It is apparent that the fact Lucia was to give birth to their child, which the !Xun preferred to do in the Grootfontein hospital, may have played a key role during this stay in the town. However, after his son Willem was born, Kashe stayed in Grootfontein only briefly. In July he was told by his relatives (by the “brother” of Max’s wife Erika from *erf 2*) about the possibility of temporary road work consisting of cutting the bush along the road to **Abenab (89)**. The “subcontractor” was, according to Kashe, an “Ovambo” or “Herero”. He took all the workers to the Labour office and arranged a contract, according to which each of them was to be given 27 NS for every kilometre of cut bush. According to Kashe, the “subcontractor” did not talk with the workers about the conditions of the contract before going to the Labour office. After arriving, he asked them to wait outside and only then were the final terms announced. These conditions were extremely disadvantageous. Kashe admitted he was not able to make an evaluation of the terms at that very moment, only later on did he realize that “it won’t work”. All the workers lived by the road in a makeshift shelter with a plastic cover for a roof, as was usual in such kind of work. According to Kashe, after about “two weeks”

the workers had managed to cut only “400 meters”. If true, and if we calculate it according to the contract, each worker would have earned about 11 NS for cutting this distance. At that moment Kashe gave up. According to him, he had to cut parts with thicker bush than the others and he started to feel the stomach pain which intensified with the workload again. Furthermore, Kashe was also troubled by the fact that he had left his wife and two sons behind without any means. When they were to leave from Grootfontein to the workplace, Kashe asked the “Ovambo subcontractor” to buy 10 kilograms of mealie meal for his family. He had allegedly promised to do so but finally had reneged on the promise. Kashe left the workplace, hitchhiked with a farmer and went to **Grootfontein (90)**. There, in order to avoid any conflict with the employer, he rushed to the Labour office to tell the officials that because of health problems he left the work, went to hospital to get some pills and was now staying in the town. He did not get any money for the done work and he did not ask for any either.



Picture 15. Kashe had always a calendar at his shack in Blikkiesdorp so he could check how long he had been working for a particular employer and calculate his wage. He believed that thanks to the calendar he would not be easily deceived.

When I began my first field research in Grootfontein at the end of August 2007, Kashe was still living in Grootfontein. He assisted me in the town for three weeks and we also went for another three weeks to Bushmanland to visit Kashe’s kin in the settlements Omatako, Grashoek, Swart Tak and near Omatako Valley Rest Camp. Kashe claimed he would go to Swart Tak after I left in order to prepare the land at his plot for planting. For this reason I gave him 150 NS to cover the cost of transport to Bushmanland. However, he did not go there and stayed in the Grootfontein township. Why? An important role may have been played by the fact that Kashe’s wife Lucia did not want to go to Swart Tak anymore. The reason was her strained relationship to Kashe’s niece’s husband’s sister. Kashe said Lucia distrusted him and believed he and the woman were in love with each other, but Kashe told me there was no truth in this. According to him, the two women would quarrel and even fight with each other.

Soon there came an event that significantly influenced Kashe's life and his decisions as regards his further mobility patterns. In the second week of December in 2007 Kashe and Lucia split up, but both of the sons stayed with Kashe who had to provide for them. According to Kashe, the main reason for the breakdown of their relationship was Lucia's addiction to alcohol: "It's only because of the alcohol". Kashe said that Lucia went often to Single Quarters to drink and sometimes she came back only the next day, despite the fact that she had to provide for a newborn child. Kashe suspected that when she got drunk she had sex with other men. The newborn son Willem was at that time constantly ill and Kashe was convinced this was due to the bad milk she produced. At the time Lucia was suffering from high blood pressure and had to take pills regularly. According to Kashe, the doctor had told her drinking alcohol on top of taking the pills would affect the quality of breast milk. Kashe told me he insisted that Lucia wither stop drinking or stop weaning the child. "We'll lose the child," he kept telling her.

Unitl 2010 Kashe claimed Lucia "left" him. What happened was, without doubt, more complicated. According to Kashe, some of Lucia's relatives thought he had had thrown her out. Nevertheless, it appears that Lucia, who was aware of her alcohol-addiction, left Kashe's house. Kashe once said Lucia deliberately decided to leave the children with him because she felt "very weak". "They (her family) say I chased Lucia away, but it was not me. It was Lucia herself." The moment Lucia left was after a quarrel and she was drunk. They were accompanying a !Xun woman leaving from Total station to a farm, when a drunk Lucia suddenly decided to go with her. Leaving Kashe for financial reasons did not seem to be the main reason since Lucia's later !Xun partner, whom I met in 2008, was also unemployed.

Table 10: Period IV. Moving between Grootfontein, farms, Bushmanland and Hereroland (2003 – 2007)

	place	duration of the stay	work	ethnicity of the farmer/employer	ethnicity of the workers	kin (“family”) bf. arrival	reasons for coming to this place	reasons for leaving to another place	way of leaving
71.	Grootfontein – „traditional village“	IV. 2003 - VI. 2003	Y	“Baster”	multiethnic environm.	Y	family	looking for work	The car of the new employer
Kashe moves to Hereroland									
72.	Katomama	VI. 2003 - XI. 2003	Y	Herero	!Xun Herero	Y, but he did not know it in advance	work	problems with the employer	hike/by foot
Kashe moves to Bushmanland									
73.	/Káandu	XI. 2003 - I. 2004	Y	Afrikaaner	!Xun	Y	family moving to Grashoek	only temporary work	horse/by foot/donkey cart
74.	Grashoek	I. 2004 - VIII. 2004	N	-	!Xun Ju/'hoan	Y	family	problems with Ju/'hoansi and family	horse
75.	Swart Tak	till V. 2005	Y	Herero	!Xun	Y	family	looking for work	hike
Kashe moves to Grootfontein and builds his shack in the town									
76.	Grootfontein	V.-VI. 2005	N	-	multiethnic environm.	Y	family	was offered a work	car of the farmer
Kashe moves to a farm									
77.	Meterorit II.	VII. 2005	Y	Afrikaaner	!Xun	Y	family	helping his family with bureaucracy	car of the farmer
Kashe moves to Grootfontein									

78.	Grootfontein	several weeks	N	-	multiethnic environm.	Y	family	was offered a work	car of the employer
Kashe moves to Hereroland									
79.	Katomama	3 months	Y	Herero	!Xun Herero	Y	Work	problems with the employer	hike
Kashe moves to Grootfontein									
80.	Grootfontein	Shortly	N	-	multiethnic environm.	Y	family	to plant at his land in Swart Tak	hike
Kashe moves to Bushmanland									
81.	Swart Tak	end 2005 - V. 2006	N	-	!Xun	Y	to plant at his land in Swart Tak	looking for work	hike
Kashe moves to a farm									
82.	Alvyn	several weeks	Y	Afrikaaner	!Xun O/K	Y	looking for work	- problems with the farmer - violence	hike
Kashe moves to Grootfontein									
83.	Grootfontein	VII. 2006	N	-	multiethnic environm.	Y	- family - his house	was offered a work	car of the employer
84.	Swart Tak	several short trips from Grootfontein	N	-	!Xun	Y	- to check his hut and property - to check the horse	moving back to Grootfontein	hike
85.	Lemoentjie	IX. 2006	Y	Damara/Coloured	!Xun	Y	Work	problems with the employer	by foot
86.	Grootfontein	X. - XI. 2006	N	-	multiethnic environm.	Y	- family - his house	was offered a work	car of the farmer

Kashe moves for the “last time” to a farm									
87.	Brandberg	4. 12. 2006 - IV. 2007	Y	Afrikaaner	!Xun	N	Work	problems with the farmer	hike?
Kashe moves to Grootfontein									
88.	Grootfontein	IV.-V. 2007	Y/N	Damara/	multiethnic environm.	Y	- family - his house	looking for work	car of the employer
89.	„padwerk“ by Abenab	26. 5. - 7. 6. 2007	Y	O/K	!Xun Damara	N	Work	health problems	hike
90.	Grootfontein	VI.2007 -I. 2008	Y/N	- Coloured - Herero	Damara/ multiethnic environm.	Y	- family - his house	was offered a work	car of the employer

Comments: Grootfontein and Swart Tak: having two places to stay

From the time when Kashe built his own shack in the middle of 2005 at his father's plot in Grootfontein, makeshift shelter with ceilings covered by plastic sheet, until my last meeting him in May 2013 Kashe had constantly moved between the town and other places, be it farms (till April 2007), Bushmanland or Hereroland. He always emphasised the plot in Grootfontein was his father's. However, the moment he built his shack there, it became a place he could always go to, irrespective of whether his parents were present there or not. As after he also acquired a place to live in Swart Tak in Bushmanland at the end of 2004, he had two places which he could regard as his "homes". In the past followed Kashe his kin-networks without having a place of his own to stay and his social ties in a certain sense "preceded" the moves. Acquiring his own home in Grootfontein and in Swart Tak meant he ceased being effectively homeless and landless and changed his mobility patterns significantly. He could move to these two places at any time, without having to depend entirely on social bonds and relationships to other people.

However, having his "own" place to live had a double-edged effect for Kashe. On the one hand, they became his "homes". On the other hand, their existence made his decisions to leave places where he was employed and for some reason dissatisfied to some extent easier. When he wanted to desert an employer when he was virtually homeless, he had to deliberate on which relatives he could find a refuge with. This changed with the dwellings in Grootfontein and Swart Tak. They became places he could always move to. The shacks with such things as utensils, clothes, blankets and tools inside also constituted a property, which he had to check on from time to time. As will be shown in chapter dealing with material culture, he could not rely on his relatives at either place to make sure that none of his goods were stolen. The hut in Swart Tak was also built from less durable soil and grass and needed to be repaired. "My house was there," said Kashe sometimes about the reason for his moving from Grootfontein to Swart Tak. As was also seen, Kashe sometimes used the need to check his property in Bushmanland as a pretext for leaving his employer.

Location	Duration	Percentage
Grootfontein	15 months	47,5 %
Commercial farms/plots	7,5 months	24 %
Bushmanland (Swart Tak)	5,5 months	17,5 %
Hereroland	3 months	9,5 %
Other (tender with Abenab)	0,5 month	1,5 %

Dividing the socio-economic settings between which Kashe was moving into town (urban environment), commercial farms and communal area of Bushmanland and Hereroland, we can observe the following (see table 11): since building his house in the town in 2005 until he and Lucia

separated in December 2007, a period of two and half years, he spent almost half the time (47,5 %) in Grootfontein. Acquiring a house in Grootfontein dramatically changed his mobility patterns, since he spent more than twice the time there that he did in Swart Tak (17,5 %) or at the farms (24 %) and almost five times longer than he did in Hereroland (9,5 %). There were several reasons for that. Given his recent experience with working for white farmers in the commercial area and Herero farmers in the communal lands, he had become reluctant to enter into a working relationship with either group. For Kashe, his last employments at the commercial farm (Brandberg) and in Hereroland (Katomama) were frustrating and he felt deep injustice because of what he saw as his entirely unfair treatment by these employees. The fact, that he spent the least amount of time in Hereroland is understandable for other reasons as well: Hereroland was not a place where he could decide to

go by his own will, he did not have many relatives there and he could move there only with a Herero employer, on whom he would depend.

Kashe's two periods of employment in Katomama are the last times he has accepted employment in Hereroland: "The Hereros say the Bushmen want to live only by the dump sites, they don't want to work. But it's them who make the Bushmen like this. They don't want to pay the Bushmen." According to Kashe, many Bushmen had such an experience when working for the Hereros and that they would rather go to Grootfontein if they can. "We, who were working there for too long, we know the manner (of the Hereros)."

In Grootfontein he could generate a permanent, but low, income by collecting empty bottles or scrap metals. Since the consumption of alcohol in the township was high, it was possible to look for bottles virtually every day. Moreover, his parents or his mother's "sister" Emma were usually there and he could ask them for some help. A source of income similar to gathering bottles or scrap metals did not exist in Bushmanland. He moved to Swart Tak for the rainy season with the plan to prepare the land for planting. However, his plans were thwarted by erratic weather conditions, late planting or the plants being eaten by livestock or insects. Thus, his survival there required him to partake in mixed economy activities: agriculture, foraging, preparing the fields for Ovambos and Kavangos and looking after the small herds of the black (absentee) pastoralists, who, however, gave the !Xun workers a wage of only 100 NS or so. Occasionally, he acquired some food from his relatives at the farms, but this eased his situation only for a short time. The situation in Bushmanland might vary to some extent in different settlements, even though they may be only a few kilometres from each other. Thus, in /Káandu Kashe could rely on the wage work of cutting the dry trees for firewood for an Afrikaner businessman and in Grashoek he tried to earn some money (although not successfully) by making art objects for tourists. The periods of hunger were eased temporarily when drought relief food arrived. All these factors made the idea of a long-term stay in Bushmanland difficult, especially after the onset of the dry winter time in May and June, when the harvest was eaten and the Ovambos and Kavangos would not require workers on their fields for the several months until the rains again came. If not able to go to the farm, Kashe was forced by circumstances to return to Grootfontein.

Despite the opportunity to stay in the town, Kashe never stayed there without interruption for longer than a few months, indeed sometimes only a matter of weeks, and then moved to the communal area, to a farm or to do some temporary work outside Grootfontein, as was the case when he was contracted to cut bush by the road to Abenab. When going to Swart Tak or Grootfontein, he moved between his two houses. The moves to a commercial white farm, Hereroland or near Abenab were the result of employment opportunities. The frequent moves away from Grootfontein show that he did not consider collecting bottles as an economic activity he wanted to engage in on a long-term basis.

The conditions of the wage work in the town or of a "tender" outside the town were very disadvantageous. Not only were the wages very small, in the case of the work by Abenab, if I was given correct data, even exploitative. When working at the compound of the future regional councillor office (D), his destitute situation did not even allow him to enter into a standard formal wage work contract which assumes getting a salary at the end of each month. His repeated attempts to have some money informally provided in advance led to the job ending. Thus, Kashe left the first employment after about two weeks and the second time after less than a month. In both cases the situation was exacerbated by the fact that Kashe was not

provided with food rations, which would cover the family's basic consumption needs until they could buy food with Kashe's first salary. Being employed meant that Kashe depended on the help of his relatives until he received his wage and there was "hunger at the house". Going to work did not enable Kashe to collect and sell empty bottles and, thus, provide for his family in the period before receiving his wage. Due to his low socio-economic status, entering a work relationship often also held for Kashe the prospect of mistreatment and conflict. Those who gave Kashe work decided to employ him probably also for the fact that they intended to have minimal expenses with him. Thus, the employment relationships Kashe went into contained a dormant conflict situation from the beginning. Kashe soon solved this conflict by leaving the job.

What is clearly revealed is that Kashe's frequent quitting of work and movements were brought about by his employers' exploitative treatment of him, irrespective of the environment in which he was working and the ethnicity of the employer. He experienced the most striking example of exploitative behaviour the two times he worked in Katomama for a Herero cattle owner, who paid him almost nothing at all. At the white farms things seemed to be better, at least financially, but Kashe often suffered from the mistreatment at the hands of the farmer. At the same time I surmise that Kashe's father's and Kashe's depiction of their access to food during their stays with the farmers in the more distant past as unproblematic may have been influenced to some extent by the fact that they could not recall that time so well and also by a romanticising of it when they contrasted it to the life in the town, in Bushmanland and Hereroland. The closer in time we moved, we saw that Kashe complained about the food he was given by the whites as well. At Klippan (44) the !Xun did not get enough food. At Driehook (53 - 59) there was hunger as well. At Alvyn (82) they did not get their food in time. At Brandberg (87) the food was allegedly close to rotten.

We saw that when Kashe felt that some injustice had been done to him by his employers, he did not hesitate to go to the Labour office. This also has some importance in terms of his mobility. Not only is this institution in town, which meant he had to go to Grootfontein to access the service. If its officials did not solve the complaints of Kashe immediately, he had to stay in Grootfontein to follow the further developments of the case and not lose the chance to finally receive some money.

His mobility patterns were further influenced and constrained by his previous encounters and experiences with various people. He was cautious to avoid farms neighbouring Klippan, whose owner had beaten him in 1994. According to Kashe, if he started to work at a farm in the vicinity of Klippan, the farmer would find out from the people. "I'm still afraid of Luis Grobbelaar. If he catches me there (at one of the neighbouring farms), he would maybe kill me." Kashe seemed to be sincerely concerned that if the farmer of Klippan came across him in certain farm areas, he could harm him: "He will get me easily. Look, it's night and I ride my bicycle on the road, he comes from behind and he hits me. Nobody would know it. Nothing. This is why I don't look for work at the farms." Kashe claimed that for this reason he had to stay either in the township in Grootfontein or to look for work at farms near to Bushmanland which were sufficiently far from Klippan.

Since he was afraid of potential conflict with the farmer of Strydfontein, Kashe also avoided going to this farm as well. Furthermore, despite having the opportunity to work again for the Hereros in Kameelwoud in Bushmanland, he did not want to go there any more because of his

past conflict with Simon, the former partner of Lucia. Similarly, he also did not want to go to Grashoek because of his constant quarrels with Faleke.

Another problem was, at least in Kashe's view, that the farmer of Klippan could spread bad rumours about him among the farmers and thus hinder Kashe's prospective employment opportunities. According to Kashe, the farm labourers knew well that the farmers often collaborate and exchange information on workers they are going to employ. This was the way Kashe's brother Andris purportedly lost his job at farm Uitkoms. Luis Grobbelaar from Klippan allegedly told its owner that Andris and Kashe used to "attack the people with sticks and knives"³³⁰ and consequently the farmer terminated Andris' contract, allegedly after only "two days".

Furthermore, since his bad experience at farm Brandberg early in 2007, Kashe did not want to work at any farm at all. This was not just a question of his mental attitude. He claimed he had to stop working at the farm also because of his worsening physical state. The gastritis he suffered from since his work at Brandberg meant he avoided any long-term strenuous work.

Alcohol continued to have an impact on Kashe's behaviour and mobility. One of the reasons he left Grashoek in Bushmanland was his drunken quarrels with his "brother" Faleke. His addiction to alcohol caused him not to return from Grootfontein to farm Meteriot II., where he was, in contrast to many of his employments in the past, relatively well paid and the farmer was satisfied with his performance. It can not be over-emphasised that stopping drinking alcohol in early 2007 also had a crucial influence on Kashe's further movements. Since that time till my last meeting him in May 2013 Kashe the teetotaler was not involved in any violent incidents.

We observed also that while Kashe was living with Lucia, where they would live did not depend solely on him. Lucia was generally not inclined to live in Swart Tak in Bushmanland and seemed to prefer life in Grootfontein.

The fact that the state hospital was in Grootfontein played a significant role, or a kind of co-role, in Kashe's movements. They went to Grootfontein from Swart Tak (82a) because Lucia and Anton were unwell. Lucia gave birth to their second child in the hospital. Kashe left the Lemoentjie plot after accompanying Lucia to the hospital. The main reason for his leaving farm Brandberg was that he was bitten by an insect and had to be treated at the hospital. Kashe also terminated his road work at Abenab because he needed medical treatment for his gastritis problems. At the same time, he knew that he could always get to his shack in Blikkiesdorp from the hospital.

The more we approach the present, the clearer it is that leaving a given place can be the result of several variously interconnected factors and the better Kashe's narratives showed the complexity the interactions between the workers and employers which brought about the quitting of work and a movement to a different place. When leaving Katomama (72) in

³³⁰ According to Andris the farmer Grobbelaar might have spread this information about him after his involvement in a serious fight with other !Xun in 1993 at the tarred road near farm Baden. Andris fought with two !Xun brothers (according to Kashe, they were the sons of Old Hendrik, had who led the the SWAPO combatants to the house of the farmer at Boomplaas), when one of them purportedly wanted to take Andris' wife. Andris claimed he had been attacked by them with stones and that he stabbed one of them in the chest. Andris was then transferred to the Maroelaboom police station where he spent „one week“. Andris had worked at Klippan in the past. However, he was a visitor to the farm at the time of the incident.

Hereroland and talking to his employer Chezao, both of them strived to achieve their own goals and outwit each other. “We play a role,” commented Kashe. Kashe, who was building a *kraal* for the Herero, decided to leave, but did not want give up his pay, which Chezao was refusing to honour. I do not know what the thoughts of the Herero were at that time, but we may assume that he regarded his relationship to Kashe as advantageous since he had minimal expenses and the Herero must have been interested in upholding this, from Kashe’s point of view, exploitative state. Moreover, he must have known that Kashe, a !Xun breadwinner with two dependants, would have difficulty finding a permanent job with a reasonable wage and that staying with him gave Kashe’s family at least some food security. The complexity of this interaction can be also seen by the fact that Kashe did not tell the Herero directly (during either of his stays in Katomama) that he would be leaving but instead talked about the need to see his horse in Bushmanland or assisting his wife’s aunt with her pension application. Thus, that Kashe could return still remained a possibility. On the other hand, the Herero was promising that he would eventually pay him. Telling the Herero he was leaving would mean giving up any chance of receiving his remuneration. At the same time, if the Herero said he would not pay Kashe at all, it would also sever his ties to Kashe and, prospectively, to the latter’s !Xun relatives and friends, and he would not be able to justify his position at the Labour office.

Interestingly, Kashe did not put this Herero in the same category as his Herero employers in Bushmanland, Djandero and Sepi, who he praised, despite the low wages they paid him, for their respectful treatment of the workers. As with the white farmers, he observed a generational difference between the behaviour of the older Hereros and Chezao, who was a young man. He used to say that the young white farmers were more abusive towards the workers than their fathers were and, according to him, Chezao did not compare favourably with the older Hereros. “He is nice, but he is only much slim (skelm). He is young.”

Another example of a complex interaction between Kashe and his employer, this time a German farmer, was Kashe’s leaving of *plaas* Brandberg. Kashe regarded the farmer as stingy since he did not give them enough meat and was convinced he was giving them bad food. He also regarded the work at the farm as too strenuous. When he became sick, he asked the farmer to take him to hospital. When the farmer took him there, he asked Kashe not to reveal what had happened on his farm, but in Blikkiesdorp Kashe seem to have realized the farmer was on the defensive. In all probability, both of them had the feeling of being somehow deceived. Kashe wanted the farmer to give him all the money which he had allegedly deposited with him. At the same time, the farmer was probably desperately looking for trustworthy workers who would look after his herd of sheep in the absence of Kashe and could not grasp that Kashe did not want to return to his farm even though he was virtually begging him to and bringing him some money (which was, however, according to Kashe, still not the right amount). The *eienaar* also may have felt infuriated by the fact that he had done some favours for Kashe such as giving him some presents in the form of old clothes and various objects, which I saw in Kashe’s shack during my field research. The farmer also may not have known that Kashe might also not want to come back to the farm because of his strained relationship to the other worker at the farm, who was “sabotaging” his work. Naturally, there may have been many other factors that we are not aware of and which made this interaction more complex.

Period V.: Living mostly in Grootfontein: Kashe substitutes the mother (2007 – 2011)

!Xun couples with children separating is very common, as is a !Xun woman having children with several different fathers. A woman leaving her children with the father is, however, comparatively rare. Nevertheless, in the case of Kashe's wife Lucia it seemed to be clear that her addiction to alcohol was the key factor in what happened with her and Kashe. The fact that it was primarily up to Kashe to take care of the children also had a significant influence on Kashe mobility.

In December 2007 Lucia and Kashe broke up and in January 2008 he moved from Grootfontein once more to the **Lemoentjie plot (91)** near the town where he had already worked in the second half of 2006. This time it was not the Damara woman who took him to the plot but she sent her Coloured son-in-law, called Sonyboy by the workers, to collect him from Blikkiesdorp. Why did Kashe accept a work at a place which he had left in the past because of dissatisfaction? As in the past, he was in need of some income to provide for his children. Furthermore, his decision was also made easier by the fact that his relatives were still working at Lemoentjie at that time as well. Only a few days after coming to the plot, Kashe realized he needed somebody to look after his two sons because they would be in tears when he left for work in the morning. Thus, he asked Sonyboy to drive his parents to the plot as well and with them came his mother's "sister" Emma. However, he stayed at Lemoentjie for only two weeks until the end of January for which he earned 150 NS. At the end of January he asked the Coloured owner of the plot for a few days off to enable him to fetch his ID card from Bushmanland (he was registered there for the ID), which he needed for an application at the Ministry of Health and Social Services that would enable him to get financial support from the state for his small children. Nonetheless, his plans were changed by an incident: his younger son suffered burns on his finger at the fire and this made Kashe stay at his shack in **Grootfontein (92)** to be able to accompany him to the clinic for regular medical treatment. However, even after young Willem recuperated, Kashe stayed in the township until May and lived on money earned by selling empty refundable bottles.

I have to admit that I had probably some, although unintentional, influence on Kashe's movements in 2008 including his decision to stay in the town in this particular case, because he thought I would come to Grootfontein in the first months of 2008, which I had hinted at (but not promised) during my first research trip to Namibia the year before. Furthermore, Kashe's stay in town may have been eased by the fact that the local Dutch Reformed Church, on my request, was providing his family with some food - 20 kg of mealie meal, 10 kg of sugar, some cooking oil and tea. In May 2008 I talked with Kashe by phone and informed him I would not arrive before September. Kashe then decided to return to **Lemoentjie (93)** and started to work there for the third time. The presence of his parents and aunt Emma, who had been there since January, was important because they could look after his two sons. In Blikkiesdorp he could ask his relatives at the neighbouring *erf 2* to take care of them, but most of the people living at this plot left for the farms at that time and, thus, could not help him. Kashe stayed in Lemoentjie until the beginning of July. He then left because of me. I had begun my second field research trip to Namibia at the end of June and I needed Kashe for my work in Grootfontein. The farmer did not object to his leaving and paid him 300 NS for the month. I could well observe the all details of the process of Kashe's leaving the plot and since it enabled me to understand some its dynamics, I will describe it thoroughly.

Leaving Lemoentjie - a complicated process

It has been often reported that from the point of view of many white farmers the !Xun leave a place where they are employed with ease, following their “nomadic instincts” and feeling no responsibility to the employer. However, as will be shown by Kashe’s leaving of the Lemoentjie plot a few kilometres from Grootfontein, it may be perceived by the !Xun as a complicated and risky process.



Picture 16. Lemoentjie plot, where Kashe looked after the goats.

Kashe worked at the Lemoentjie plot three times. Kashe’s third employment lasted from 27 May to 7 July 2008. The owner of the plot was a Coloured man called Sonyboy, whose wife was “Damara”. They lived in their house in Grootfontein, but the owner visited the plot almost daily to control the workers and to transport food for them and also for his pigs from the Grootfontein army base. There were only two main workers at Lemoentjie, Kashe and his relative Hans (who had his own shack at plot 3 in Blikkiesdorp), who was the foreman, and they were also occasionally helped by their kinfolk living at the plot. Their work consisted of tending a herd of about 200 goats and sheep and caring for almost 40 pigs. Each day they had to take the goats and sheep out of the *kraal* to the pasture, to give them water, to separate the young and old animals when necessary, when the latter were grazed, to chase the livestock back into the *kraal* in the evening, and to make sure all young animals could suckle milk. They also had to feed the pigs twice a day and to clean the twelve pigs’ stalls every second day. These main tasks were sometimes accompanied by smaller ones such as going with the farmer to the army base by car to fetch food for the workers and the animals, removing the thick layer of faeces in the goat and sheep *kraal*, starting up the water pump engine, repairing

a burst water pipe or helping in the garden. Kashe usually started work between seven and eight o'clock in the morning, at noon he could eat and rest for about an hour and half, and finished at nightfall around six p.m. The work consisted of periods of physically very strenuous tasks such as carrying heavy buckets with food for the pigs in the stalls to less demanding ones such as looking after the goats in the bush. Then he could also rest a bit and smoke a cigarette. However, Kashe and Hans had to look after the livestock every day and they did not have any free Saturdays or Sundays.

Kashe's father Willem was employed at the plot as well. His work consisted of cutting the grass and bush to prepare beds and of planting and growing vegetables such as lettuce, onion, carrot, red pepper and beetroot. At the beginning of July 2008 I counted 95 beds (approximately 1 x 5-8 meters each in size) and in 72 of them plants were already growing. Willem said he had been preparing the beds with the help of Kashe, his older son Andris and the foreman Hans, since January that year. However, at the end of June and the beginning of July 2008 I observed only Willem working in the garden. In the morning he usually started his work at the same time as Kashe, but it did not seem to be as demanding as Kashe's. Sometimes he stopped working early in the afternoon but at other times he worked on the beds or watered the vegetables until sunset. This depended mostly on the presence of the farmer at the plot and the other workers seemed to behave in a similar way.

In Lemoentjie Kashe and his family slept in a small brick house consisting of one room of approximately six square meters. For seven people in total, four adults (Kashe, his parents and his mother's "sister"), two sons of Kashe, one of his brother Andris and their belongings such as bags, blankets, clothes and utensils, this was a small place. Kashe regarded sleeping with his parents in one place as a "big problem" and gave as a reason why he did not want to work there. Kashe never complained that they suffered from hunger in Lemoentjie. The farmer brought food for all of them almost daily from the army base in a 10-litre plastic bucket and occasionally he bought other foodstuffs, such as sugar, tea, coffee, as well as tobacco and matches, although in rather small quantities.

It was near the Lemoentjie plot that I met Kashe when I came to Namibia for my second field research trip in 2008. When I came there on 27 June, Kashe told me it would be no problem to leave the plot and continue our research in the town, whatever was my wish. He said he would have left the place at the latest by the end of August because he and his father intended to prepare the field at Kashe's plot in Swart Tak before the rainy season. They also planned to buy some sheep and goats there as Willem said they wanted to start "our own work" (eie werk). Both of them said they regarded their employment at Lemoentjie from the beginning as temporary measure that would help them to earn some money which they could use in Swart Tak.

Both of them expressed their dissatisfaction with the Coloured owner of the plot. They complained especially of the long working hours and having seven working days per week. Furthermore, they were unhappy at what they saw as the constant presence of the owner at the plot. "You must eat a bit and rest a bit. It is 2 hour (p.m.) and I have not eaten yet," complained Willem. He further complained that he was supposed to be given 200 NS each month but had received his salary only once or twice in the five months he was working there. Kashe was also repeatedly expressing his dissatisfaction with the unbearable stench in the pig stalls he had to keep clean.

On 27 June Kashe made a plan to wait first until 30 June, the last day of the month, to ask for his salary. Kashe claimed he would tell the owner of the plot that the reason for his decision to leave was some commitments in Blikkiesdorp and at his plot in Bushmanland. However, Kashe could not stick to this strategy entirely. On 29 June, the day before Kashe wanted to raise the matter of quitting, the farmer's son informed the workers his father was in "Ovamboland" and would be staying there until 4 July. Therefore, Kashe had to wait for his return. Without being visibly disturbed by the development, Kashe assured me he would leave the plot. He even claimed to be ready to desert the place and come back for the salary "two weeks later".

The farmer finally arrived from "Ovamboland" earlier than expected on 2 July. However, Kashe decided to postpone the negotiations because the owner of the plot was, according to him, "angry". The reason for this was the absence of the foreman Hans, who had gone several days beforehand to Grootfontein, allegedly to accompany his father to withdraw the pension at the NamPost, but had not returned. Kashe suspected he was drunk. Willem told me the foreman's visits to Grootfontein always extended to several-days long stays due to his indulging in drinking: "He should have bought a bit of mealie meal, sugar, tea, but he buys nothing. He drinks, drinks, drinks, drinks, drinks and brings nothing." On the one hand, Kashe condemned the foreman's behaviour but he did seem to have a certain understanding for Hans' retreats to Grootfontein as well. Kashe told me, for instance, the farmer had beaten the foreman the year before. According to Kashe's tale, Hans reacted by leaving the farm, but the farmer allegedly "took" him back. On 1 July the farmer's son and Kashe went by car to Blikkiesdorp to look for the foreman but to no avail. In his absence it was up to Kashe to provide for the livestock. Nevertheless, Kashe assured me his leaving of the plot was in no way a significant problem because some of his !Xun "friends" in Blikkiesdorp would replace him.

The next day, 3 July, Kashe presented another plan to me: he would wait until Saturday 5 July when the farmer would certainly give the workers their salaries. Kashe claimed all of them, including the foreman, who had been meanwhile found drunk by the farmer in the township and driven back to Lemoentjie, and his family would leave the plot at once. On 4 July Kashe explained to me that he had already wanted to inform the owner of the plot about his intention to leave but the foreman dissuaded him from doing so. He was advised to wait until he was paid. When I asked whether his prospective leaving of the farm could not threaten the well-being of the livestock, Kashe claimed the farmer was so bad that he would leave, "even if the young animals died". Contrary to his former claims, Kashe said the farmer would run into trouble in finding somebody to replace him because of his reportedly bad reputation: "All people know him".

On 6 July Kashe finally told me the owner of the plot had paid him a salary of 300 NS the day before and given him consent to leave. We arranged to meet the next day at 8 a.m. at a house owned by Dutch Reformed Church, where I was staying in the town. After waiting for several hours, I decided to find Kashe by myself and went to Blikkiesdorp. When I came to his familie's *erf* at approximately 1 p.m. Kashe and his father Willem were already there (**Grootfontein 94**) but they had arrived only shortly before me. I was told that the foreman and his family had decided to stay at the plot. Kashe gave me two reasons why he had not come to my house at the agreed time. First, he had to accompany his parents and his mother's "sister" to NamPost to withdraw some money from their pension accounts and, second, he was too busy carrying all his belongings from the plot and at the same time also his younger son, Willem, on the shoulders while also looking after the second son, Anton. He wanted to

take the things to the township first. Further delays were caused by shopping. Before Kashe, his sons and Willem embarked from the town centre to the township, Kashe and his father each bought their first cell phones. They also bought two small toy cell phones for 10 NS each for Kashe's sons. Otto, the son of Kashe's brother Andris, who had also been staying with them at Lemoentjie for some time, got a new small radio.

Kashe also bought a new door lock, a purchase directly linked to his leaving the plot. He had accidentally broken the door lock at the house in Lemoentjie when he worked there. He did not inform the farmer about this but he did not want to leave the place without repairing it and thus, wanted to change the broken door lock for the new one.

The distance from Lemoentjie to Blikkiesdorp is about eight kilometres with the Grootfontein commercial centre being half-way to the township. Kashe, carrying his belongings and also his son Willem, together with his father, small Anton and Otto went from the business centre to Blikkiesdorp alone and left mother Maria and Emma there. They agreed that after carrying his belongings to the township Kashe and his father would come back and meet with Maria and Emma at the state hospital, which was next where I was staying and "make a plan" (maybe involving me as well) about how to arrange the transport Kashe's parents' belongings, which had been left at Lemoentjie. Unlike Kashe, his parents and Emma, all of them older than 70, could not take their belongings with them because they were too heavy for them. But finding a way to transport their property was a difficult. When all of them had gone to Lemoentjie from Blikkiesdorp, they were driven there by the farmer who had an interest in assisting them because Kashe and his father were going to work for him. Asking the owner of the plot to do the same after they had deserted him seemed to be out of question. Kashe told me he had never used a taxi on his own initiative. He was, therefore, considering asking for help from somebody in the township who had a car at their disposal to go to Lemoentjie with them. Kashe said he was thinking of the !Xun pastor Ephraim, but he did not seem to be sure.

At this moment I entered the story. Afraid that my informants would spend the next few days debating the best way of getting their property from Lemoentjie to the township, I arranged a taxi for them and advised Kashe to drive to the plot alone to save money and at the same time to save space that could be used to transport of their belongings. However, after discussion with his father, Kashe suggested it would be better if both of them went because Willem wanted to ask the owner of the plot for his salary. At that moment Willem told me the farmer had paid Kashe but not him. "I was waiting to be called by him (owner of the plot), but he did not do that. Then he got into the car and left," Willem said of the situation when the farmer remunerated his workers.

Moreover, it turned out that, unlike Kashe, Willem did not tell the farmer he would leave. Thus, Kashe also did not want to go to the plot alone because he was afraid the owner of the plot could object to him not having told him about his father's plans. On this occasion, Kashe recalled an instance in the past when the owner of Lemoentjie had beaten a worker. Willem also refused to go alone. There was also the problem of his mother Maria and her "sister" Emma waiting at the hospital and the three boys who had gone with them to Blikkiesdorp. What to do with the boys when Kashe and his father would be collecting their belongings at Lemoentjie? Kashe did not want to leave them in the township but taking them in the car would reduce the space in the vehicle available for transporting their belongings. I intervened again and asked Kashe to take the boys with him, dropping them off with the women at the hospital and letting all them walk to the township together. To ensure the smooth running of

the process I told the taxi driver he would be paid only after he brought Kashe and Willem and their belongings back to Blikkiesdorp. They returned to Blikkiesdorp in an hour, apparently relieved. They had not met the farmer as he was not there and, thus, avoided any conflict situation. Kashe managed to change the broken door lock and they had also transported their most important belongings. However, there had been too many things and they had not managed to load all of them into the taxi.

Nevertheless, despite his initial relief, Willem remained concerned because of his unpaid salary. In the weeks that followed Willem told me several times that he would visit the owner of the plot in his house in the town and ask him for the money. However, he could not find enough courage to do so. Only once, he told me, had he gone to the farmer's house, but the farmer had not been there. According to Kashe, he did not want to go to the farmer's house in the town alone and he requested Kashe or his wife Maria to accompany him. When I asked Willem about this problem during my research a year later, he told me he still planned to ask the owner of the plot for his salary.

This concrete example gives us an insight into the highly complex situation surrounding leaving a place where the !Xun worked. As we could see, the process of leaving Lemoentjie took place in a climate of stress, uncertainty and dilemmas. As mentioned above, when evaluating the oral histories about leaving a certain place, we observe that the more recent was the event, the better Kashe could remember the details and factors, which he did not recall when talking about the more distant past. I believe we may rightly assume that at least some of the numerous similar situations Kashe and his family faced in the past may have been similarly intricate if not even more complex. My !Xun informants, especially Kashe, reduced their motives for their leaving a given place mostly to one or only a few reasons. The selection of the reasons given to me may again have been influenced by many factors - they were regarded as the most important ones, they may have been the only ones Kashe remembered and the desirability effect may also have played a role. It is possible that I was told a version that fitted into the notions that Kashe expected I may have. Kashe might have also omitted what for him were unpleasant facts.

I would like to highlight several factors that played a role in the process of leaving Lemoentjie and that may have been present during other instances when Kashe or other !Xun left a farm or plot.

Planning and adapting to changing situation

In reaction to my questions, Kashe constantly assured me that leaving Lemoentjie plot was not in fact difficult for him. However, it was for Kashe a stressful process which forced him to act strategically in order to achieve his goals. The foremost was to leave but not without getting paid. Kashe tried to anticipate the farmer's reactions to his possible actions and, therefore, planned his steps well. He did not make any impulsive decisions, which could have thwarted his plans, but carefully waited for the right moment to reveal his intentions to the farmer. Furthermore, Kashe had to adapt his steps to the constantly evolving situation - the unexpected absence of the plot owner and of the drunk foreman and he had also to accommodate to the current mood of the farmer.

Avoiding conflict situations

Kashe wanted to avoid giving the farmer any pretext for conflict. Thus, he waited with his request for the salary until the end of the month and, subsequently, delayed it further until the

foreman returned from town. The incident with the broken door lock, which Kashe bought for 40 NS (13 % of his wage), proves he did not plan all his steps only with the immediate goal of receiving the salary. He changed the door lock after receiving the money. Why? There were several substantial and obvious reasons. Many of his family's belongings remained in Lemoentjie and he had to make sure the farmer would not get angry and that he could transport them to the township. Furthermore, the damaging of the relationship with the plot owner could also ruin Kashe's father's chances of getting his wages. There was also a danger of the farmer resorting to physical punishment and it was possible that leaving the plot without informing the owner could also affect other workers staying at Lemoentjie, among them Kashe's relatives. Furthermore, Kashe had already worked for Sonyboy three times and he did not want to destroy a relationship with an employer who could give him work in the future. Kashe's father Willem avoided any conflict with the farmer by not asking him for the money. He did not even ask for his wages for some of the previous months. Instead of this, he was waiting for the plot owner to approach him when it suited him.

Collective decisions and building up negative group sentiments against the farmer

Kashe's leaving of Lemoentjie was not a purely individual action, but the result of a collective decision-making process, showing the inter-dependency of the members of Kashe's family. However, I must add that it seemed the !Xun women family members, Kashe's mother and her "sister" Emma, were rather excluded from this decision-making process. Kashe consulted with his father and the foreman Hans. In the days before they left the plot, in their discussions the workers mutually confirmed each other in their negative feelings towards the owner when they were constantly recalling past bad experiences with him. The workers further complained that they were not allowed to rest while working or to go to hospital, or about being given low-quality food. In doing so, they were supporting and encouraging each other emotionally and rationalising their actions. All of Kashe's close relatives left the plot as a group.

Recalling the previous experience after leaving a place

I should also highlight that even after leaving Lemoentjie Kashe sometimes recalled spontaneously some moments from his stay at the plot. For example, once he told me that when staying at Lemoentjie, his young son Willem needed to go to hospital because he had a festering inflammation on his genitals. But the plot owner's answer was: "No, there is too much work." Therefore, Kashe suggested they could stop at the hospital in the evening on the way from the army camp where the farmer bought the food for workers and pigs. The farmer consented, they got the medicine and, according to Kashe, his son's problems went away in a few days. However, Kashe perceived the situation as proof of the farmer's unwillingness to help if it affected the work at the plot: "So, I see this Sonyboy is not good." Another time when I was discussing with Kashe his duties as a father of two, he started to complain that Sonyboy had not allowed him to take sufficient care of the children. For example, he said he could not prepare food for the children according to their needs because during the day he saw them only during his lunch break. Recalling negative events from when he was at Lemoentjie shows that Kashe evaluated his past experiences and in this way he justified his past and present actions and deliberated plans for the future.

I left Grootfontein in the second week of August 2008. Kashe then stayed in Blikkiesdrop for about two months and found also employment (E) there. One of Kashe's relatives (/Xae living at plot 4 in 2007 and at plot 3 between 2008 and 2013) from Blikkiesdorp told him about a possibility of work in the yard of Herero people for whom he had worked in the past. Kashe's main tasks consisted of watering the garden and keeping the yard clean. He arranged with the

Hereros to be given 150 NS per month for four half a days work per week and food rations once a week. At first the Hereros also gave him some kudu meat and milk. However, according to him, he was asked after only “two weeks” to buy the food for himself. Kashe went to /Xae and wanted him to talk to the Hereros, but he was told by him to “go away from the people.” Therefore, Kashe left the Hereros after receiving the first salary of 150 NS.³³¹ When Kashe saw their other expenses he felt he was being misused: “How it possible is that somebody (the Hereros) buy airtime (for a cellphone) for 200 NS and wants to give you 150 NS (as a salary). When I think of it I rather leave.” Another reason that may have facilitated his leaving the job was that Kashe was concerned about his sons not being properly watched by his kin during his absence: “It’s not nice, the small children stay at the house. Anton goes to play in the bush. People cannot see it.” He used to leave them during that time with a “mixed” !Xun woman in the township (not a relative) to look after them and he gave her some mealie meal, meat and milk the Hereros gave him for the children, but he complained that she was eating the food herself. Kashe could not, however, later use her to watch his sons, because she died soon after. Kashe claimed she had died of AIDS.

Kashe went again to **Swart Tak (95)** in October 2008, when he again started to look after the livestock (about 25 cows and several goats) of the Herero woman Eben for whom he worked at the end of 2005 and beginning of 2006. “The Herero took me,” expressed Kashe of how he started to work for Eben again. His parents also later moved to Swart Tak. His father “was taken” there by the sister of the wife of Hermea, the Damara man, for whom Willem worked in Kameelwoud after first coming to Bushmanland in 1997. In fact, Hermea recommended Kashe to his wife’s sister, who had a plot in Swart Tak neighbouring on Kashe’s land. Willem’s work consisted of tending her cows, cutting the bush and repairing the corrugated iron sheets house at the plot. However, according to Kashe, in this instance he did not know they would come to Swart Tak. However, Kashe and his parents did not stay together. They slept at the plot of their respective employers, Willem and Maria at the Damara plot and Kashe at the Herero’s.

Kashe thought he would be able to work for the Herero and plant some crops at his plot. Nevertheless, he soon realised he would not manage to do so, since looking after Eben’s livestock took up most of his time. Finally, he planted maize and beans for himself at the plot of the Herero woman. He planted one kilogram of maize seeds, which he was bought by Eben for allegedly 24 NS in AGRA shop in Grootfontein and about one kilogram of beans bought Kashe himself for about 5 NS from street vendors in the town. Eben told him they would share the bean harvest. However, there was none. The plants were eaten by the free roaming goats while he was occasionally looking for the strayed cattle. Kashe blamed his kin at the neighbouring plot, who, according to him, did not help him to check the fields and chase away the animals.

Between October 2008 and June 2009, when I started my third field research in Grootfontein, Kashe moved several times between Swart Tak and the town, a situation that was very similar to the second half of 2006. This time his “base” was not Grootfontein but Swart Tak. There were a number of reasons for this: Kashe’s parents were living there; he was also employed in Swart Tak and he was attempting to grow plants there; and, very importantly, he enrolled his older son in the pre-school facility in Rooidag. Kashe, like most of the !Xun I spoke to in

³³¹ When I talked with Kashe about it for the first time he claimed to have quitted the work without asking them for the money for the worked off days and that he would have left even after receiving the promised 150 NS whatsoever: “You cannot buy food with it”.

Grootfontein, told me that education was very important and had already talked about the necessity of enrolling his sons in school during my previous research in 2007 and 2008.

In the eight months between October 2008 and June 2009 Kashe moved to Grootfontein seven times in total, for periods of a few days to one month. He went there for the first time in October and had two reasons for doing so. First, he had to accompany his parents to the NamPost to withdraw their pensions and, second, he wanted to ask Eben, his Herero employer, who lived in Grootfontein, for some money. He got 150 NS from her, spent only one night in Grootfontein and then went back to Swart Tak. He did not go to his shack in Blikkiesdorp at all, the !Xun family passed the night at the Herero's house yard as in the past. The Herero woman paid for Kashe's journey back to Swart Tak. What is more, when she later saw the parents were not able to get to Bushmanland and were still staying at her yard, she covered the costs for their transport to Swart Tak as well.

The second and third time Kashe went to Grootfontein in October and December, respectively, because his sons became sick. The first time it was the older and the second time, the younger child, but both times he took both sons with him. Both times he called in the ambulance car in Omatako clinic from the fixed line at the veterinary checkpoint office at Rooidag and it took him both times from Swart Tak to Grootfontein and back. Kashe was always accommodated at the Grootfontein's hospital paediatric ward. He slept with his sons in the hospital and recalled with a certain amusement that he was the only father in the dormitory where they were sleeping, since other children were accompanied by their mothers: "I did everything like them, but went only to different toilet and bathroom. I was the ma of the children."

The fourth, fifth and sixth of Kashe's visit to Grootfontein followed the pattern of his October trip. He was accompanying his parents who wanted to withdraw money at the NamPost and at the same time he asked Eben for some money. After the first of these visits (January) he allegedly received 150 NS, the second (February) 100 NS, and the third time (March) 80 NS. When coming to Eben's house, Kashe was often asked to clean her yard. In January he slept under his mosquito net at the Total petrol station and in the second and third instance inside the Herero's house in the town.

	parent's pension	Wage	hospital
1	X	X	
2			X
3			X
4	X	X	
5	X	X	
6	X	X	
7			X

The seventh time Kashe went to **Grootfontein (96)** was at the end of April because he had been told during his medical check in November 2008 that he was supposed to undergo another check-up at the hospital on the 28th of April, 2009. He did not know precisely what the reason for his medical examination was. This time he stayed in the town for a month. There were several reasons for this. There were school holidays in Namibia in May and his older son could leave the pre-school facility in Rooidag. Kashe also felt compelled to look into the theft of some of his family's belongings from their shacks in Blikkiesdorp during his absence. Furthermore, Kashe seemed to be afraid of an alleged gang of men who were according to him doing business, selling the sexual organs of people they killed. Kashe was strongly convinced that the members of the gang wanted to kill him and cut off his genitalia, which they would purportedly sell to witchcraft practitioners. The members of the alleged

gang operated, according to Kashe, both in Swart Tak and Grootfontein but he may have felt more threatened by them in Bushmanland at that particular time.

Kashe stayed in Grootfontein till the end of May, when he returned to **Swart Tak (97)**, so that his son could go on going to school after the holidays.

Then it was again me who influenced Kashe's movements. After calling Kashe's relatives in the town in June that year and telling them I would soon be arriving, Kashe returned to **Blikkiesdorp (98)** to meet me, but left Anton in Swart Tak to attend the pre-school. When leaving Namibia at the end of July 2009, I thought Kashe would hurry to Bushmanland to be reunited with Anton and resume working for Eben. I also gave him 300 NS and thought he would use some of the money to pay for his transport to Swart Tak and to buy some basic foodstuffs to take with him. However, I underestimated the influence that my proposal that he undergo a proper medical examination in order to find out the real nature of the constant pains in his belly from which he had been suffering from the beginning of 2007, when he was working at farm Brandberg, and which did not allow him to do any strenuous work, would have on his movements. I accompanied Kashe to the Grootfontein state hospital and the doctor decided that Kashe should be examined in a state hospital in Windhoek, which was technically better equipped.

The nurse at the Grootfontein hospital told Kashe that people undergoing medical treatment in Windhoek were driven there once a week in groups in a minibus organised by the hospital. She asked him to inquire at the hospital regularly for his turn. When I left Grootfontein that year, Kashe was told he might be requested to go to Windhoek only a day before the departure. Afraid that he could miss out on the opportunity to receive the treatment in Windhoek, he decided to stay in Grootfontein and kept on visiting the hospital every Tuesday morning for „several months“ until he gave up.

Later he became concerned about his son's condition in Swart Tak as he learned from his relatives that Anton had developed sores on his buttocks. Kashe thought it happened because he knew Anton was wearing the same clothes at all times even when he was sleeping. Kashe was told this the son of his sister Kristine living at farm Dismyn, and his niece Popi and her husband Piet from Swart Tak. When Piet and Popi appeared in Grootfontein Kashe gave them a piece of paper, on which he wrote Anton's name, his own name and also his cell phone number³³² and asked them to ask the teacher from the kindergarten to call an ambulance to take Anton to the clinic in Omatako for treatment. However, Kashe complained that neither his nephew nor his niece forwarded the request to the teacher. When I asked him why, he gave me as an explanation the shyness of some Bushmen to enter into conversation with non-!Xun: „There are many !Xun who are afraid to talk with other people.“

Kashe did not go to Swart Tak since he had meanwhile found work in the town (**F**). He was asked by the Herero Eben to look after her newly built brick house on the outskirts of the township for which he would receive some food and 150 NS per month. He soon got a chance to see Anton as Eben and her husband asked him to go with them to Swart Tak in order to settle a dispute about the ownership of one of her cows. They spent only one night in Swart Tak and went back to Grootfontein, but Kashe took his son with him. According to Kashe, Anton must have been suffering from the sores for a long period, but he knew from his

³³² Kashe was illiterate, but managed to write these names and was also partly numerate.

previous treatment which medicine to buy in the drug store. Kashe claimed if Anton had not had the sores, he would have left him in Swart Tak to attend pre-school.

Kashe then kept on working for the Herero woman in Grootfontein. On some days he checked the house only during the day, but sometimes he slept there with his children and cooked on a fire in the yard. The property was, however, poorly secured. There was still no entry door he could lock and instead of a window only a hole in the wall and no fence around the plot. He ended this employment abruptly at the end of 2009. On the night of the 23 to 24 December (according to Kashe at exactly 1:30 a.m.) a burglar, who was, according to Kashe, carrying a gun entered the house and asked Kashe, whom he did not see at first because he was lying with his two sons behind the bed to hide, to give him a sanitation pipe, which he must have seen there before. Kashe managed to tell him that the pipe was not there any longer, but the intruder took his radio, one kilogram of sugar and about half a kilogram of rice, which Kashe had wanted to cook for the children on Christmas Day. The next day he decided to stop looking after the property: „Those people (chochis) could easily kill us.“³³³

Kashe then stayed in Grootfontein for a long period of a year and a half to July 2011. In March 2010 Kashe tried to gain another job in Grootfontein's township (G). A Damara was allegedly looking for workers in Blikkiesdorp who would lay pipes leading waste water away from toilets in the Saamstaan part of the township. However, Kashe spent only one day digging the pit for the pipes and left. „I work with hunger,“ was his explanation. As in the past (Grootfontein, 88D) he saw that if he were to work the whole day, there would not be time to look for bottles and, since he would get the salary only at the end of the month, he could not provide for his two sons.

He then lived by selling scrap metal and empty bottles until he found yardwork with a German man in the town (H). He was told about the work by a Damara man sympathetic to his plight, as he had often seen him pulling his cart through the township. Kashe received 400 NS a month for doing three half days of work (Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday) per week and some food he could eat on site. Although he claimed he was satisfied there, he stayed for only one month. The only reason he gave was the strained relationship with a “Damara” woman who worked in the kitchen.³³⁴ The woman allegedly kept on putting him in bad light in front of the house owner. Kashe suspected she was doing it because she wanted to secure work for someone from her family. According to Kashe, as a result of her gossip the German started to tell him that “he knew only farm work” and not yardwork. Kashe could also not stand the behaviour of the “Damara” woman towards him as she twice gave him mealie meal in a bowl that she fed the white man's dog with.³³⁵ He realized this only after he had washed the bowl and put it in the cupboard when the “Damara” scolded him for not putting it on the ground under the table in the kitchen, so that the farmer would not get angry at her having placed the dog's bowl with the utensils used by his family. Kashe was all the more appalled by this behaviour as the wife of the German once gave him food (rice and meat) in a container. When I asked Kashe why she behaved so badly towards him, he responded: „She is Damara, I'm !Xun, she thinks she can do whatever she wants to.“ Kashe worked there for four weeks. Then the house owner told him that a previous employee would be resuming his job

³³³ The Herero decided they would not call the police, because she was afraid of running into troubles as well. She got namely the pipe burglar was looking for, by a Damara man, who probably somewhere stole it.

³³⁴ He thought in the beginning she was “true” Damara, but later on he saw she was „mixed “ and also spoke !Xun.

³³⁵ Though at that time it had upset him, when narrating this to me, he could not stop laughing.

there. Kashe was convinced that had the “Damara” not talked badly about him, he would have stayed there for a long time.

From May 2010 Kashe lived again by doing *zula*. In August he was told by his „big friend“ Háka (“Damara-!Xun”) about the possibility of being employed building a private residential house in the town (I). Kashe was promised 30 NS per day and his work consisted of digging the ground for the structure’s concrete foundation and fetching building materials for the workers. He said he earned 100 NS for the first four days he worked there. Then he was told he would receive the rest of the salary at the end of the month. However, he added that he was the only worker not to be paid earlier. Then, after being told that he had to wait until the end of September, he quit the job.³³⁶

When I came to Grootfontein in November 2010, Kashe told me that in the period of almost 16 months since I was last in Grootfontein, he had stayed in the town, except for the one-day trip to Swart Tak. He claimed he was also contemplating visiting two farms in the vicinity of Grootfontein where relatives lived. „I was telling the people I’ll go there.” But he did not since he was still afraid of being caught by Louis Grobbelaar, the Klippan farmer: „All the time I’m only afraid, it’s still the same.”

In December 2010 I went with Kashe to his plot in Swart Tak for several days. During our stay there Kashe seemed to have clearer plans about what to do once I left. He said that after coming back to Grootfontein he would buy 10 or 20 kilograms of mealie meal, some sugar and persuade his relative Jakob from plot 2 to join him and they would go to Swart Tak to clean the land of bushes and plant maize and beans and also repair his hut, which was falling apart. Kashe told me Jakob had already agreed to the plan. “I don’t want to sit the next year without food,” claimed Kashe. However, he did not intend to stay in Swart Tak permanently because until the harvest there would be nothing he could live on. Thus, he envisaged shuttling between Grootfontein and Swart Tak. His plan was to *zula* in the town and with the money he would earn from selling bottles and scrap metals he would buy mealie meal with which he would go to Bushmanland. There he would check his maize field and come back to the town when the food was eaten, then *zula* and go back again to Swart Tak.

However, when I came back in December 2011, I found out that things had taken a totally different course. Kashe’s plans were altered by what had seemed an inauspicious event that had happened during our last stay in Swart Tak a year earlier. One day when Kashe was stepping over the wire fence to his plot, he suddenly felt a pain in the lower part of his legs as if somebody had hit him there. He started to suspect it could be the result of a witchcraft curse. Kashe told me that when I left he started to have problems in both of his legs, he felt it first in the lower parts and then this pain spread up the legs and the pain increased when he was walking for a long time. Sometimes he struggled to walk at all and spent a lot of time just sitting or lying at the plot in Blikkiesdorp. Then, he bought pain-killer pills in the drug store in the town, but they brought only short-time relief.

Thus, he went for help to the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, where he had sometimes, although not frequently, gone in the past. He told them he feared his problems were caused by witchcraft and the pastor smeared his legs with salt, lay his hand on them and prayed for him during the service. Whenever Kashe went to the church, the pastor always held Kashe’s legs firmly in his hands and prayed. Later on, Piet, his niece’s husband living in

³³⁶ Later on however, he managed to get some of the money by asking for help the Labour office.

Swart Tak next to his plot, visited him in Grootfontein and when they discussed Kashe's troubles he agreed the witchcraft threat in Swart Tak was serious and he recommended that Kashe not to go to Bushmanland for some time. During the three-month period when Kashe was recovering in Grootfontein, he could not *zula* as much as when he was feeling healthy. He looked occasionally for bottles, but, he was too weak to pull his trolley and carried only the rucksack on his back. After selling the bottles, he went straight home and sent the *manneljies* from plot 1 or 2 to buy some mealie meal in the Hakahana shop in the township with the money. He had to rely significantly on the help he was provided with by his parents and his mother's "sister" Emma, who were also living in Blikkiesdorp at the time.

However, it was not only the fear of witchcraft that made Kashe give up on his desire to go to Swart Tak. He feared he might get killed in Swart Tak by the members of the (alleged) gang of people catching people and cutting off their genitals for witchcraft. When Kashe talked with Piet during the latter's visit to Grootfontein in February 2010, they agreed that this gang might fear him because he was often in the company of a white man, i.e. me, who he was telling about the problems the Bushmen in the area were facing, including the issue of being targeted by the gang. Kashe was especially afraid of an "Ovambo" policeman from neighbouring Rooidag. According to Kashe's information, the gang continued to operate in the western part of Bushmanland to Grootfontein and probably other towns such as Tsumeb, Otjiwarongo, former Otjituo reserve and the Mururani and Rundu areas. Kashe said its important members were except for the policeman from Rooidag, a "Damara" pastor, who lived in Grootfontein township, an "Ovambo" living only two plots from Kashe's father's plot, a Herero from Kameelwoud and a "mixed" !Xun, who was allegedly moving between Bushmanland and Grootfontein. The last one was described by Kashe as one of the gang's "workers".

Piet informed Kashe that the gang had caught a crippled man living at a plot neighbouring Kashe's one night not a long time before on the Rooidag – Tsumkwe road. They were about to cut off his genitals, but he was allegedly saved by his friends, who threw stones at the attackers. The identity of the attackers was, according to Kashe, not revealed since it was dark. Piet also told Kashe a new story: the Herero from Kameelwoud allegedly persuaded one "Ovambo" to go with him to Omatako to drink. The "Ovambo" allegedly drank heavily, but the Herero and his friends remained intentionally sober and on the way back to Kameelwoud slit the "Ovambo"'s throat. Kashe heard meanwhile that people were cutting off other people's genitals in area of the former Otjituo reserve. A friend told him that when he worked there a group of Hereros tried to catch him and wanted to cut off his private parts, but he fought them off with a piece of an iron bar he had managed to grab and fled. "This story (about people cutting off sex organs) is everywhere," claimed Kashe in 2011. It was evident he took it very seriously and was genuinely convinced the gang might want to kill him.

Kashe was convinced that he could be more easily caught by the gang in Bushmanland, which was sparsely inhabited in comparison to Grootfontein and where a person could easily be dragged into the bush without anybody noticing. Interestingly, Kashe claimed he felt more secure in Grootfontein because there was a cell phone network and he could call the police for help. "It's the only thing which protects me," claimed Kashe of his cell phone. In Swart Tak, which was not covered by any network, Kashe felt more vulnerable. Kashe told me in December 2011 that the gang members were paralyzing their victims with pepper spray and for that reason they wore medical masks, which, according to Kashe, people could easily obtain at the Grootfontein hospital.

Although Kashe did not explicitly mention it as a reason for his decreasing inclination to move to Swart Tak, a certain role may also have been played that he might not feel socially as comfortable there as in the past. At the end of 2010, when we got to Swart Tak, he found that most of the things in his hut there had been stolen and he was very angry at his !Xun neighbours for not having prevented it and suspected that they may even have taken some of his belongings.

Furthermore, it also seemed that Kashe did not have anybody in Swart Tak that he regarded as a very close friend and ally. His best friend in Swart Tak /Kan//a, with whom he was in a kin relationship, had died. Their friendship dated back to the time when they were both held for some time in a Maroelaboom prison cell. Later, when they lived in Bushmanland, they used to ride together on horseback to visit their relatives at the farms (“We *zula* the food”) and also to look in the bush for the Hereros’ stray cattle. It was clear that when /Kan//a lived in Swart Tak, Kashe had one reason more to live there.³³⁷

In April 2011, when Kashe’s leg problems had abated, he found temporary work at a plot near Driehook plot (**J**), where he cut the grass. A young !Xun from plots 6 - 7 told him about the job. However, he did not have to leave Grootfontein and stay at the plot, since its German owner drove the workers to the plot from the town every day. The problem of taking care of his two sons was also solved as two women running a small kindergarten in Blikkiesdorp looked after them during the day and did not ask Kashe for any money out of sympathy for him. Kashe worked at the plot from Monday till Friday from the morning until 2 in the afternoon at a wage of 100 NS per a week, and in the afternoons he often went on *zula*. However, he stayed there just a fortnight, thus earning in total 200 NS. He left because he physically still did not feel well. After leaving the job, Kashe stayed for another two months in Blikkiesdorp and was living on *zula*.

Even though I believed that Kashe would never again work at a farm because of the constant pain in his stomach and his fear of the owner of Klippan, when I came to Grootfontein in December 2011, to my surprise, I learned that Kashe in July 2011 had again become a farmworker.

³³⁷ The circumstances of his death were clear in Kashe’s memory. According to his story, /Kan//a often had quarrels, sometimes violent, with the /Turus, who then bewitched him. /Kan//a became ill and was treated at the clinic in Mangetti. But since he had a dispute there with a Bushman, he decided to leave the hospital and go back to Swart Tak. However, the doctor allegedly angrily told him that if he left so early, he should not come back, if he would feel sick again. After coming to Swart Tak, his condition worsened, Kashe called the Mangetti hospital, but was told that since /Kan//a was a troublemaker they would not assist him. He passed away soon after.

Table 13 Period V. Between Grootfontein and Bushmanland: Kashe substitutes the mother (2008 – 2011)

	Place	duration of the stay	work	ethnicity of the farmer/employer	ethnicity of the workers	kin (“family”) bf. arrival	reasons for coming to this place	reasons for leaving to another place	way of leaving
90.	Grootfontein	VI.2007 - I.2008	Y/N	- Coloured - Herero	Damara/ multiethnic environm.	Y	- family - his house	was offered a work	car of the employer
Kashe moves to a plot near Grootfontein									
91.	Lemoentjie	15.-31.1. 2008	Y	Coloured	!Xun	Y	work	to obtain the ID card	by foot
Kashe moves to Grootfontein									
92.	Grootfontein	27. 5. – 7. 7. 2008	N	-	multiethnic environm.	Y	- his house - family	looking for work	by foot?
Kashe moves to a plot near Grootfontein									
93.	Lemoentjie	VI.-VII. 2008	Y	Coloured	!Xun	Y	- work - family	I needed to work with him in Grootfontein	by foot
Kashe moves to Grootfontein									
94.	Grootfontein	VII.-X. 2008	N	-	multiethnic environm.	Y	- I needed to work with him in Grootfontein - family	- was offered work - plant at his land in Swart Tak	hike
Kashe moves to Bushmanland									

95.	Swart Tak	XI. 2008 – IV. 2009	Y	Herero	!Xun	Y	work	- to accompany the parents to withdraw the pension - to ask the employer for salary	hike
Kashe moves to Grootfontein									
96.	Grootfontein	28.4.-29.5. 2009	N	-	multiethnic environm.	Y	- accompany the parents to withdraw the pension - ask his employer for salary - go to hospital - take care of the property in Blikiesdorp - fearing the gang selling peoples' body parts	return to the work	hike
Kashe moves to Bushmanland									
97.	Swart Tak	29.5. – end of VI. 2009	Y	Herero	!Xun	Y	work	because of my arrival	hike
Kashe moves to Grootfontein									
98.	Grootfontein	end of VI. 2009 – VII. 2011	Y	-	multiethnic environm.	Y		leaving for a farm	

Comments: Bound to Grootfontein

Table 14 Kashe's mobility between 5/2005 - 6/2011		
Grootfontein	49,5	66 %
Swart Tak	12,5	16,5 %
commercial farms/plots	9,5	12,5 %
Hereroland	3 months	4 %
Other places		
tender by Abenab	0,5 month	0,5 %

Looking at Kashe's movements in the period after he acquired a permanent place to stay in Grootfontein in 2005, we observe that his shack in the town became for him by far the most important place (66 %). The second most important was his plot in Swart Tak (16,5 %), followed by farms and

plots (12,5 %). Kashe's movements sometimes resembled a shuttle between his "houses" in the town and in the communal area, even though he spent much less time at the latter.

There were five new major reasons influencing Kashe's mobility in the reported period between 2007 and the first half of 2011. First, he split up with his wife Lucia, who left both children by him. The second reason was Anton's enrolment in school. The third, Kashe's fear for witchcraft, the fourth, the activities of the alleged gang cutting off and selling people's genitals, and the fifth, my research.

Since being left by Lucia and bearing the responsibility for two children, for Kashe it became even more difficult to enter into any employment, because it would mean he could not properly look after his two sons. He hesitated to accept any employment that would mean that he would spend most of the day at work. We saw that in 2010 Kashe twice left a job in the town - once it was digging out the pitches for sanitation pipes (G) and the other time building a house (I), since he could not wait until the end of the month for the salary. Living on collecting empty bottles allowed Kashe to take his sons with him and if they became tired, he could drive them on his cart. His other three periods of work in the town also ended after a short time: The Hereros, for whom he did yardwork (E) underpaid him and stopped giving him rations. Guarding the house of the Herero Eben in the township was dangerous (F) and at the house of the German man (H) he was constantly put in a bad light by a "Damara" worker, until he was released. At Driehook (J) he left after one day after feeling physically too weak to do the job.

Leaving Blikkiesdorp for agricultural project at Kabuda

In 2008 I gained clear proof that having a place to stay in Grootfontein did not mean that all the !Xun living there associated their future with staying in the town. This became clear in connection with a !Xun agricultural project initiated and run at plot called Kabuda near the town by the "foremen" of the "!Kung Grootfontein Community".

According to Amos Shivute, the community chairman, the acquisition of a plot for the landless !Xun had from the beginning been the main goal of the !Xun living in the area of Grootfontein. The committee members found support from Deputy Prime Minister Libertina Amathila during her visit to Grootfontein in March 2007, and also the Grootfontein municipality and the regional council. They managed to obtain an approximately 20 hectare plot, which was lent to them by its Herero owner. The aim was to run a vegetable project, from which the harvest would partly be consumed by the !Xun participants and partly sold. The money earned would then be deposited in the !Xun community bank account. Shivute said to me that he had been sure the project would run well, but it ran aground on the unkept promises of the government, which failed to provide food for the workers and diesel for running the water pump.

According to Shivute, about 20 adult !Xun with children came to the plot and built their huts there. Most of them were from plot 1 and 2, that is the !Xun with whom I was working the most. When the news spread that the !Xun in Blikkiesdorp could start a new life at the plot, many of them regarded it as a long-awaited opportunity to start their “own work” on their own land. Kashe’s brother Andris dismantled his township hut, which was made out of wooden poles and mud, took the poles to Kabuda and built a new house there for his family. Kashe’s mother Maria, her “sister” Emma, and many !Xun from Max’s family went as well. They apparently did not have any detailed information about the project. There were rumors that the government would distribute drought relief food at Kabuda on the anniversary of Namibian independence on 21 March and that the !Xun at the plot would be provided for by the government. „They were waiting there but nobody came,“ recalled Kashe.

Since the !Xun had no food Maria and Emma walked to plot Lemoentjie (93), where they received some from Kashe and his father Willem, who were working there at that time. Kashe was afraid both of the old women could be robbed of their pension by the “bachochos” . Both women slept away from the others with bush between them and in “traditional” huts from bent branches which were later covered by a plastic sheet. Andris also soon gave up and moved to a farm neat Berg Aukas where he found work. Maria and Emma then moved into his shack, which could be locked. Kashe went to Kabuda “twice” but only to visit. “I would have gone there as well,” said Kashe. However, he was afraid of Luis Grobbelaar, the farmer from Klippan. According to Kashe, Grobbelaar often visited a plot next to Kabuda which was owned by his brother in-law. Eventually, all the !Xun left Kabuda.

If we note that the Bushmen often build an elaborate, dense web of social relations, we may be over-inclined to think that finding somebody to take care of their children should be easy. After Kashe and Lucia broke up, he placed Anton at his relatives in Swart Tak, but he was often pre-occupied about whether they were taking good enough care of his son and whether he was suffering from hunger or any health problem. Occasionally, he also asked his female kin from neighbouring plot 2 for some assistance in supervising his sons. For a short period he was also helped by a “Damara” woman from Blikkiesdorp and the female owners of a small kindergarten in the township. Likewise, his parents and often also his mother’s “sister” Emma remained important for him. As pensioners, they could support him financially and share food with him. Kashe stayed with his parents with some interruptions for much of the time in the reported period. He lived with them in Grootfontein from December 2007 until January 2008 when they moved to Lemoentjie plot near the town. After spending some time in Grootfontein, Kashe returned to his parents at the same plot in May 2008. When he moved back to Grootfontein in July, his parents followed him. In October 2008 after Kashe had moved to Swart Tak in Bushmanland, he was again almost immediately followed by his parents. Soon after he had gone to Grootfontein in June 2009, his parents went to the town as well (before coming to the town, however, they spent some time at farm Dismyn, where Kashe’s sister Kristine lived) and he lived with them there until the end of my fourth research in December 2010, even though in the last months only with his father, since his mother Maria and Emma were by then at Dismyn. According to Kashe, they spent most of their time with him in Grootfontein in the first half of 2011 as well.

Nevertheless, despite his parent’s assistance in providing for the children, Kashe often mentioned they were too old to supervise them properly. He was, for example, afraid that in his absence his children would be hit by a car on the road next to their plot in Blikkiesdorp. The relationship between Kashe and his parents was by its nature complex and it was not beneficial only to Kashe. We saw that in many cases it was the parents who moved to him. In fact their co-presence helped to decrease their respective vulnerabilities.

The separation from Lucia complicated Kashe's situation as he could not move away so easily from the children. However, it eased his economic situation to a degree, since, as he sometimes stressed, he did not have to provide for his wife. Following the pattern of working for the Herero Chezao in Katomama (72, 79) and at Lemoentjie plot (85, 91), he accepted work for a person who had deceived or mistreated him in the past in Swart Tak (81, 95) too.

In the period between the end of 2007 and July 2011, Kashe stayed in Swart Tak for a lengthy time only from the last quarter of 2008 to the middle of 2009. It was the Herero Eben who "took him" there. He could live there for the longer period since she regularly provided him with a (even though it was very meagre) wage of 100 NS or so and allowed him to drink her cows' milk. His intention of doing some subsistence agriculture failed as had happened in previous years. It was also Eben who often paid for his transport between Grootfontein and Swart Tak. His stay in Bushmanland, thus, depended on the Herero.

However, in this particular instance Kashe's stay in Swart Tak was supported by enrolling Anton in the school at Rooidag. Thus, he moved back from Grootfontein to Swart Tak in May 2008 so that Anton could resume attending the school after the holidays. At the end of the year, however, Kashe took his son from Bushmanland to Grootfontein, because he was concerned about his health and that he was not being fed sufficiently by his relatives in Swart Tak.

He often visited Grootfontein from Swart Tak. The nature of the work relationship with the Herero Eben, which was not as formal as when he had worked for white farmers, enabled him to do so. Thus, if Kashe wanted to leave for the town, he just arranged with his relatives or friends in Swart Tak to look after Eben's livestock in his absence. He could ask, for example, his relatives from the neighbouring plot, although, he often complained that they just milked the Herero's cows, but neglected to give them water. Thus, he started to turn more to the help of a !Xun called Boni (according to Kashe, he was Ovambo on one side of his family) and in 2009 I observed that he was also helped by Jakob, the son of Max from plot 2 in Grootfontein, who was then living in Swart Tak. Sometimes he could also ask an "Ovambo" pastor from his neighbourhood who had done the job in the past to look after the cattle. However, it appeared that the !Xun who were "subcontracted" by Kashe may not always have been satisfied with the task. Since Kashe could not remunerate them, their only reward for the work was the cows' milk. I observed that Jakob was demotivated to do the work and it caused some tension between him and Kashe, when the latter accused him of being lazy and *skelm*. Once Kashe asked Eben in Grootfontein to give him some mealie meal for Boni, but she retorted that since it was him who had asked Boni to do his work, he must arrange the food for him on his own.

From Kashe's perspective, Swart Tak still seemed to be a better place to live than Grootfontein or the farms. Nevertheless, without a source of permanent income, it was hardly possible to live there alone for a longer period, let alone with dependants. Since most of the !Xun in Swart Tak were suffering from insufficient food, Kashe could hardly keep on asking them for help. Thus, Kashe stayed in Grootfontein for a period in 2009, when his older son Anton was placed with relatives in Swart Tak. His emotional attitude towards Swart Tak was, however, clearly demonstrated when I suggested to him that we visit the region together. When I asked Kashe in 2008 to leave plot Lemoentjie, where he was working, I promised he would be able to visit Swart Tak. When my promise was not fulfilled, due to time constraints, he was apparently upset. "It seems to me we don't go to Bushmanland?" Kashe asked me, with disappointment in his voice towards the end of my field research.

In 2007 and 2008 witchcraft was, said the !Xun, Kashe included, a serious problem in the former Hereroland, but not so much in Bushmanland and not at all in Grootfontein. I believe this claim indeed reflected to some extent their experience, and it was confirmed to me in 2008 by the !Xun pastor Ephraim from Grootfontein, who would have been consulted by the Bushmen living in the township if there was a problem with witchcraft in the town. Later, I realized, however, that because of the sensitivity of the issue the !Xun may have been somewhat hesitant to talk about it. For example, Kashe started to talk with me about it more openly only during my fourth field research to Namibia in December 2010, when we were alone in Bushmanland on a day-long trip in the bush far from the settlements and where no one could hear us. In 2007 when I inquired about the issue of witchcraft in Grootfontein, I was told only about one !Xun, who lived at plots 6-7, who was allegedly bewitched by the Herero at a farm. In 2008 I learned that at plot 8 were two children who were being raised by their grandparents because the Hereros at a farm had caused the death of their parents. There were in fact two versions: in one the Hereros poisoned the *tombo* the !Xun were drinking; in the other; the !Xun had fallen victim to Herero's witchcraft.³³⁸

Generally, the !Xun portrayed themselves as a target of Herero witchcraft because the latter were allegedly often jealous at their good performance working on the farms. In 2008 I came across witchcraft directly at Kashe's plot. Kashe was at plot Lemoentjie. However, when he returned, he slept for some time in his parents shack. Only after a few days did he tell me it was because he had found faeces smeared on the chain and padlock on his shack door and he thought it might be witchcraft being used against him. He believed it was done by somebody from a poor Herero family who had been allowed to build a shack at the plot by Kashe's father for a monthly rent of 50 NS. After a few days, Kashe plucked up his courage and went into his shanty, saying the faeces may have been smeared on the padlock by children playing a game.

The issue of witchcraft seemed to have started to have a significant influence on Kashe's life only in 2010 after we visited Swart Tak. When passing between his plot and another, he suddenly felt a sharp pain in his legs and immediately started to suspect it could have been witchcraft. However, he had already had an experience with witchcraft near his plot in Swart Tak in 2004. One day, when he was digging some bushfood from the ground with his shovel, he found a bottle in which was allegedly some witchcraft material. Kashe claimed if he had broken the bottle, it could have killed him. He left the bottle where he found it and threw just some soil on it. He recalled that on that day he felt sick. He was convinced that the bottle had been put in the ground by a Herero who had owned the land and he could have used the witchcraft as protection.

According to Kashe, the bottle must have been placed underground before he acquired his plot in Swart Tak and he was sure it was not directed against him. In 2010 Kashe told me that there had been people using witchcraft in the recent past in this part of Bushmanland and named especially the Kavangos and /Turus, but that in Swart Tak it had not been a real problem. However, during my visit to Swart Tak at the end of 2010 the issue of witchcraft was an important topic among the !Xun in that settlement. After coming there, Kashe told a story about his "brother" Soti, who had died that year in Swart Tak allegedly after being bewitched. According to Kashe, it happened because he had criticised the construction of a

³³⁸ Pastor Ephraim believed in the first version. He told me in 2008 that in this particular instance two Herero farmers quarrelled because of the ownership of cattle and one of them stole some animals from the another. However, he was allegedly seen by a !Xun man and since he was afraid the !Xun might reveal it to other people, he poisoned his *tombo*, which then drank except for the !Xun man also his wife.

new *kraal*, which was being built near the village by the Herero Eben. The !Xun in Swart Tak were convinced Soti had been bewitched by Eben's people. In December 2010 Kashe recounted also another story of another death in Swart Tak that was, according to him, caused by witchcraft. A !Xun couple living in the settlement had a dispute and the woman threw a stone at the man. It however missed him and hit an Mbundu man standing nearby in the face. The woman died the same year and the !Xun in the village were convinced she had been killed by the man's magic in revenge. The man also often gave people sweets that were said to contain witchcraft as well.

In December 2011 Kashe told me of a case of a recent death of a !Xun, who allegedly did not repay his debt for *tombo* in Single Quarters in Grootfontein and he suspected there may also have been some influence of witchcraft in the recent death of the mother of Felix, the husband of his wife Kristine, which occurred at the farm. Thus, during this period Kashe seemed to be preoccupied with the problems of black people's alleged witchcraft directed against the Bushmen more than ever before. Having been struck by the pain in his legs at Swart Tak, Kashe started to observe himself and to interpret other problems he had as consequence of this witchcraft. Thus, he complained about unexpected pain when urinating and he also started to feel a pain in his shoulder. I was convinced the latter was caused by his having carried a heavy bag for some time the day before. However, since the pain did not disappear quickly, he still suspected that he had been targeted by witchcraft even after he returned to Grootfontein. When we met the !Xun pastor Ephraim by chance in the township, Kashe told me he could tell from the way the pastor was looking at him that he also recognised he was bewitched. However, when leaving Grootfontein at the end of 2010, I did not have expected that Kashe would be recuperating from witchcraft for months to come.

Kashe's movements were influenced also by fear of the alleged gang cutting off people's genitalia, which they then sold to sorcerers. As when talking about the witchcraft, Kashe was very careful that nobody could hear him and from my subjective point of view this vigilance bordered on paranoia. He was willing to talk about it on a public place only if nobody was nearby but preferred to talk about it inside his shack, when he switched on the radio so that nobody would overhear us. He also felt more relaxed talking about this issue at my residence and not in the township. Kashe had started to talk about these stories during my second field work research visit in 2008: At the beginning he did not want to talk about it himself, but was insistent that I talk about the matter with Hans, his relative and foreman from Lemeontji plot. However, when I visited Hans at the plot to talk about the gang's practises, he was so afraid to talk that he reacted to my questions by switching the discussion to different topics. However, he told him that one day he was abducted by some people in Grootfontein, they dragged him into a car and started to touch his genitalia before he managed to flee. In 2008 I was told by the !Xun pastor Ephraim that the !Xun had talked the most about the story of people being caught and their organs being sold the year before.

I believe this was because of an event from September 2007. That month police found a woman's body parts at several locations near the state hospital in Grootfontein. Later, it turned out that the body was that of a Kenyan nurse who had been working in the hospital and that she was murdered and her body dismembered by her Kenyan boyfriend. However, that horrific story made headlines across Namibia and was widely reported on the radio, to which many !Xun listen, and it became a hot topic of conversation for the residents of Grootfontein, irrespective of ethnic background. I believe it could have contributed to the fears of the !Xun in Grootfontein that they might be targeted by people selling body parts. Importantly, the !Xun were convinced that the gang focuses on them because they were known to often be

found heavily drunk and in this state could be easily overwhelmed and that when a Bushman disappeared the police would not be concerned about it.

Furthermore, we also saw how Kashe's movements could be altered by an unexpected event. This was the case at the beginning of 2008 when Kashe left the plot Lemoentji in order to obtain his ID card which would enable him to apply for government support for his children. However, he did not go there nor did he return to Lemoentjie because his younger son was suffering from some minor burns on his finger.

Although it was not my intention, it seems clear, retrospectively, that my research doubtless had a significant influence on Kashe's movements. His decision to stay near the town or in the town after I left Namibia in July 2007 was to some extent influenced by his expectation of my return. In September that year, in July 2009 and December 2010 he also went with me to Bushmanland. In the first half of 2008 he stayed in the township partly because he thought I might come. His stay in the town during that period may also have been made possible since I had asked the Dutch Reformed Church in the town to provide the family with some basic foodstuffs. In this particular instance Kashe could capitalise on my sympathy. It was also me who made him leave his job at Lemoentjie plot in July 2008 and Swart Tak for Grootfontein in June 2009. In fact, since I informed him from the beginning that I planned to return to Namibia in the years which were to come, he knew I could come back any time. This may have tempted him to stay in Grootfontein or its vicinity, since he knew this was the place I wanted to work. Furthermore, as we saw, according to his narratives, his mobility in 2010 was also heavily influenced by me. He claimed the gang cutting off and trading other people's genitals might target him since they could have learned that Kashe had revealed the identity of its members to me. Since Kashe thought it might be easier for the gang to kill him in the mostly remote area of Bushmanland than in Grootfontein or at the farms, he started to avoid Swart Tak.

Staying with me seemed to have influenced Kashe's life in several ways, but I believe it was advantageous for him. First of all, he did not have to earn any money since I provided him with basic foodstuffs such as mealie meal, bread, instant soups, biscuits, sugar, tea, sweets for children and, occasionally, also covered some rather small expenses, including airtime for his cell phone or admission fees at the hospital. Sometimes I also gave him small amounts of money, usually not exceeding 20 NS. At the end of each of my field researches he also received his "salary", which was on average 300 NS during my first, second and third trips, but in 2013 600 NS. I am convinced the second reason Kashe liked to work with me was that this association with a white man enhanced his low social status and, thus, also his personal dignity and perception of self-value. This also happened when he shared the food I had given him with his nuclear or enhanced family. Although I do not believe I was offering Kashe any kind of comfort, there was no doubt that the usual economic activities available to him were in no way competitive with staying with me.

Period VI.: From castaway space a desired option: Kashe goes back to farm

When I discovered that Kashe had started to work at a farm in July 2011, I was taken aback. Kashe moved to a farm (he regarded the work at the plot Lemoentjie, where he was employed three times, as only temporary, something he did to earn some money) after three and a half years of living, mostly, in Grootfontein and Bushmanland. What was the reason for Kashe changing his attitude and agreeing to go to the farm again? He told me he felt physically much better. Not only had the pain in his legs stopped, but he also did not feel the pain in his belly any longer. His explanation was that he was helped in the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God. According to Kashe, he had been completely healed there. At the farm Kashe found out that the pain did not come back even after hard work: “I can take the axe and cut out all the bushes (and feel nothing)”. The second reason why he accepted the work was allegedly that he wanted to earn more money so that his sons did not go hungry.

The farm **Herenhausen (99)**, was owned by Germans, and lay about 15 kilometres from the town by car, but significantly closer on foot. He found the job there after the farmer sent his “Damara” employer to Blikkiesdorp to find workers among the Bushmen. Kashe’s work at the farm consisted mainly of looking after more than 370 sheep and 25 goats, feeding the hens and transporting the workers by tractor to where they had to repair the fence. He earned a salary of 800 NS, the highest he had ever been paid. He also appeared to have a good relationship with the farmer, who seemed to trust him and treated him like a foreman. This is what had prompted my great surprise: virtually overnight Kashe made the transition from a unemployed *zula* man to the native head of the labour force at the farm.

At the same time, it gave me an insight into how extensively the !Xun utilised their kin bonds to exploit employment opportunities and the hurdles farmers faced when recruiting a workforce.

The first !Xun with whom the farmer spoke in Blikkiesdorp was Max from plot 2. He, however, told the farmer he would only be available a few days later. Kashe saw them and joined the discussion, agreeing to go to the farm the next morning. The next day, 14 July, 2011, the farmer drove Kashe, Kashe’s brother’s son Small Willem, and Kashe’s two sons to the farm. At that time there was, according to Kashe, only one “mixed Damara” worker. A few days later the farmer also drove Max and two other !Xun workers there. The “Damara” had been working at the farm for only a short time and did not stay there long. According to Kashe, in August a thorn wounded the “Damara’s” leg when he was cutting the bush. The farmer allowed him to go to the town to be treated at the hospital. However, he returned a few days later (according to Kashe, he did not go to the hospital at all and just stayed in the township) and since he did not bother to give the farmer an explanation as to why he had come late, the latter dismissed him.

Max stayed at the farm only until the end of July before leaving and resuming *zula* life in the town. “It seems to me he likes the *zula* life,” commented Kashe. Small Willem also started to think about leaving the place after a short while. It was winter time, the grass was dry and, according to Kashe, it was very difficult for the worker to look after the large flock of sheep, which moved long distances in search of pasture. Kashe claimed to have persuaded Small Willem to stay at the farm. However, when he received his salary at the end of August, he left without giving the farmer any notice. The day after Small Willem’s desertion the farm, the farmer came to the workers compound and saw only Kashe there. Kashe, who could not do the work by his own, recommended the farmer to bring his brother Andris to the farm, even

though the latter was physically not very well, since he was recovering from tuberculosis. Since herding the sheep was very strenuous, Andris health deteriorated and after a week he asked the farmer if he could go to the hospital in Grootfontein. After recovering, he returned, but the farmer offered him only temporary employment. He accepted, but soon left the farm for good, since he saw it did not offer him a long-term future: “Then I see it was just a waste of time.” Andris then decided to stay in the town while still recuperating from the long sickness, and he found a yardwork job for 150 NS monthly.

Kashe subsequently recommended Tamati, a son in-law of the “owner” of plot 2 Max and a !Xun called Petrus, who also lived in the township. The latter brought another !Xun called Piet with him to the farm. Some time in September and October Lukas, the brother in-law of Kashe’s brother Andris, came to the farm as well. He worked there for several weeks, but quit after an incident with the farmer. This happened after Lukas and another worker were asked to dig out and repair a water pipe. However, they were not careful and when digging they damaged the pipe. The farmer lost his temper and took them to the Labour office in Grootfontein, which purportedly agreed that the price of a new pipe could be deducted from their salaries. Lukas claimed that he felt the farmer might beat him and, therefore, he left the *plaas*. Lukas also complained that the farmer had not told him in advance what the prices of the foodstuffs sold at the farm were and therefore he did not know, what amount he deducted from his salary. He also felt deceived as the farmer allegedly promised him he would not look after the sheep for too long. Kashe told me that when Lukas became dissatisfied, he often started to talk about beating up the farmer. I cannot judge who was the right version of events, but it may be noted among some !Xun Lukas was regarded in some ways as a problematic man.³³⁹

In December 2011 also working at the farm were Jakob, the son of Max from plot 2, Festus from plot 1, a relative of Lukas’s, and Festus’s brother, John. However, they were only given temporary work. In December Small Willem returned to the farm as well. Kashe first asked the farmer if he would not mind and, since Small Willem had already proved to be a good worker, he agreed to his return (even though when leaving the farm he had not told the farmer about it in advance).

According to Kashe, it was often difficult to explain things to the farmer, since the latter never gave the workers any space for a discussion. At the time of my research the farmer had a bad reputation, but, according to workers who had known him for a long time, he was not always like that. “It’s only people (workers) who made him like this,” claimed Kashe. According to him, the farmer became almost unapproachable and grumpy because of his negative experiences with workers. The farmer often complained to Kashe that the workforce performed their tasks badly and stole his things. As it turned out, the farmer did suffer from constant stock theft. Kashe recalled three instances. First, at the very end of 2011 three !Xun workers (two of them were sons of Stanson living next to plot 2) killed two of the farmer’s cows. According to Kashe, they became upset with the farmer when he did not give them any alcohol or extra money for the Christmas, as is often the case and one of them was frequently quarrelling with the farmer. After killing the animals they cut them into pieces and hanged

³³⁹ For example, when staying in Blikkiesdorp he was mocked by some !Xun because he constantly talked about a hyena living in the bush next to the township. The hyena was, according to him, attempting to get into his shack at night. There were, however, no hyenas living in the bush, and probably no larger mammals at all, but Lukas went on talking about it, including telling the !Xun that had already once encountered on the road close to the plot and managed to chase it away by hitting it. Kashe told me, that Lukas was also suspecting it could be a lion.

them on the trees in the bush to dry. They were going to eat the meat there, since if they brought it to their houses, it would be noticed by the farmer's family. However, the farmer noticed vultures flying above the trees, found out what had happened and had the culprits arrested.

Around March 2013 another cow disappeared and the next month a further 15 of them went. The unknown thieves attached wire loops to the trees, in which the animals' heads caught and when they tried to run away from the trap they were strangled by the loop. The cows were then cut up and driven away. The thieves were not captured and the farmer blamed "chochis from Grootfontein". However, the !Xun at the farm and the policemen were convinced, it had been the work of former Ovambo workers at the farm, who had quarrelled with the farmer over salaries. According to the !Xun, the Ovambos at the farm were to be from the Tsumeb area and must have known the farm well. They also apparently went to steal the animals at Herenhausen, when it was raining, since they knew the workers and farmers's family would be at their houses.

When I came to the farm in December 2011 and wanted to stay there with Kashe for a week (it was only a short visit), the farmer did not allow it, but agreed that we could go to Blikkiesdorp for the week. At the end of the week Kashe planned to go back to the farm.³⁴⁰ In some aspects he was satisfied there and thought that his stomach problems had stopped because he had enough food at the farm, more than when he relied on *zula* in Grootfontein.

However, it did not mean that he was entirely satisfied. Kashe received what was by !Xun standards a decent salary of 800 (later 860) NS, but the workers did not get any food rations and they had to buy their food. Since it was quite far from the town, they bought the foodstuffs from the farmer, often on credit. The prices at the farm were, however, disadvantageous. 10 kg of mealie meal, which in Grootfontein was around 38 NS, cost allegedly 50 NS. Kashe bought goods on credit so frequently that at the end of the months after deductions he was only paid a very small amount. Thus, his first wage in July 2011 was allegedly only 150 NS while Max from plot 2 received a salary of 259 NS for the same month, according to Kashe, even though he came there later since he allegedly took less credit and ate more at other's people's fireplaces, especially his son's Jakob's. According to Kashe, it was Max's bad habit of eating at other people's places, which was disliked by the others, that enabled him not to buy so much on credit. However, it was difficult to refuse to give him food since he was already regarded as an old man.

Kashe sometimes claimed that the farmer wanted the workers to buy foodstuffs only at his shop. Another time he admitted that even the farmer would wonder why he was buying so often on credit. According to Kashe, there were several reasons for it. First, there were many !Xun living at the farm and since they often shared their food, it quickly disappeared. Second, when his father joined him there, he had to provide for him. I thought it must have been an advantage for Kashe to live with a pensioner. However, according to him, his father was rather a burden for him, since he lost a significant part of his pension immediately after receiving it when he repaid his debts at two black people's shops in the township. Willem also did not buy the cheaper food in the town. According to Kashe, he would buy only one kilogram of sugar and some tobacco in the town after receiving the pension and then he bought expensive food on credit at the farm. When the food was finished, Kashe had to

³⁴⁰ After the farmer got to know that I was interested in his life, Kashe became also concerned that the farmer might be tempted to rather release him. However, it did not happen and Kashe resumed the work after I left.

provide for him. Third, Kashe was obliged to support his relatives at plot 1 in Blikkiesdorp. His mother Maria, who also moved there from farm Dismyn, could hardly walk and was not more able to cook for herself and since she also bought foodstuffs on credit, which she had to repay after receiving her pension. She also spent much of her pension immediately after receiving it.

Kashe often took expensive mielie meal at the farm and sent it to his mother via his brother Andris or other !Xun relatives. At the same time he knew the mealie meal would be quickly eaten since Andris was recovering from tuberculosis and could not provide for his family either and Andris' brother in-law Lukas was not working. Andris himself told me that he depended on his father (who, according to Kashe, struggled as well). Kashe claimed that much of his debt stemmed from buying on credit mutton from sheep that had died (and which the farmer could hardly sell and his family highly probably did not want to eat) or meat from bushpig that the farmer had shot death. The farmer allegedly sold a dead sheep for 300 NS and a bushpig for around 200 NS (usually several !Xun shared the credit). Sometimes he shot guinea fowls and sold them for 10 NS. "We said (to the farmer), yes, we take (it). What should we eat?" During the six months he was working at the farm before I went there in December 2011 the most expensive non-food object he acquired was a lamp with radio for 27 NS. His salary from November 2011 was, after deducting debts, allegedly only 45 NS. At the beginning of 2012 Kashe tried to be more disciplined, but March saw him having big debts again and at the end of the month he received 200 to 300 NS in cash. The !Xun at the farm also resented the fact that the farmer was selling them old clothes instead of giving them to them. For example, they could buy an old shirt for 20 NS and shoes for 50 NS.

Another thing that badly affected Kashe's relationship to the farmer was that the latter allegedly "did not believe that a !Xun got sick" and that "he just wanted you to work". In October 2012 Kashe developed an inflammation on his instep. It became gradually worse, since it was also raining and his shoes were often wet. He started limping and could walk only when leaning on an iron bar but he went on herding the sheep. Kashe recalled another negative incident with the farmer. The latter was driving to Grootfontein every day and Kashe once asked him to buy some tobacco for the farm workers. The farmer did not buy it for some time and, therefore, one morning Kashe decided to go on foot to Grootfontein himself. According to him, he was back in "two hours". However, the farmer reported the incident at the Labour office in Grootfontein the next day: "The farmer was always saying: you have to decide, either you work or you don't work." There were also other small incidents, which might have looked from the point of view of the farmer as insignificant, but contributed to the building up of tensions and Kashe recalled them when the moment came to decide whether to leave or to stay. For example, one day, when it was raining heavily, Kashe came to the farmer and asked him to sell him tea and sugar on credit. But the farmer refused, saying it was not a Monday or Thursday, the days on which it was agreed he would sell the foodstuffs on credit.

According to Kashe, he left the farm as a result of the gradually deteriorating relationship between Kashe's father and the other workers, who wanted Willem to leave the farm. They complained also about Willem to the farmer and he also asked Willem to go to Blikkiesdorp. The farmer allegedly thought that Willem was just squatting on the farm and eating the food of the other workers, which, Kashe denied, and claimed Willem was buying food at the farmer's shop. Kashe did not wish his father to leave since he was too old to be in the township without any close kin to assist him. Kashe's brother Andris was in hospital at the time and could not look after Willem. According to Kashe, he had to go with him because, if his father was in Blikkiesdorp without him, the !Xun from Max's plot 2 would soon eat all the

food Willem would buy from his pension. Kashe was also concerned his father might easily get lost when looking for firewood in the bush near the township. Before the farmer drove Willem and Kashe and his sons back to Blikkiesdorp, he gave the latter 300 NS, after deducting his debts at his shop. Kashe was, however, disappointed and expected more, since he had been working at Herenhausen for more than a year.³⁴¹

According to Kashe, his experience of working at farm Herenhausen followed similar patterns as in the past. In the beginning both sides were relatively satisfied, but later the various problems pile up and the !Xun leave. Thus, the farmer, although there was trust between them in the beginning, later “changed”: “He speaks a lot. He says, Bushmen are slim. He says Kaffer is Kaffer.”

After returning to Grootfontein, Kashe went on to live on *zula*. Occasionally, he earned a little extra money by some piecemeal work. He recalled three occasions of this. Once, when looking for bottles, he passed the plot of an “Ovambo” woman who asked him to cut the bush fence for 50 NS (**K**). Another time he was asked by a “Baster” to clean his yard (**L**), for which he was given an old hat, trousers and some empty bottles. And third, he helped build a house for a Damara pastor living in the township (**M**), who gave him 20 NS per day and sometimes some food and on the last day 40 NS. The Damara also had a small shop and Kashe used to buy sugar there for one or two NS: “This man is not hard. But maybe people will make him bad later.”

When I saw Kashe for the last time in April 2013, he was still afraid of going to Swart Tak because of the alleged gang trading people’s body parts and witchcraft. Kashe feared that since his hut was dilapidated and anybody could get inside it, someone could have placed objects inside it under the ground that could bewitch him and his children. He thought of an “Ovambo” pastor living in his neighbourhood or another Ovambo called Old Johannes. Therefore, he claimed that, if he went there again, he would have to build the hut in a different place. According to Kashe, his father had suffered for some time from a pain in his legs. The pastor of his church in Grootfontein told him it was caused by witchcraft, which was used against his father by Old Johannes when Willem was the last in Bushmanland.

However, even though one day he talked about the problems with witchcraft and Swart Tak, another day he would say that he would like to go there but more men would have to come so that they could prepare the fields. He also thought of working at a farm near Bushmanland, so that he could spend more time in Swart Tak.

However, his preference was to go to a farm again. There he would earn some money with which he would start a small shop at his father’s plot in Blikkiesdorp. Like many township dwellers, he would buy some basic foodstuffs such as mealie meal, sugar and sweets in the town and resell them for higher prices.

³⁴¹ When working at the farm, Kashe went to Grootfontein only rarely, since his sons wanted to accompany him, but for the smaller one it was a too long walk. However, other !Xun workers often used to go to the township to drink alcohol.

Comments: Capturing Kashe's thoughts at given moment. Where to go?

Up to my last meeting with Kashe in May 2013 I thought that Kashe's mobility space was limited to Grootfontein and Swart Tak. Kashe had a house to live in both locations and, even though it was difficult, especially in Bushmanland, he was able to provide in both spaces for him and his sons without having to engage in hard work. In the town he could collect bottles and scrap metal and in Swart Tak he could survive by looking after the cattle of the Hereros. During my first four field research trips to Grootfontein Kashe had excluded the possibility of working at the farm: first, because of the pain in his belly when he engaged in any strenuous work; and, second, since he was afraid of the owner of farm Klippan, who had beaten him severely in 1994, and that he could learn about his working at a *plaas* or that he would come across him when he went to Grootfontein with the farmer or on a road in the farm area. Given Kashe's bad experiences with his last employment in former Hereroland, this space seemed to be excluded, too.

Grootfontein	54,5 months	56,5 %
Swart Tak	12,5	13 %
commercial farms/plots	26	27 %
Hereroland	3	3 %
Other places		
tender by Abenab	0,5	0,5 %

The fact that Kashe started to work at the farm was a lesson for me. I should not be tempted to believe that, even after spending several months with him, I understand all the variables playing a role in Kashe's life with possible influence on his movements well. Following the logic of Kashe's

narration, it would mean that the fact that he had resumed working at a farm after more than three years was an unintentional result of a chain of events triggered by his being bewitched when crossing the fence to his plot in Swart Tak in Bushmanland. This brought the pain in his legs, which made him to ask for help in the church, and there it was not only his legs that were cured but also his belly. The health problems forced him to stay in the town, where he was approached by the farmer from Herenhausen.

I could never foresee such developments, since the reality and variables at stake were too complex. There were too many variables and too much space for coincidence. It must be stressed that the motives Kashe had for moving from one place to another were not only of an economic ("moving to survive") nature. When moving from one place to another, many factors might be involved or considered in a very complex way:

- economic factors (employment opportunities, other ways of generating income or acquiring food)
- reputation of the prospective employer
- economic support by the kin
- looking for new partners
- wishes of the partners
- avoiding certain people and places
- violence (intra-family, intra-ethnic, inter-ethnic, from the side of the employer; mostly connected to alcohol consumption)
- emotional closeness to relatives/friends
- health problems
- looking after (obligations to) the kin (mostly parents and children) and in-laws
- schooling of the children

- religious ideas (person's death, fear of witchcraft)
- specific local realities (operations of alleged gang trading in human body parts)

At the same time, this complexity made me carefully regard the validity of my conclusions at any given moment. It is apparent that the employers of the !Xun could hardly be aware of all the motives and the lack of knowledge was often replaced by resorting to such stereotypes as “unreliable”, “untrustworthy”, “lying” and “nomadic” Bushmen. On the other hand, the lack of knowledge of the situation on the farmer's side supported the Bushmen in their application of stereotypes of some of the farmers as being “stingy”, “bad” and taking advantage of the !Xun.

The choices of spaces where Kashe could move were determined by 1) the presence of his kin or 2) the employer. If he followed the kin network, the geographical area in which he could move was rather limited because the !Xun moved only by gradually entering neighbouring spaces with a demand for the labour force. When coming to a farm area inhabited by other peoples, further movement slowed down or stopped. Moving far from their own own kinfolk would mean entering a socially alien space and the loss of social security the kin networks provided. Moving beyond the frontiers of the geographical spread of the kin only happened when following the non-!Xun employer, in Kashe's case the white farmers or Hereros (former Hereroland). When the employment ended, the !Xun had to move back their kin.

There were periods in Kashe's life when he stayed somewhere and was not thinking for some time of leaving. But there were often times when Kashe deliberated for various reasons about going and trying his luck elsewhere, or starting to engage in another economic activity. I could observe this well. Since my first field research trip in Namibia in 2007, Kashe had always had to deliberate all the possibilities, all the people involved, all the economic opportunities, and all the consequences of such a move and he based his deliberations on his past experiences. His thoughts of going somewhere else were often determined by the information he received from his relatives and friends, who were not always exclusively Bushmen, or by being approached by prospective employers, be they white or black people. It was apparent that thinking of going to a different place must often have been an unpleasant and stressful matter for him, since he needed to weigh up the consequences with great care.

Thus, during his stay in Grootfontein between my third field research trip in the middle of 2009 and the beginning of my fourth research at the end of 2010 Kashe was living in the town, but this did not mean he was satisfied there. In fact, he was permanently contemplating going somewhere else and evaluating all the options he had. He thought of finally going to the hospital in Windhoek for treatment and then staying for a short time with his Damara friend who was working as a security guard at a backpacker hostel in the capital, where we were together in 2008. He was also contemplating going to Swart Tak, where he would enrol his older son in the pre-school facility again. Furthermore, Kashe was also thinking of the possibility of taming horses for white farmers in the commercial farm area and for the Hereros in Bushmanland and, as we saw, he was also giving thought to visiting his relatives at farms in the vicinity of the town and staying with them for some time.

In 2010 Kashe told me that “shortly” before my arrival he had helped his former Herero employer Sepi, for whom he had worked in Kameelwoud, by repairing his car in Grootfontein and he earned 70 NS as a reward. It was just one-day piecemeal “work”. The randomly acquired money, which Kashe, however, could not have accumulated by collecting bottles, made him consider buying some mealie meal and going to Swart Tak to prepare his land for

planting. However, since he knew I would come soon to Grootfontein, he abandoned this plan. During that period he was also purportedly offered work as a security guard in Grootfontein for 300 NS per month. The salary would be not high, but, according to him, he would only have to work three days a week and he could thus also *zula* on other days. However, even though Kashe toyed with the idea, he did not take the job for the same reason he did not go to Swart Tak.

When I came to Grootfontein and stayed with him in November and December 2011, Kashe told me on different days about several plans for the time after I left. When we were in Swart Tak, he once claimed that when I had gone back to my country, he would buy 10 or 20 kilograms of mealie meal and some sugar in Grootfontein and persuade his relative Jakob from plot 2 to join him and they would go to Swart Tak to clear the land of bushes and plant maize and beans: “I don’t want to sit next year without food.” Kashe told me Jakob had already agreed to the plan. However, as we saw, he did not intend to stay in Swart Tak for long because until the harvest there would be nothing to live on. Thus, he envisaged shuttling between Grootfontein and Swart Tak. His plan was to *zula* in the town and with the money he would earn from selling bottles and scrap metals he would buy mealie meal with which he would get to Bushmanland for a short period just to see his maize field and come back to the town always when the mealie meal would be eaten (**option 1**).

At the same time he also contemplated going to Omatako Valley Rest Camp, a settlement several kilometres from Swart Tak to find construction work. However, the prospect of this work left Kashe feeling partly uncomfortable with the fact that one of the workers, indeed a foreman, at the building project was Titus, who he frequently mentioned in a negative way (**option 2**). Another day he came up with the idea of building a *kraal* on his plot in Swart Tak where he would tame horses for the Hereros and also for white farmers (**option 3**). He also thought of finding a new wife, who would take care of his children, he would give up *zula* life and consider starting a regular job (**option 4**). Last but not least, he was thinking of retiring and receiving a pension. Although he was only 40 years old, he thought he would be entitled to it because his stomach problems at that time left him unable to perform casual farmwork and he had to provide for his two children. Thus, he told me: “I hear (on radio) when a child is seriously sick, he will be retired (it can get disability grant), he is just the half, he doesn’t have the power (as Kashe saw himself because of his medical problems)” (**option 5**). As we saw, none of these plans materialised and Kashe stayed in Grootfontein for another year and a half before again he went to a farm.

Mobility patterns

Primacy of town – farms movements

To obtain data on the mobility patterns of the Grootfontein !Xun dwellers, I have gathered information on the movements of the inhabitants of the twelve !Xun plots Kashe led me to in 2008 (his father's plot including) to show me his „family“ in the town. In 2008 I made a list of 109 people living at these plots and subsequently in 2009 and 2010 I found out whether they had stayed in those places or moved away and, if so, where to (see Table 16). Since it would be very time-consuming to reconstruct all their movements in the period, I gathered data only on where they were at time of my field research. Thus, although the data do not give us the whole picture of the movements of the !Xun in the sample, they still give us a good picture of their movements patterns and about the geographical area of their living space.

Table 16: Percentage of the !Xun staying in and moving out of Grootfontein										
N. of people at the plot in 2008										
plot 1	2	3	4	5	6-7	8	9	10	11	12
11	17	9	3	9	19	10	8	10	4	9
How many of them were in Grootfontein in 2009										
1	3	6	2	7	10	9	7	8	4	9
Percentage										
9%	17,5%	33,5%	66,5%	78%	52,5%	90%	87,5%	80%	100%	100%
Total: 66 person out of 109 – 60,5 %										
How many of them were in Grootfontein in 2010										
4	4	5	3	5	13	10	6	9	0	4
Percentage										
36,5%	23,5%	55,5%	100%	55,5%	68,5%	100%	75%	90%	0%	44,5%
Total: 63 person out of 109 – 58 %										

When we evaluate the data as a whole, we see that the !Xun in the sample are characterized by significant mobility. In 2009 I found only 60 % (2 people had died) of the Bushmen who had lived there the year before and in 2010 this number decreased slightly to 58 % (4 individuals died). A significant number of their !Xun relatives came in the reported period from other areas to Grootfontein, in 2009 it was 39 people and in 2010, another 28.

However, stating that the „urban“ !Xun population is highly mobile would somewhat distort the picture. Despite the high mobility we should also not overlook the fact that more than a half of the !Xun in the sample stayed in the town or returned there and regarded it as their home. Thus Grootfontein was a place many of them preferred to other areas. The !Xun in my sample in 2008 lived at 12 plots, but they were only six rented directly to them by the municipality. The „owners“ of these six plots were men in the middle age or elders and they tended to stay predominately in the town. The fact that some of them had their „own place“ to live represented an important event in their lives. Before settling in the township they mostly moved between farms, and to a lesser extent also to urban areas. Veronika, Mathias's wife, who lived first at plot 5 and at plot 1, expressed it tellingly when she said that each job at the farm was in fact „temporary“ (tydelik). After leaving a job or losing one, they could never return to their „own place“ (ons eie plek). „This is my place“ (Dis my plek),“ said Kashe's father with relief in 2008, after leaving the Lemoentji plot and coming back to Blikkiesdorp.

plot/ N.2008	farm	Bushmanland	Herero- land	o.urban area	o. area	o. land	Prison	died
1(11)	6	3 Swart Tak					1	
2(17)	6					8 Angola		
3(9)	2							1
4(3)	1							
5(9)	2							
6- 7(19)	3	3 Mangetti		Windhoek Koblenc				1
8(10)	1							
9(8)	1							
10(10)				Tsintsabis	Ovambo- land			
11(4)								
12(9)								
Total (41 persons out of 109, further 2 persons died)								
	22	6		3	1	8	1	2
Percentage								
	53,5%	14,5%		7,5%	2,5%	19,5%	2,5%	

plot/ N.2008	farm plot	Bushmanland	Hereroland	o.urban area	o. area	o. land	prison	died
1(11)	6						1	
2(17)	10		3					
3(9)	2							2
4(3)								
5(9)	3	Tsumkwe						
6-7(19)	4	Mangetti		Koblenc				1
8(10) ³⁴²								
9(8)	1							
10(10)	1							
11(4)	4							
12(9)	4							1
Total (42 persons out of 109, further 4 persons died)								
	35	2	3	1			1	4
Percentage								
	83,5%	5%	7%	2,5%			2,5%	9,5%

³⁴² They lived at another plot in 2010.

plot/ N.	farm	Bushmanland	Hereroland	Grootfontein	o.urban area	prison	born
1. (8)				7		1	
2. (3)	1					2	1
3. (7)	5			2			
4.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6.-7. (4)	3		1				3
8. (2)	2						
9.							
10. (12)	12						
11. (2)					2 Berg Aukas		
12							
Total – 38 newcomers, further 4 newborns							
	23		1	9	2	3	4
Percentage							
	60,5%		2,5%	23,5%	5,5%	8%	

plot/ N.	farm	Bushmanland	Hereroland	Grootfontein	o.urban area	prison	born
1. (2)	2						
2. (11)	9			2			
3. (5)	5						2
4.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6.-7. (1)		3 Mangetti					1
8.							
9. (2)		Tsumkwe			K. Mulilo		
10.							
11.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12. (5) ³⁴³		2 Omatako		1	2 Otjiwarongo		
Total – 28 newcomers, further 3 newborns							
	16	6		3	3		3
Percentage							
	57%	21,5%		11%	11%		

³⁴³ They lived at another plot in 2010.

Movements between Grootfontein and the farms

The data revealed that the movement space of the !Xun dwelling in 2008 in Grootfontein stretches mostly to the farms in the area (see Tables 17 - 18). Of those who were no longer present in Grootfontein in 2009 more than half (53,5 %) moved to the farms and in 2010 it was more than four fifths (83,5 %). Most of the newcomers to Grootfontein came to the town a from the farms, in 2009 the figure was 62 % and the next year, 57 %.



Picture 17. Plot No. 1 in December 2011. Most of the !Xun have left the plot. Only Kashe's shack and that of his parents were still there. Some !Xun moved that year to the farms, others got their own plot in the township.

„Owners“ of plots in Grootfontein tended to stay at them. Their adult children or in-laws stayed in the township for longer periods only if they found employment. However, if they had their own families, the adult offspring of the plot „owners“, even if they had their own shack at the plot in the township, often went to the farms. Given their limited marketable skills in the urban environment, they found work more easily at the farms which meant that they would receive a wage with which they could better provide for their family, and this generally also included regular food rations, consisting mostly of mealie meal, sugar and tea. It was often the case that it was first the man, the breadwinner, who moved to the farm and his wife and children, especially those not attending school would follow him, if the farmer had no objections to it. The woman might sometimes acquire a work at the farm, but mostly for a smaller salary than her partner. They could leave the plot in the township for months or even a few years and visit their house in Grootfontein only when they received leave, which was often only for a few weeks at a time.

It is also common for a man employed at a farm, be it in long-term employment or in a temporary job, to leave his wife and children in the town and visits them only occasionally, if the farm is near, at the weekends, less often if further away.

Therefore, for the adult children (and their spouses and children) of the „owners“ of the plot in Grootfontein, their shacks in the township may serve as a base from which they can go for some periods to other places, mostly to the farms. Sylvain observed the same among the Ju/'hoansi in Omaheke (1999: 370). When the employment ends or if the workers can leave on holidays, they return to the township. In their absence their shacks are mostly pad-locked.

If the daughters of the „owners“ of the plot in the township were living with their families at the farms and were abandoned by their partners, they could also move to their parents in the town. The !Xun in the township could also become foster parents of minors whose parents had passed away.

Movements within Grootfontein

The second most important source of the newcomers to the 12 !Xun plots in the sample was the township itself. In 2009 I found out that 12 of the 109 !Xun in the sample in 2008 moved to another place in the town, that is 12 %, 7 of them from plot 5 to plot 1, and 2 from plot 4 to plot 3. Thus, because of the kin relations among the dwellers of these plots there was also significant mobility among them. Between 2009 and 2010 19 people moved to another place in the town. The family from plot 11 left the town to a nearby plot. However, before leaving Grootfontein they stayed for several months at plot 9. If we add them to those moving within the town, the total number would increase from 19 to 24, or 22 %, in 2009. The total intra-town movements in the two year time-span from 2008 to 2010 then reached 33 %. Thus, every third person changed where he/she stayed in this two-year period. Out of these people, every third person moved between the 12 plots in the sample.

However, it is necessary to emphasise, that the plots deserted by the !Xun were not “owned” by them, but were rented from the municipality by non-!Xun people, who allowed them to stay there. These !Xun were often their subletters or in a similar position when they had to pay only for water, for example. In one case in my sample the plot (No. 9) was owned by a white family and the !Xun were in a position similar to housekeepers and in another one they lived on a property of a white, for whom the household head worked (No. 12). Staying at other people's plots made their position vulnerable as they could be evicted at any time. Thus, of the plots with the !Xun subletting two of these families left the place in 2009 and a third in 2010. In all these instances it meant that all the !Xun left the place at once. The reasons are described here:

Leaving a place in Grootfontein where the !Xun were allowed to reside temporarily

The !Xun from plot 4, an old couple whose daughter lived with them at some times, left because of a quarrel about rent with the Hai//om owners of the plot. Then they moved in with their kin at plot 3, where they did not have to pay anything.

The family from plot 5 sublet a plot “owned” by people, who were allegedly “mixed” Hai//om(or Damara)!Xun and they paid them 50 NS monthly between 2007 - 2008. ”We don't have our own place,” they explained. But in the second half of 2008 they had to move

because the owner of the plot wanted to take the corrugated iron sheets from their house to a farm to build a shack. At the same time they also could not afford to pay the rent of 50 NS every month. Kashe's father allowed them to build a shack on plot 1. They arranged to pay him a rent of 50 NS per month, but in fact only occasionally gave him 20 NS or so. In 2013 I learnt that they had been given their own plot by the municipality at the new extension behind Blikkiesdorp.

The family from plot 8 moved because they did not pay "any money" to the !Xun "owner" of the plot. They lived there from the second half of 2007 and did not have pay since they and the "owner" were "family". However, when I came to Blikkiesdorp in 2010 and found them at another place, Andris, the household head, told me they had had to leave because the "owner" had taken other kin to the plot, who were willing to pay some rent. Andris' family then moved to a plot "owned" by a "mixed" !Xun/Ovambo who is Andris's friend (not relative) and they were paying him 50 NS per month.

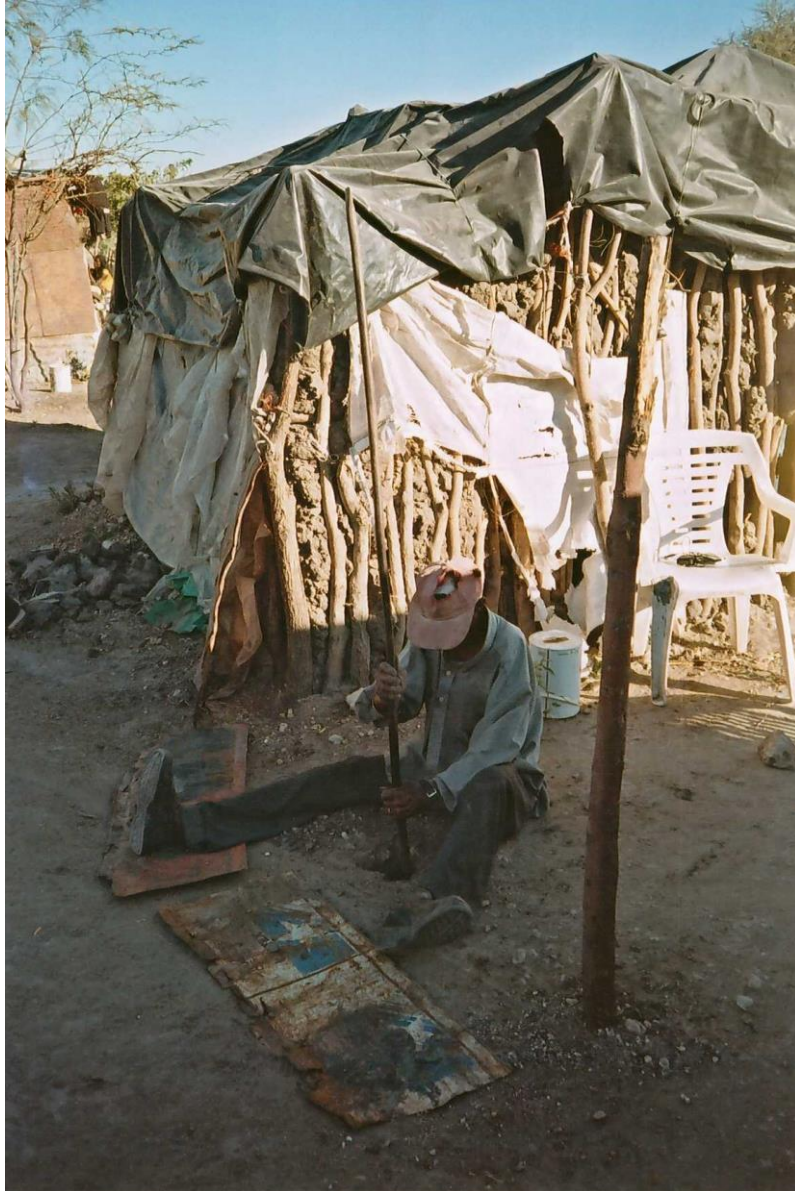
The family from plot 11 moved to a brick house at a plot owned by a !Xun man who had left for a farm and because the owner was afraid that the property in the house would be "stolen" by his son, with whom he had very strained relationship, he asked Ágrob, the household head of the !Xun family from erf 11, to take care of it in his absence. However, when the owner later returned to his house, they had to leave. They were allowed to stay for several months by their relatives at plot 9, but later went to a plot next to the town.

„Plot 12“ was in fact the backyard of a car repair company in the industrial area between the township and the town's business area. Since Petrus, the head of the household, was employed as a yard worker at the house of the white owner of the company in the town, he did not have to pay any rent to live at this property. The living conditions were very depressing (it is very difficult not to use such a judgmental term). Their shack lay in a narrow strip on land between the back of the company's building and a high wall – the fence. Since almost no one else lived in the industrial area and the !Xun were generally afraid of moving around after dark, this family seemed to live there in a kind of social isolation, especially the children (one of them was blind), who were often left behind when the father went to work and the mother to do shopping. When I came to Namibia in 2010 they had moved and were living at a plot in Blikkiesdorp „owned“, according to Petrus, by a Hai//om, whom they paid a rent of 50 NS per month. The reason for their departure from the car yard was a series of alleged disputes with a Ju/'hoan man who worked and slept at the car repair company.

From the 12 !Xun plots in my sample six were let by the municipality directly to the !Xun and even though some of its "owners" may have left it for a period of time, they have always returned there and regarded the place as their own plot. In the instances, when the !Xun were subletting, they left the site after some time. However, the very fact that most of them stayed in the town instead of moving somewhere else shows that they regarded staying in the town as the preferable option. Being effectively forced to leave to another place accounted for by far the greatest number of the movements in the town. In other, less frequent instances, the !Xun were moving to other kin or to a partner's plot.

There was, however, also one other apparent, although rather minor, tendency. Between 2008 and 2010 three !Xun women, all of reproductive age, one of whom was Kashe's wife Lucia, left their families and started to live in Single Quarters. Their !Xun families then seemed to lose track of what they were doing. Nevertheless, it appeared to have followed a similar pattern: all the women started to live with a non-!Xun men (Lucia seemed to move from one

partner to another), for whom they cooked and maintained the home. The wife of the brother of the “owner” of plot 3 did the same. This woman came to the plot with her husband and children from a farm in the period between my field research trips in 2009 and 2010. Like Lucia, this woman left their two children with her kin at plot 3. In both cases it was apparent that the behaviour of the women was brought about to a significant extent by their addiction to alcohol, which they could easily obtain in Single Quarters.



Picture 18. Building a new shack in Blikkiesdorp from flattened drums.

These cases, however, also reveal the vulnerability of !Xun women to what they were exposed to in the town and the fact that they became in fact victims of the local social-ethnic-economic hierarchy as they (and their alcohol-addiction) were often misused by the non-!Xun, often Bantu men, in better socio-economic positions. There are often references in the writings on the life of various Bushmen groups about women engaging in “prostitution” as a result of their desperate economic situation. I have, however, never come across a case of a !Xun woman, who would explicitly offer sex for money. In the cases of the three !Xun women, the women entered into uneven and exploitative relationships with non-!Xun men, who did not intend to offer them a long-term relationship but rather took advantage of their

situation. The miserable situation of these women was perpetuated by deepening addictions to alcohol, which they could now have easier access.

Importantly, the !Xun living at each of 12 plots in the sample were bound by kin ties. In 2008 I came across only one instance in which a !Xun staying at the plot (3) had only a friend relationship to the *erf's* „owner“. In this case, the !Xun had worked for the same farmer. Thus, in all cases except this one, the !Xun who moved to the 12 plots in the sample were relatives of those already present.

Movements to other areas: Bushmanland, other urban areas and Hereroland

Movements to other areas - Bushmanland, Hereroland and other urban areas or other countries³⁴⁴ - played a much less important role and were represented mostly in single-digit percentage numbers. The only more significant figure seems to be that in 2009 when 14,5 % of the Bushmen moved from Grootfontein went to Bushmanland. During the period from 2008 to 2010 I observed 14 movements in total between Grootfontein and Bushmanland and in some cases two movements involved one person, while for other urban areas in the commercial farm zone it was 9 movements and to and from former Hereroland, only four. It is also worth mentioning that while in the broader movement tendencies of the !Xun it played rather a minor role, there were also people coming to and from prisons, conspicuously in 2009 three of the 38 newcomers, or 8%, were former prisoners.

The names of other urban sites and settlements in Bushmanland clearly indicate how far the social network of the !Xun and the network of their employers reached. The urban sites mentioned were Windhoek (plots 6-7), Katima Mulilo (plot 9), Otjiwarongo (plot 12), Koblenz (plots 6-7), Berg Aukas (plot 11), Tsintsabis (plot 10), Mangetti (plots 6-7), Swart Tak (plot 1), Omatako (plot 12) and Tsumkwe (plots 5 and 9). However, as is clear these places were in each instance mentioned only a few times. This does not mean that if the places appeared in the gather data only few times that the other !Xun may not have any relatives there or in other places. But it rather shows where were relatives with whom they maintained vivid and close contacts lived.

The social kin networks of the !Xun in my sample do not reach Windhoek, Otjiwarongo and Katima Mulilo. In one instance, one !Xun woman was taken to the capital for a temporary job as a housemaid by her „Damara“ employer. In another case, a !Xun man worked temporarily as *handlanger* for a lorry driver in Katimo Mulilo. Only Magdalena from plot 12 mentioned any links to relatives in Otjiwarongo and it was not clear how important !Xun identity was for her kin in Otjiwarongo. Magdalena claimed in front of me to be a Bushman, her mother was allegedly a !Xun, but her father a Coloured and she spoke !Xun only as third language after Afrikaans and Damara. I may also add that I came across one distant relative of Kashe, who ho had worked for some time as far away as Walvis Bay. He was employed there in the household of a white family who had taken him there from Grootfontein. His case follows virtually the same pattern as by the !Xun woman who worked for the „Damaras“ in Windhoek.

³⁴⁴ The 19,5 % of the people in sample moving to „Angola“ appeared to be rather exceptional data as all of them were from one extremely poor !Xun family (Max and his kin from plot 2), whose adults with some of their dependent kin were allegedly brought by a white farmer to the mentioned country for a temporary contract work. However, since I never saw their passports, I believe they were rather brought to some place near Angola. Generally, I have never heard about a !Xun from Grootfontein area travelling abroad.

It is also worth highlighting that none of the !Xun in my sample ever mentioned having relatives families in the town of Tsumeb, which lies several dozen kilometers east of Grootfontein, or to work at a farm in this area, be it in the past or present.

In former Bushmanland the social network of the Grootfontein !Xun dwellers reaches mostly only as far as the western part with places such as Omatako, Mangetti and Swart Tak being mentioned. The presence of some kin in Tsumkwe, in the area inhabited traditionally by the Ju/'hoan San, was reported only by people from two of the 12 plots in my sample. One of the !Xun families in Grootfontein had relatives in Gam.

In „Ovamboland“, it was only some !Xun from plot 10 who had relatives there. Several sons of one !Xun woman from this plot lived there. She had moved there with her Ovambo partner, but the children stayed there, speaking as their first language Oshivambo and with only a rather passive command of !Xun. It appeared that the sons were on their way to being assimilated into the culture of Oshivambo-speaking people.

The links of the !Xun in my sample to former Hereroland were rather weak. Some of them had relatives in the area and had worked there for some time. They seemed, however, to have more experience with working at the commercial farms. In contrast to former Bushmanland, I have never heard from any !Xun living during the time of my research in Grootfontein that he or she would like to settle in Hereroland.

The reasons for going to the town

It must be emphasized that a person could go to and stay in Grootfontein only if there was a place where he or she could dwell. It meant there must be relatives (or, more rarely, friends) who would allow that person to stay with them or to build a shack at their plot. Another option would be if an employer, mostly a white owner of a house in the town, were to take a person into his/her house as a domestic worker who would then stay in a *buitekamer*. The domestic worker would mostly not, however, be allowed to take his or her family to the *buitekamer*.

Thus, the !Xun could start to live in Grootfontein in higher numbers only after they acquired plots they could occupy. As was seen, many of the !Xun could not settle in the town if they did not receive assistance from sympathetic non-!Xun. Many of the families could start living there for longer periods only after being given a plot by the municipality. This applies, for example, to plots 1, 2 and 6-7 and others (plot 5 and 9) could move to the town only after a white employer/farmer enabled them to live at his plot. The (former) white employers assisted in the process of acquiring a plot also the !Xun from erf 1 and 2. The Grootfontein Lions Club also helped in the acquisition of plot 1. Veronika and Mathias and Veronika's sister (plot 5 and later plot 1) made it to Grootfontein when a white farmer bought a house for Veronika's father.

Why did the !Xun I encountered in Grootfontein during the period of my research live in the town and how did it happen? In the case of Kashe's kin at plot 1, we saw the enormous complexity of the !Xun mobility patterns. Below I will first present the information I was given by the heads of the households at the plots in my sample on their reasons for settling down in the town. The information was provided to me during (one or few) short interviews. Given the fact that the !Xun from plot 1 told me initially that their coming to Grootfontein

was preceded by several other movements, we should approach this information with certain caution. It certainly reflects, to some extent, the events of the past, but the background to these events may well be simplified to one or few motives. It not only reflects „how things happened“, but how the !Xun related to these events at the time of our interviews, what they could remember and what picture of their past they wanted to provide me with.

Plot 1, Blikkiesdorp

The case of Kashe's close kin, who acquired the plot in Blikkiesdorp in 2004, was described thoroughly above. Even though there were many factors involved, it seems certain that the decisive one was that Kashe's parents, who were already elderly by that time, could no longer work at a farm and found life in Bushmanland too difficult and regarded living in Grootfontein as, in some aspects, better. Importantly, the fact that they were pensioners and had a permanent income allowed them to live, to some extent, independently of their kin. Thus, they could exist in the town without the presence of their children. Had they not had their pensions, this would have been impossible and they would have had to follow their working offspring to the farm or to Bushmanland. The assistance of the municipality and their long-time white employers, an Afrikaner family, was also of crucial importance.

Plot 2, Blikkiesdorp

Max, the „owner“ of this plot, who was living on scavenging food on the dump sites, was one of the most withdrawn !Xun men I encountered in the town and it was very difficult to extract any information from him. The information I have about him and his close relatives was provided to me mostly by the !Xun from the neighboring plot 1. Like Kashe, he had lived for most of his life at farms. Finally, in 2003 he and his family ended up at the Total petrol station and subsequently the „traditional village“. Max was among the group of !Xun men who agreed to be transported to Bushmanland to start a new life there, but he returned only a few weeks later after finding the conditions in this area unbearable. He again joined his relatives at the Total petrol station. It was his family and its small children running across the main road leading through the town that caught the attention of Grootfontein Lions Club members. Thus, it was his family, who were the first of the !Xun living at the Total petrol station to acquire their „own“ plot in the newer part of Blikkiesdorp. They were assisted by the Grootfontein Lions Club and also an Afrikaner, for whom Max had worked at a farm and also in the town. The Grootfontein Lions Club built two houses from new corrugated metal sheets for them at the *erf*. Max never told me why he and his family settled in the town, but it seems obvious that he was reluctant to engage in long-term farm work (although he had a reputation for being a skilled worker) and did not want to do yardwork for the whites in the town either. Bushmanland was for him an alien environment.

Plot 3, Blikkiesdorp

Paul, the „owner“ of the plot in Blikkiesdorp, had spent long periods at the farms since his childhood, but also in Grootfontein. He was born in 1964 at a farm, but his family often stayed in Grootfontein since his father had relatives in the Damara location. His father's „grandfather“, who was in Paul's words a „Damara-Bushman“, used to work in Grootfontein as well. In 2001 Paul went from a farm, which he left, to Swart Tak settlement in Bushmanland to start living there. However, after „two weeks“ he decided to leave this area, because it was virtually impossible to earn any money there and the only viable option was to engage in agriculture for only several months a year. Thus, he left Bushmanland to a plot near Grootfontein, then to a *buitekamer* of his white employer in the town and subsequently moved to his brother's plot in a part of the township called Malanami. Later he acquired his own plot

in Blikkiesdorp, where he lived throughout my research. Paul did not want to work at a farm any more. He claimed he would like to engage once more in agriculture, but only if he could work on his own land and not for others.

Plot 4, Blikkiesdorp

In 2008 an old !Xun couple, Christine and /Xae and their daughter, lived at this plot. They had spent most of their life at the farms and then moved to this plot in 2007. The „owner“ of the plot, was, however, a Hai//om, but his wife, whose mother was a !Xun and father Hai//om, was a relative of Christine's and this kinship link enabled them to settle there for some time. Christine said she went to this place because „I don't have (my own) house“. /Xae said he had had quarrels with the farmers and then had left the farms with his wife.

Plot 5, Blikkiesdorp

Mathias, the head of the household, told me in 2008 that they moved to Grootfontein in 2001 after he lost work at a farm. His wife Veronika claimed to have followed him. When I talked to them about this further in 2010, when we knew each other much better, other interesting details emerged. Mathias, who was born in 1967 at a farm, indeed settled in the town only at the beginning of the 2000s. Up to that time he had sometimes accompanied farmers to town, but - in contrast to Kashe - he never slept overnight in a *buitekamer* and always went back to the farm on the same day. Veronika was born in Grootfontein in 1974 to a !Xun mother and a Mbundu contract worker father. However they soon went to the farms and Veronika returned to Grootfontein for several years to attend school there between 1984 and 1988. Interestingly, she stayed in the house of her father's friend (allegedly also a Mbundu), but in 1988 she went back to her parents at the farm and there she met Mathias. In 2010 they told me that they came to Grootfontein in 2005 after a German farmer bought a house for her Mbundu father in the location, so that his other children could go to school. Veronika and Mathias then moved to her father's place. Mathias then started to work in Grootfontein as yardworker. Veronika's Mbundu father stayed with his !Xun wife until 2008 when she died. Veronika recalled that of her close relatives only her sister was living in Grootfontein in 2005 that time. The sister had lived with her Herero husband in the Ovambo location.

Plots 6-7, Blikkiesdorp

Several households lived at these two plots, which were not separated by a fence and thus looked at first sight as if they were one *erf*. I inquired of two of the household heads living there, Angula and Matilde, their reasons for settling in Grootfontein

Angula had started living in Blikkiesdorp in 2004 after leaving a farm. He thought life in the town would be easier than at the farm. „I thought it would be better, but it's not.“ His family moved with him.

Matilde, a single mother and the head of a female-headed household, lived first at a plot next to Grootfontein. Later she found a job at a restaurant at the SPAR supermarket. Initially she found it strenuous to walk from the town to the plot every day. Therefore, she settled at the plot of her relatives in Blikkiesdorp.

Plot 8, Blikkiesdorp

Andris (according to his ID card born in 1939) told me he had moved to the town from the farms with his wife and children in 2003 because he was unemployed and the farm-work was already too hard for him. „At the farms there isn't work. I'm now old, then I come here,“ he

said. In the beginning they moved in with his son, who was already living in Blikkiesdorp. Then they were allowed to stay at a different plot.

Plot 9, Soweto

Old Frederik and his wife Flíta, an old !Xun couple, had spent most of their life at the farms. In the 1990s they lived in Kameelwoud in the former Bushmanland for several years, at approximately the same time as Kashe and his relatives. They reported moving to the township in Grootfontein in 2001. Their reasons for leaving Bushmanland were apparently similar to those of Kashe's parents. They found life there too difficult. In contrast to the majority of the !Xun in my sample Frederik's family lived in good conditions in Grootfontein since they lived in a brick house with several rooms. Its owner was a white man in the town for whom Old Frederik had worked in the past. Old Frederik's family had to pay only for water, which was allegedly about 50 NS per month.

Plot 10, Soweto

The family of Piet went to Grootfontein in 1998. The „owner“ of the plot was his mother, who lived at a farm during my research period. Piet claimed to have lost work at the farm. His health may also have played a role since he had an inborn deformation of his back.

Plot 11, former Ovambo location

This family went to the town, „so that the children can go to school“, Ágrob³⁴⁵, the household head, told me in 2007. However, in the first two years he did not live with them at the plot permanently, but visited them only at the weekends when he did not have to work at the farm. After losing his job, he joined his family.

Plot 12, industrial area (yard of the employer)

This family lived at the farms allegedly until 2005. When Petrus, the household head, lost his job, they went to Blikkiesdorp, but since they were unable to acquire their „own“ plot, they started to live in the backyard of a car repair company owned by an Afrikaner in the industrial area between the township and the town's commercial centre. Petrus did not want to go to former Bushmanland, where he had relatives, since there were, in his opinion, almost no employment opportunities. Neither did he want to resume working at the farms.

Losing work at a farm: statements vs. reality

Some !Xun men heading households in Grootfontein stated that their main reason for settling in Grootfontein was that they had lost work at the farm.

Dieckmann lists the factors behind decreasing demand for labour at the farms as:

- The increasing commercialisation of agriculture and its readjustments to the sector of free-market constraints, resulting in an increase in safari lodges and guest farms, a net decline in permanent jobs and increase in short-term seasonal work;
- The demise of apartheid legislation and the passing of Labour Act (No. 6 of 1992)
- Demographic factors relating to rapid growth and the impact on the economy as a whole, resulting in over-subscription and increased competition in the farm labour market and the increasing competition in the general job market.

³⁴⁵ Ágrob took away from Kashe his wife Martha, after he fled in 1994 the farm Klippan.

The farmers could no longer rely on state subsidies after independence (Dieckmann 2007: 240 - 1).³⁴⁶ The 1992 Labour Act set forth the minimal conditions of employment concerning remuneration, maximum working hours, overtime, annual leave, sick leave and maternity leave, accommodation for the workers and rations and so on (Devereaux, Vemunavi, and van Rooy 1996: 9 - 13). Pressure to upholding these conditions leads farmers to use labour in the most efficient manner and to keep the number of the workers at a minimum.³⁴⁷ The !Xun were also during the time of my research vaguely aware of some of the rights contained in the Labour Act. They learned about these from the radio, contacts with „Labour office“ (the local branch of Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare in Grootfontein) or from other workers

At the same time, I noticed the !Xun gave me as a reason for moving to Grootfontein the loss of the work at the farm, especially at the beginning of my research, when they wanted to highlight their generally difficult economic situation. At that time, they did not know that I wanted to work with them on a long-term basis and some of them may have thought the survey I was doing might lead to some financial or food assistance for them. For this reason, I was often asked by other !Xun to pay a visit to their plot and to talk to them too. They approached me saying „I’m a Bushmen as well.“

In the course of my research I gathered a lot of evidence that finding work at a farm or plot was generally not difficult. The problem lay in having work with satisfactory employment conditions (decent wage, food rations, a good relationship with the farmer) and the willingness to engage into it. I come across some farmers who claimed that the Bushmen lost work at the farm after white-run farms were acquired by blacks. However, I never came across a single !Xun who told me a job had been lost in this way or even that they had worked at a commercial farm for a non-white person. This is not to say that it does not happen, but it is apparent that the blaming of black farmers to some extent reflects racial and political tensions in the country.

All the !Xun living in Grootfontein regarded life in town as difficult, but I came to the conclusion that none of them had settled down there because there were no other options. Most of the !Xun could try to find employment at a farm and some of them could move to Bushmanland. In the case of the older !Xun they could also join their relatives in other areas, but when contemplating their possibilities, they regarded Grootfontein as the better option. As Kashe’s case shows, in many, if not most, instances it was the !Xun who decided to leave a particular farm.

³⁴⁶ White farmers in the area could not rely on the support of the state after independence and often felt they were in a rather defensive position. In 2007 the farmers in the Mururani area were accused in the media of „dumping“ around 120 San children at the Grootfontein-Rundu road in early June of that year because they were afraid of being prosecuted on child labour charges. It was then reported that some of the children were „rescued“ by a former mayor of Rundu. Coincidentally, the alleged dumping happened when the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare was conducting visits at farms around the country to look into possible abuse of child labour. The investigation undertaken by the Division of San Development (DSD) in the Office of the Prime Minister, however, concluded that these reports were „shockingly not in consonance“ with the situation on the ground. It turned out that these were children whose parents wanted them to board at Mururani Combined School (New Era 2011b; New Era 2011c, Namibian 2011).

³⁴⁷ In Pickering and Longden (2006: 6 – 10) the life story of a Hai//om man, Elias Soroseb, who lived at seventeen farms and finally settled in Otjiwarongo, is portrayed. Soroseb says: „The new farming technology and methods changed from manpower to machinery, from cattle farming to game farming, lodges and game reserves. That brought a drastic decrease in need for farm workers, therefore people flocked to urban areas. That’s how my family and I became residents of Otjiwarongo, where we are now staying jobless and suffering from hunger and poverty.“

Thus, statements about the !Xun living in the town as being those who were virtually forced to resort to this last desperate option - to live in an hostile urban environment, seem to be too simplistic and hinder us from grasping the issue in its complexity. At the same time, such statements implicitly support the notion that a Bushmen does not „belong“ to the urban environment and that his life there must be less satisfactory than it would be at the farms or communal areas. Such perceptions tend to view the Bushmen one-sidedly as passive victims of the socio-economic system and deny their autonomy to act.

Work in the town

The wages the !Xun received at the farms were on average similar to those received in Grootfontein. Thus, it was not simply that a person (!Xun) would decide to go to the town in search of significantly better employment than at the farm. Thus, if a !Xun decides to go to the town, other factors than merely the improvement of their financial situation and prospects are involved.

To some extent, the situation changes when the !Xun move from former Bushmanland or Hereroland, where it is almost impossible to generate any income. Coming to the town means the prospect of having at least some income, although almost always small, be it by finding employment, mostly as a yardworker for white house owners, or by living on *zula*. Finding work in the town generally depends on the density of social network a person has in order to obtain information that will help them gain employment. Many farmers drive to Blikkiesdorp to acquire probably the cheapest labour force in the whole township. However, because the !Xun from Bushmanland or Hereroland can often attract better wages in the neighboring farm area, Grootfontein does not have a stronger economic pull effect on them. Thus, if they come to Grootfontein to stay there for a lengthy period, other factors may be involved as well.

Reclaiming autonomy: fleeing the baas – worker, patron – clients relationship

Some of the !Xun dwelling in Grootfontein, even though physically capable of hard farm work, did not, based on their past experiences, want or were strongly hesitant to work for the white farmers or black cattle owners any longer. They apparently did not want to enter again into the farmer (baas)-worker or patron-client relationship, which they perceived as being in some aspects exploitative and sometimes prone to violence.

Elders: life in the town is less difficult than at the farms or communal area

When we look at the reasons given by the heads of the households for moving to the town, we see that for the old !Xun men of the fourth generation the main reason for going to the town was their advanced age, which did not allow them to continue working at the farm or living in the communal area of Bushmanland. Life in the town, although not easy, seemed to be a better option for them. Moving to the town was easier if they already had a permanent income in the form of a pension, which they could withdraw at the NamPost any time. If still capable of physical work, they could engage in yardwork in Grootfontein. This kind of employment took up only half a day, in contrast to farm work, which started in the morning and ended often with the sun setting, only half a day.

Joining the kin in the township

Sylvain (1999: 34) highlighted the connection between mobility and the kin network. „It would be too simplistic to see Ju/'hoan mobility exclusively in terms of job seeking and job dissatisfaction; but, worse, doing so obscures how Ju/'hoan families both facilitate and motivate mobility.“

Sometimes the !Xun settle in the township after joining their kin who is already living there. This might be easier when it concerns a single person, who can stay at the shack of a relative with whom he or she has a good relationship. However, it is more complicated when a whole family is seeking to move. Then, it requires the permission of a plot's „owner“, with whom the incomer should have a good relationship. There must also be space on the plot so the newcamer can erect a new shack.

Furthermore, if the whole family settles in the township, the breadwinner must be employed (unless living on scavenging or collecting empty bottles and scrap metals) in order to provide for the family. Gaining employment, mostly as yard-worker, would be easier if the person already knew some white people living there and could capitalize on these relationships. In this respect, !Xun who used to live in the immediate Grootfontein area or the town itself for a lengthy period of time are in a more advantageous position.

There is also a difference between the movements of the !Xun to plots that have been rented to them directly by the municipality and plots where the !Xun live as subletters. It was much easier for newcomers to build their shacks at former plots since it depended only on the permission of their relatives. When comparing the number of newcomers to the plots rented to the !Xun directly by the municipality and those who lived on the plot owned by someone else, we can observe the following: in 2009 at the six plots in my sample „owned“ by the !Xun, there were 5,5 newcomers per *erf* and only few newcomers in total at the plots where the !Xun were allowed to stay.³⁴⁸

At plot 1, „owned“ by Kashe's father, in 2004 there was only one dwelling, where Kashe's parents lived, but in time the plot was covered by more and more shacks and in 2010 there were 10 structures, including two wind shelters. One shack was, however, removed. In addition to these dwellings, there were also another two erected by a poor Herero family. This makes 12 structures in total. The building of new houses on the plot depended only on the Kashe's father's permission.

Schooling of the children

Many parents in the farm area send their offspring to relatives living in Grootfontein .While the parents often pay their school fees, the burden of providing for the children lies mostly on the hosts.

This, however, does not mean that all parents regarded it as preferable to send their children to Grootfontein, where they usually went to the Umulunga primary school, which had the lowest school-fees. There were also !Xun who sent their children to Mangetti because it was reported by some !Xun to be a better school. Kashe also preferred to enroll Anton at Rooidag.

³⁴⁸ Out of the of the six plots two of them they already left by that time.

First, no school fees were demanded there and Anton apparently felt better in a school with many other !Xun children.

Access to better health care

I have never heard any !Xun person saying he or she decided to settle in Grootfontein because of its hospital or clinic. However, if any !Xun in the farm area of Grootfontein or in former Bushmanland was seriously ill, he or she went or was taken by ambulance to hospital in Grootfontein. After being released from the hospital, that person often had to stay in town with relatives, if this was possible, to have regular check-ups either at the hospital or the clinic next to the township. That person then becomes more familiar with the urban environment, broadens his/her social networks and may stay in the township even after recovering their health.

Generally, the fact that the Bushmen could receive better treatment in Grootfontein than anywhere else in the region is viewed positively by the !Xun.

According to Kashe, in the past people would go less often to the hospital because they relied on the traditional healers (trance dancers). Kashe used the Afrikaans term *toordokters* (witchdoctors) to describe them. The institution of healers curing other people during the trance dance, the well-described ritual practised in the past by many Bushmen groups, had been virtually abandoned by the !Xun in the Grootfontein area, according to my informants. It was never practised in the township and, according to Kashe, not at the farms since the early 2000s either. The former !Xun farmworkers who settled in Bushmanland did not practise it either allegedly. „From the 2000s people don't work with the witchdoctors, they work with the church,“ Kashe told me in 2011. According to some other !Xun from the Grootfontein area, the trance dance had already stopped at the farms in the 1980s. One reason may also be that the farmers did not like the Bushmen to practise the ritual at their *plaas* and, according to one !Xun foreman living in Grootfontein, this made them perform it only when the farmer left the farm, but later on it stopped for once and all. Kashe recalled that his uncle (who was still living in 2011) and one of his sisters were also healers. They healed people free of charge when asked to. According to Kashe, this was now different: „Nowadays the witchdoctors eat other peoples' money till they die.“ Interestingly, Kashe claimed that in the 1990s he and his friends brought guitars from the farms in the Bushmanland area around Omatako and /Káandu for the first times and when they played the instruments in the evenings, one „Damara“ friend (apparently acting as a trance dancer), supported by the sounds of these instruments, acted in a way similar to the traditional Bushman healers and was curing ill people.

Guenther, who conducted his research among the Nharo Bushmen in Botswana in the 1960s and 1970s, argued that the flourishing of trance dance among the Nharo San was a response to the difficult socio-economic situation they were facing (Guenther 1986). The situation of many Grootfontein !Xun town dwellers was also difficult. However, the loss of traditional religious ideas, general enlightenment (radio, school education), effective help at modern health facilities and the influence of Christian churches has led to the abandonment of the trance dance ritual. When ill, the Grootfontein !Xun looked for help to the hospital or clinic or to the church, where services often ended with the pastor curing the people. Sometimes the pastor and his assistants laid their hands on the affected parts of the body and prayed for the sick. It may be added that Kashe's father Willem recalled that when he was a child, the trance dance was often practised at the farm Kaibeb. Once when he was ill, the trance dance healer allegedly saved his life during the ritual.

The role of alcohol

Another co-factor that could influence the !Xun's decision to stay in town was easy and permanent access to alcohol. In Single Quarters or other places in the township it was possible to buy a big cup of *tombo* at any time for 1 NS. Most of the !Xun who started to squat at the Total petrol station and under the trees opposite the SPAR supermarket in 2001 - 2002 were alcohol-addicted. By practising *zula*, they could generate enough income to buy alcohol. Alcohol consumption and *zula* life perpetuated the squatting and looking only for occasional work. Had these !Xun not drunk, they would highly probably not have stayed in Grootfontein and would have dispersed to the farms and plots utilizing their kin-networks as in the past. Many of them eventually settled at the plots in Blikkiesdorp. Once having a place to stay in the town, alcohol and *zula* life continued to keep some in the town. I have not heard about !Xun men who had been living this kind of life for years because most of them moved to the farms or other areas for some time. However, when coming back to the township, they would often indulge in the same way of life.

This was what happened to Kashe and his family before 2007, when he stopped drinking. He left a relatively good job at farm Meterorit II, because after receiving his salary he and his wife indulged in drinking in the township and did not feel compelled to go back to the farm any longer. When Kashe's namesake Kashe came to Grootfontein in 2010 to be treated at the hospital for tuberculosis, he allegedly could not go to the farm, since the medical staff in Grootfontein refused to give him a long course of pills (probably in order to check on his recovery) and he started to live in Kashe's shack. During his recovery, he started to *zula* and going regularly to Single Quarters to drink. In the end, he stayed at Kashe's dwelling for a long time. In 2013 I learnt he had gone to a plot near Grootfontein, but when coming to the town he could always overnight at Kashe's place.

Visitors

Another category of !Xun present at most plots was visitors. They come mostly from farms, but also from the western part of former Bushmanland and other urban areas. If they come as a family, they stay with their kin, if there is available space, mostly for a short period of a few days or so. If staying longer, they would be a burden to their hosts. If the visitors are single men with good relations with their hosts and able to generate at least some income by *zula* or some yardwork, they can stay much longer, for weeks or even months.

The visitors often come to the town to accomplish a task which can only be done there: for example, getting new documents such as birth certificates, undergoing a medical examination, receiving vaccination in the hospital or answering a summons to the court. In these instances, they are often accompanied by other family members. For example, when a mother has to go to the hospital with her sick child, she may also take her other children with her so that she can look after them. The „boundary“ between a visitor and person living at the plot may be sometimes very clear. Thus, for example one affine of Kashe, Emanuel, who was living near the Omatoko Valledy Rest Camp in former Bushmanland, used to go regularly to Grootfontein to take part in a hearing regarding the theft of his few chickens by his neighbor since the court was often adjourned. He only ever spent a few days in the town, mostly overnighing at plot 12, and always emphasized how little he enjoyed staying in Grootfontein. On the other hand, this „border“ might sometimes be quite unclear and blurred.

This applies, for example, to single men who are „visiting“ but staying in Grootfontein for months and even working.

Communication, mobility, urban space

There is a link between multilingualism and the mobility of the !Xun. Due to their frequent movements from one place to another, the !Xun come into contact with people from other socio-linguistic groups and acquire communication skills in several languages, their resultant multilingualism then smoothing the process of their entering the urban space as well. The way Kashe has acquired his competences to communicate in several languages, is probably „typical“ for the !Xun of his generation, who end up in the town.

The first language Kashe learned at the farms dozens of kilometres northeast of Grootfontein, apart from his mother tongue, was Afrikaans. He acquired it while playing with Afrikaner children and he could practise it during all his employments at the commercial farms owned mostly by the Afrikaners. Afrikaans was nevertheless used also in communication with the few farmers with German and English mother tongue he worked for.³⁴⁹ Additionally, he was slowly learning Otjiherero, which is the language the Bushmen speak with Herero people and also use as a communication medium with Ovambo and Kavango farm workers. Nevertheless he also learnt to understand partly the Ovambos and Kavangos in their mother tongues. His learning of Damara was also a slow process because, according to my informants, there were only relatively few Damara speakers in the farms of the mentioned area northeast of Grootfontein. Kashe made a significant leap forward only after getting acquainted with a “Damara” driver at one particular farm, who became his friend. Later, he was able to practise Damara when he worked in the immediate vicinity of Grootfontein.

At the age of 27, Kashe moved to Bushmanland and got used to communicating with the !Xun groups speaking different dialects coming from northern Namibia and southern Angola and the Ju/hoan people. In former western Bushmanland, where he often tended cattle belonging to Hereros, and afterwards when he worked for them in former Hereroland West, he made substantial progress in his Otjiherero. Since moving to the town, Kashe has once again been improving his Damara.

The farm and communal area, where many of the !Xun lived before coming to the Grootfontein township, are mostly less ethnically and linguistically heterogeneous than the urban environment. Kashe often worked in farms with only !Xun workers, but nevertheless some farms and many villages/settlements in the communal areas were, albeit to a varying degree, ethno-linguistically heterogeneous. By frequent moving to different places, where he met people of different ethnic background, he could gradually learn other languages. Hence, I never heard my informants complaining that communication in the ethnically heterogeneous urban environment was a significant obstacle for them. Some of them even hold that, regarding their ability to communicate in various languages, they are more skilled than many non-!Xun ethnic groups. “We !Xun, we speak all the languages, Ovambo speaks only Ovambo, Damara speaks only Damara,” a foreman of the !Kung Community in Grootfontein told me. “The only language we do not speak is English.”

³⁴⁹ Devereaux, Katjuanja, and van Rooy (1996: 19) found that from the sample of almost 350 workers from different ethnic groups in commercial farms in the south, centre and north of Namibia, the communication language between them and their employers (in the sample of the study, mostly farm owners, but also e.g. foremen) was approximately in 90 % Afrikaans, but only 10 % of the farmworkers had Afrikaans as their mother tongue.

Lacking any command of English, combined with the generally extreme illiteracy of the San farm workers, who were also educationally marginalised by the South West Africa administration, is an insurmountable obstacle for the !Xun as far as securing them access to the already scarce better paid jobs in Grootfontein. However, for their daily communication situations in the town, this lack of English is generally just a minor hindrance for the !Xun. With his knowledge of Afrikaans, the township's lingua franca, Damara and Otjiherero, Kashe could hardly come across a person who would not be able to communicate at least partly in some of the languages. I asked him to show me all the shops or institutions (clinic, hospital, Labour office, post office etc.) he generally frequented, and to tell me who he spoke to there, and in what language. I was led to over 40 places. In the township, it was mostly small shops owned by Ovambos or Kavangos, with whom he spoke mainly in Otjiherero and occasionally in Afrikaans. In the offices in the town, and in supermarkets, he used mostly Afrikaans, the language he also employed when encountering people he saw for the first time irrespective if white or black. Thus, with regard to communication in Grootfontein, Kashe and similarly many other !Xun could de facto get along without speaking English.

Finlayson and Slabbert, examining code-switching in the townships in South Africa, claim that: „multilingual skills have prestige value in the urban environment where you are expected to accommodate your addressee” (Finlayson and Slabbert 1997: 407). However, in the case of the !Xun I could not observe that their multilingualism raised their esteem in the eyes of the non-!Xun. I rather tend to agree with Vossen's assumption made regarding the San in Botswana, that Bushmen “mother-tongue speaker would be probably looked down upon irrespective of his/her linguistic repertoire, because of the low social prestige the Khoisan population has throughout Botswana” (Vossen 1988: 27).

1 AG	1	2	3	4	5	6
M(22)		47.5%	31.5%	10.5%	10.5%	
W(19)		54.5%	32%	9%	4.5%	
2 AG						
M(9)			11%	44.5%	22%	22%
W(9)		44.5%	11%	33.5%	11%	
3 AG						
M(10)			20%	30%	20%	30%
W(14)		14.5%	21.5%	35.5%	14.5%	14.5%
4 AG						
M(4)				25%	50%	25%
W(5)	20%	20%			20%	40%
Explanation: 1 AG (first age group): 6-18 years, 2 AG: 19 - 37, 3 AG: 38 - 56, 4 AG: 57 and older.						

Regarding the ability of the !Xun to communicate in multiple languages, and to cope with the multilingual urban setting, there seems to be a difference between women and men. Looking at Table 21, we observe that apart from the youngest age group, the !Xun men are generally more multilingual than the women. It was most conspicuous in the second age group, where, for example, five of the nine women in the sample seemed to be unable to communicate well in Afrikaans. I assume that in this particular case it was mainly brought about by the fact that these impoverished women, who relied to a significant extent on scavenging on the dumpsite, had to focus on the care of their small children and common household activities such as cooking, cleaning the yard, washing or fetching water and firewood, and this restricted their possibilities to socialise outside of the homestead.

Even at the farms, plots and in the communal areas, the San women apparently had fewer possibilities to improve their communication skills than the men. According to my informants, it was mostly only the !Xun and Afrikaner boys who were allowed to play together at the farms. The girls, especially the daughters of the farmers, had to stay closer to the household. Sylvain, focusing on the Ju/'hoan San in the Omaheke, made similar observations. For example, she states that “no Ju/'hoan woman I spoke to described having Afrikaner playmates as a child. ... the childhood experiences of Ju/'hoan and Afrikaner girls tended to be house-bound, whereas the childhood associations between Ju/'hoan and Afrikaner boys occurred outside, at the workers' quarters and in the veld” (Sylvain 1999: 246). Sylvain further showed that due to the Ju/'hoan women in Omaheke region being “drawn into the settler political economy, they also became entangled in a web of colonial gender ideologies that defined them as appendages of men” (Ibid.: 166). According to Sylvain the male-work based character of the farming economy and the associated subordination of the women increased their dependency on the men. They mostly had to follow the men to the place the latter got jobs, while the San women often stayed unemployed. Further, there was a tendency by the farmers to communicate with the women through their male kin. Since the situation in the Grootfontein region was similar, these factors can explain the lower proficiency in Afrikaans of the !Xun women in Grootfontein.

Because Afrikaans was, unlike English, an invaluable communication medium in the Grootfontein urban environment, it seemed to affect the life of the !Xun women over there. I could observe that some of them were hesitant to go to various offices or to hospital without the presence of their male kin. This was partly caused by emotional stress associated with communication with unfamiliar people, but also their insufficient language skills. At such occasions it is then often the !Xun men who lead the communication with the officials.

The !Xun men in my sample seem to have generally indulged at the commercial farms into a more intensive communication with non-!Xun than the women, whose tasks such as cleaning, washing and cooking were bound to the space of farmer's house. The !Xun men, during the day, had to communicate with other non-!Xun workers to coordinate, for the farm's success, key activities such as looking after the livestock, gardening, fencing and repairing the vehicles. This had probably an impact on acquiring other languages. An illustrative example of the possible interplay of all the above-mentioned factors is offered by Kashe's father, mother and mother's sister who usually stayed with them in Grootfontein. Statistically, all three elders speak or understand more or less well the same languages Afrikaans, Damara, Otjiherero and Oshivambo. All of them, in the past, have lived together or at least in similar social-linguistic environments, but nevertheless, Kashe's father spoke all the languages much better than the women. The women's command of Afrikaans, despite their spending dozens of years at the farms, was particularly poor.

Conclusions

The !Xun mobility principally followed two networks: their large kin network and the network of work providers, and mostly both at once. The first can with some simplification be imagined as one solid area like the one of the farms north-east of Grootfontein where Kashe was born and out of which many !Xun later moved to the town. The second, consisting of the white farmers and their kin in the commercial farm area and urban areas and less frequently of black cattle owners in the communal areas of former Bushmanland and Hereroland, reaches beyond the areas with !Xun populations since, when working for the whites, the !Xun could

move with them as far afield as Windhoek, Walvis Bay or Otjiwarongo. However, when the !Xun stopped working for them, they had to return to their kin area.

The kin network of the !Xun who were living during the period of my research in Grootfontein spread mostly to the farms and less frequently to Bushmanland, Hereroland and other urban areas. In Bushmanland it was centred on the very western part of the area along Omuramba Omatako.

Since many of the !Xun in Grootfontein did not have there their „own“ plot and had to sublet space at someone else's *erf*, mostly of the non-!Xun, who could easily evict them, there was also intensive intra-town !Xun mobility.

The reasons for going to the town were often complex and could not be narrowed down to the stresses of the worsening economic situation in the farm area. Although the situation in the farm sector might be difficult, portraying the !Xun as its passive victims distorts the reality.

When moving to another place, an adult !Xun having to provide for a family would not ask whether the town, farm or Bushmanland was the best place to go but “where can I find work and where is my kin to assist me?”. If Grootfontein offers it, this might then be the place to move to. The notion of a town as the „last option“ and „last resort“ is, thus, misleading and, in fact, might reflect the bias of the researcher that the urban environment is an „unnatural“ location for the Bushmen.

Some of the !Xun left for the town not because they were no longer physically capable of farm work but in order to flee the *baas* - worker relationship which they regarded as too exploitative. These !Xun, often yardworkers, find employment in the town often with a similar income, and it is usually less strenuous than at the farm.

Another category are the pensioners, who did tend to find farm work too strenuous, and can access important services better in the town than in the farms or communal areas: they can withdraw the money they deposited from their pension to the bank accounts at anytime; with this money they can access food and other objects they demand at lower prices than in the rural areas; and have better access to health service. Another category are the children sent from the farms to their relatives in the township in order to attend school.

The prerequisite for moving into the township is having a place to stay. However, the number of the !Xun who manage to acquire a plot in Grootfontein from the municipality is still limited. If a single person has (emotionally) close kin in the township, it is usually easy to find a place at this person's dwelling or to build a shack there. If it is, however, a family, it might be problematic space-wise and the parents (or, more generally, the father) must have work in the town to provide for his dependents. Generally, the more !Xun who got a plot in the town, the more of their kin would follow them. Since there are very limited employment opportunities in Bushmanland and it can be also difficult to find work in Grootfontein, many !Xun use their houses in both places as bases from which they can go to the farms and have a place to which to return. The „owners“ of the plots in Grootfontein, however, tend to stay in the town permanently.

The role of alcohol and the lifestyle associated with it often draws in and keeps some of the !Xun in the urban environment, even if only for a short period, should not be underestimated.

Grootfontein vs. Swart Tak: the sites of the field research

In the following chapters I will present the conditions in Grootfontein and Bushmanland, in particular Swart Tak, with the aim of understanding the reasons why some !Xun prefer to stay in one of the spaces while others move between the two. As we saw earlier, when at the very beginning of the 21st century Bushmen squatters turned up on the streets of Grootfontein and the regional authorities did not have a way to deal with the situation at hand, they came up with a “natural” solution: send the “Bushmen” to “Bushmanland”. Although it was probably a well-meaning attempt to help them, it showed how little the regional and town administrators knew of these Bushmen, who, as we know, were the !Xun.

I will introduce the social settings of Grootfontein and Swart Tak as I encountered them during the period of my field research between 2007 and 2013. The chapter on Swart Tak will have a brief introduction on the history of the area. Then the views and perceptions of the dwellers of the “other side” will be presented, followed by an analysis of the economic and coping strategies in both spaces. Finally, life in both environments will be addressed and compared by using the material culture perspective. Much space will be dedicated to my main informant Kashe with the aim of further deepening an understanding of a !Xun man and breadwinner who during the time of my research preferred to stay in the township to any other spaces.

By comparing the situation in Grootfontein and Swart Tak we should be able to understand more clearly the nature of each of the spaces.

Grootfontein during the period of my research

In the years of my research Grootfontein had about 18 000 inhabitants.³⁵⁰ According to the Namibian people census in 2001 (2001 Household and Population Census), there were about 14 thousand inhabitants in Grootfontein at that time.³⁵¹ However, the statistics from this census I obtained by the Namibian National Planning Commission, when dividing the population according to the “main language spoken at home” suggested only approximately 12 000 inhabitants (see Table 22), and, thus, for the purposes of this paper I will use those figures. The most numerous group were the Oshivambo-speaking people (30.5 %),³⁵² followed by Nama-Damara (28.2 %) speakers, but this category must have also included most of the Hai//om Bushmen, who speak a language closely related to Nama-Damara (Khoekhoegowab). The next best represented groups were Afrikaans speaking people (Coloureds and Afrikaners - 13.3 %) and Otjiherero-speaking Hereros (12.1 %). The census counted also 65 persons speaking !Xun living in 6 households.³⁵³

³⁵⁰ Personal communication with officials of the Grootfontein municipality in July 2008.

³⁵¹ The Namibian National Planning Commission provided me with the unpublished data. We again face the problem of defining the boundaries between the urban and farm areas, especially concerning the problem whether to include the plots in the town’s vicinity.

³⁵² Grootfontein is a lifetime migration destination of Bantu people from the communal areas in the north, especially for people born in the Okavango, Oshakati and Ondangwa districts (Miranda 1998 cited in Pendleton and Frayne 1998:12)

³⁵³ Except for the !Xun and the Hai//om there seemed to be only few Bushmen from other groups (Khwe and Ju/'hoan San).

The census of the !Kung Community in Grootfontein³⁵⁴ in 2006 - 7, which provides only a rough estimate, found approximately 200 !Xun San living in the location. A cautious estimate, then, is that there were about 200 - 300 hundred !Xun in Grootfontein during my research. Getting a more precise number may be difficult. Many of the !Xun lived in families, forming clusters, but to find individual !Xun, often women, having partners from other ethnic groups, may pose a problem. What can safely be said is that the !Xun comprise only a tiny minority in the town, some 1,5 - 2 percent of its inhabitants. Most live in Blikkiesdorp, one of the newest parts of the township, which was developed in the early 2000s. Most of the !Xun only arrived in Grootfontein at that time, when the municipality allocated some of them plots in Blikkiesdorp and, thus, many of the !Xun regarded themselves as newcomers in the town. Other !Xun, mostly their relatives, moved subsequently to the plots as well. Some !Xun who wanted to settle in the town were allowed to build shacks from scavenged metal plates on the plots of non-!Xun already residing in the township, mostly for a payment of 50 NS or so per month.

group/language	Population	%	households	P/H
1.Oshivambo	3706	30.5	925	4
2.Nama/Damara	3417	28.2	564	6.1
3.Afrikaans	1609	13.3	417	3.9
4.Otjiherero	1468	12.1	318	4.6
5.Kavango	848	7	179	4.7
6.Caprivi	485	4	93	5.2
7.English	159	1.3	42	3.8
8.!Kung (!Xun)	65	0.5	6	10.8
9.o.Europ.	56	<0.5	11	5.1
10.German	39	<0.5	15	2.6
11.other	23	<0.5	4	5.8
12.o.Afric.	20	<0.5	4	5
13.Hai//om	12	<0.1	4	3
14.o. San	8	<0.1	4	2
15.Tswana	8	<0.1	4	2
16.not st.	208	1.7	30	6.9
Total	12131	100	2620	4.6

Explanation: P/H – people per household, o. Europ. – other European, o. Afric. – other African, o. San – other San, not st. – not stated. In the following I will use as my !Xun informants Damara instead of Nama-Damara. Kavango will be employed in the text as a term for a language group.³⁵⁵

The !Xun in Grootfontein defined themselves in terms of 1) their socio-economic position in the society, 2) their linguistic distinction and 3) sometimes in terms of their physical appearance.

At 1) The adult !Xun men who comprised most of my informants defined themselves through their “!Xunness” as belonging to an exploited (“He misused me”), landless (“We do not have a place to stay”), poor (“I have nothing”), lacking marketable skills (“We are stupid”)

and uneducated (“We don’t have school”) class of former farm workers who were at the very bottom of the social hierarchy (“All the people look down on us”), marginalised and deprived

³⁵⁴ The !Kung Community in Grootfontein (in the few documents produced by the members of the community the spelling of the ethnonym was inconsistently !Kung, !Hung and !Khung, in my text I will use in this particular instance the spelling !Kung, favoured by academics in the past) was established in 2005 as a platform for dealing with the difficult situation of the !Xun living in the town and the adjacent area. Due to its limited capacities to bring about changes it seemed to be almost dysfunctional in 2009.

³⁵⁵ In fact “Kavangos” are inhabitants of the Okavango geographical area and the term hides linguistic diversity, because they comprise several ethno-linguistic groups, who speak Rukwangali, Shishambyu, Rugciriku and Thimbukushu (Maho 1998: 36 - 44).

by the non-!Xun of the chance to rise to a higher status that would lead eventually to economic independence and prosperity (“They don’t want us to get ahead”). As Kashe put it in: „We !Xun, we suffer. We !Xun, we never work for ourselves, we work only for other people, we make only other people rich and thus we become never rich. We are always behind.”³⁵⁶ This „definition“ ,beginning with “We suffer” (in Afrikaans *Ons kry swaar*) or “We struggle” (*Ons sukkel*), was like a refrain my !Xun informants constantly repeated, thereby revealing that they must have often discussed their social status among themselves.



Map 8. Grootfontein in 2010. The arrow indicates the area in the township where I did most of my research. Map drawn by Stubenrauch Planning Consultants.

Looking at the 92 !Xun older than six people in my sample dwelling in Blikkiesdorp in 2008 (see table 23), we can observe a dramatic change in school attendance among the four generations. None of the nine elders ever sat behind a school desk³⁵⁷, from the third generation just one !Xun in 25 (4 percent) had been to school, from the second age group seven of the eighteen (almost 40 percent) had received some formal education and in the first generation almost three quarters (72.5 percent) had some schooling. This is due to two

³⁵⁶ Not surprisingly the Hai//om of the commercial farming area identify themselves similarly (see Longden 2004: 45).

³⁵⁷ One of them, the above quoted Andris, managed to learn how to read and write in Afrikaans just by asking for assistance his literate friends to practise with him.

factors: the much better access to education in independent Namibia and the spatial proximity of the schools in the town. We can see that of the !Xun of the third and fourth age groups only one in 34 attended school. At that time most of the !Xun lived at the farms. “We were at the *plaas*”, was mostly given as a reason by these !Xun for why they did not go to school or enrol their offspring. However, the drop-out rate among the first age group was high. In 2008 62,5 % (25 out of 40) of the children of school going age in my sample were attending school, but by the following year four of them had dropped out and by 2010 only 16 of the initial 40 were still attending. These 16 children had been attending school for 3,9 years on average. The longest-studying child I came across was a !Xun girl who had finished 8 grades, before leaving school and going to a farm with her boyfriend. It was only this girl with whom I could communicate (to some degree) in English.



Picture 19. The !Xun I number as living at plot No. 12 lived for a period in a shack next to a car repair company in the industrial area near the town and township.

Of the 53 adults, the potential breadwinners, in my sample, only five, i.e. 9,4 %, were literate, which, of course, predetermined their employment opportunities. Most of them were limited

to unskilled manual work. For comparison: according to the 2001 country-wide population census the literacy rate of people above 15 in the urban areas in the whole Otjozondjupa region was 87.7 % compared to 64.2 % in the rural areas (2001 Population and Housing Census: D-28).

G	Nr.	sch.	%	s.a.	%	years	lit.	%	English	Afrikaans
1	40	32	72,5	25	62.5	1.8	1-4?	2,5-10	0-4?	?
2	18	7	38.9			2.7	3	13.3	1-2?	2
3	25	1	4			5	1	4	-	1
4	9	-	0				1	11.1	-	1
	92	40	43.5			2	6,5-9,8	5.5	1-6?	4+?

Explanation: The sample is of 92 !Kung 6 years and older living in 12 !Xun plots; G: age group; sch.: attended/are attending school; s.a.: still attending school at the time of the field research; years: average time spent in the school, by one person from the I. and II. generation I did not get the data; lit. – literate persons; English, Afrikaans – number of people literate in the language.

The analysis of the complex reasons for not attending the school and the high drop-out rate are beyond the scope of this study, but are largely similar to explanations presented by le Roux (1999). One of the reasons was, according to the principal of the Omulunga Primary school, where most of the school-attending Bushmen children were enrolled, the mobility of the San:

We take the Bushmen children in January, in March they left the school. The parents come and say, we go to Omatako or to a farm. There is no place to stay, they are moving around. In July they come back again, are crying, want to have the children in school. We take them and in December they are left. They take the children out of school anytime they want.

The principal complained about what for her were the unnaturally and incomprehensively firm bonds between the parents and children, who “must always stay together”. For her, the strong parent - child relationship of the San was a sign of their human immaturity. The headmistresses, who at the same time genuinely seemed to want to help the Bushmen, interpreted their behaviour as being an inner fault, without realising the strong family bonds could be to a large degree created by the social, economic and psychological interdependence of the members of the marginalized San families.

The fact is that some children did not want to stay at the school if their parents had to move to a different place. In some cases they could stay with their kin in the township but the parents were worried about leaving them. After Kashe separated from his wife in 2007, he kept on telling me that Anton had to go to school regularly. But all his attempts to enrol him were only short-lived. When moving between the township, Bushmanland, plots and farms, Anton mostly wanted to follow him and Kashe did not trust his relatives to look after his son in his absence. The older Anton became, the more complicated it was to enrol him, since he became too old to start at grade one, the grade which corresponded to his knowledge of English, the tuition language.

At 2) Most of the adult !Xun dwellers were well aware of their linguistic distinction from other ethnic groups in the town. When asked about the difference between them and the Hai//om Bushmen my !Xun informants pointed to the fact that they, in contrast to the former, speak “Bushman language”.

At 3) Some of the Grootfontein-dwelling !Xun also felt distinct as regards their physical appearance. This applied especially to their complexion and hair. According to these informants, the !Xun are “red people”. Kashe, my main informant, says that the Damara-speaking population of the township refers to his plot as “the place where /Abakhoe (red people) live”.³⁵⁸ However, as mentioned above, some of the !Xun lacked the features “typically” associated with !Xun-ness.



Picture 20. The !Xun plot No. 11 in the Ovambo „location“.

Nevertheless, it was striking that none of the !Xun living in the town described, nor was able to describe, his or her own !Xunness in terms of concrete “typical” or “traditional” cultural features such as specific items of material culture (tools, clothes, adornments), customs or rituals. Some of them mentioned !Xun songs. Kashe, for example, claimed it was typically !Xun to sit around the fire in the evening with one’s bare feet close to the heat. Most of my !Xun informants were born at the farm as were their parents. It was mostly only their younger children who were born in Grootfontein. Among my informants there was not a single one who had engaged for a long period in the hunter and gatherer economic mode. The last generation of “traditionally” living !Xun in a genealogical kin relationship to my respondents must have been born around or before the 1910s because they were the parents of my oldest informants, who were born in the 1930s at the farms. The “old time” of hunting and gathering was of negligible importance in the common discourse of the !Xun in Grootfontein, except to a few, to varying extents, respected, !Xun community leaders who grasped the potential of such a discourse as an instrument for achieving their political (the prospect of setting up a Traditional Authority Office in Grootfontein), economic (access to state support programmes) and other claims (the allocation of land).

³⁵⁸ The term „red people“ is used by other Khoesan groups as well.

As shown in Table 22, Grootfontein and its township is a highly heterogeneous environment both ethnically and linguistically. However, only a limited number of socio-linguistic groups occupy the mental space of the !Xun in the town, and their relationship to these groups is of most importance for them. A Grootfontein !Xun talks mostly only about a Goba (used by the !Xun mostly for an Ovambo and a Kavango person; the plural form is Goba-sɲ, my !Xun informants used -sɲ also for expressing the plural with the ethnonyms given below), a Tama (used for a Herero) and a Ghom or a Xautama (used for a Hai//om or a Damara). The term Goba is used for black people in northern Namibia but not for a Herero. The Grootfontein !Xun mostly do not differentiate between the Ovambo and Kavango people, let alone the particular groups among them, and when they speak in Afrikaans use the terms as synonyms. The !Xun also rarely differentiate between the different Damara-speaking groups (in Grootfontein this applies to the Damaras and the Hai//om), calling any local Damara-speaker only “Damara” in Afrikaans while in !Xun using the terms Xautama or Ghom. Ghom, according to my !Xun informants, are physically shorter, thus corresponding more to the Hai//om. The !Xun often use the term Ghom for all Damara-speakers whose ethnicity the !Xun do not know. Thus, looking at the socio-economic hierarchy of the different ethnolinguistic groups in the township, the !Xun reduce them de facto to three levels:

1. Goba (Ovambo, Kavango) and Tama³⁵⁹ (Herero)
2. Ghom³⁶⁰ and Xautama³⁶¹ (Hai//om, Damara)
3. !Xun

The !Xun generally view the Ovambos, Kavangos and Hereros as people with a monopoly on the better jobs in the town, especially in the government and police, and whose power is demonstrated in their possession of valuable assets such as brick houses and cars. The Ovambo and Kavango people (but not Hereros) also own most of the small shops in the township. In the view of the !Xun, a significant gap separates the Ovambos, Kavangos and Hereros from other peoples.

In the 12 !Xun plots in the township with kin of Kashe, there were in 2008 112 people with declared !Xun ethnicity, but these data conceal high ethnic intermixing. 24 of the 112 !Xun, i.e. 21.4 %, had one parent of different ethnicity - Kavango (8), “Damara” (6), Ovambo (4), Tswana (2) and an “Angolan Bantu”, Hai//om, Coloured and Nama (1 each). The non-!Xun parent was, in 21 out of the 24 instances, always the father. The most striking situation was at plots 6 and 7 (see Table 24), which were not divided by any fence and formed one space. There were 19 people, but 8 of them, i.e. 42 %, had a father from a Bantu ethnic group (Ovambo, Kavango, “Angolan Bantu”). But as with the inhabitants in other plots, this had no impact on the first language of their children. The Grootfontein !Xun “foreman” Amos Shivute said of these inter-ethnic unions: “In Grootfontein everybody is mixed”.

359 In Ju/'hoan you find “Gòbá” for a „black person, esp. other than Tswana or Herero person“ (Dickens 1994: 201) and “Tamah” for a “Herero person” (Dickens 1994: 265). Lee (2003: 143) states similarly that the Ju/'hoansi apply the term Goba for all non-Herero and non-Tswana blacks, thus for example also for Mbukushu and BeYei.

360 In Northwestern !Xun “ghóm” means a Hai//om person (König and Heine 2008: 24; König and Heine 2001: 6) and, interestingly, in Ju/'hoan language a “person born out of wedlock, illegitimate person, bastard” (Dickens 1994: 200). In Vedder (1910: 10) we find the term Xom-khoin for the „Saan“ of the Etosha area. Later (Vedder 1928) Vedder used the term Chom-Khoin. The Chom khoin visited also Lebzelter (1925a : 83).

361 In Ju/'hoan language a “Damara person” is “G!à'utàmà” (Dickens 1994: 63). Xuadama is commonly used in Namibia, also by the ≠Akhoe Hai//om, for the Damaras (Widlok 1999: 17).

The !Xun I interviewed also said that most of their non-!Xun friends in the town were “Damaras”, which might be in many (if not most) cases the Hai//om.

Table 24: Language knowledge of the !Xun on plots 6 – 7

AG	Id	Mo	Fa	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
0 Δ	!X	!X	!X,O	!X					
0 Δ	!X	!X,O	!X	!X	D				
1 O	!X	!X,O	!X	!X	H	A	D	E	
1 Δ	!X	!X	!X,O	!X	D				
1 Δ	!X	!X	!X,O	!X	D	H			
1 O	!X	!X	K	!X	H	D	A		
1 O	!X	!X	K	!X	H	D			
1 O	!X	!X	!X	!X	H	A	E		
1 O	!X	!X	!X	!X	D				
1 Δ	!X	!X	AB	!X	D	E	AB		
1 Δ	!X	!X	K	!X	A	K	E	D	H
1 O	!X	!X	K	!X	D	K	E		
2 O	!X	!X	K	!X	D	K	A		
3 Δ	!X	!X	O	!X	H	A	D	O	
3 O	!X	!X	!X	!X	H				
3 O	!X	!X	!X	!X	D	A	H		
3 O	!X	!X	O	!X	D	A			
3 O	!X	!X	!X	!X	A	H	D	K	O
4 O	!X	!X	!X	!X	H				

Explanation: AG - age group 0 - 4 (0 - younger than 6, 1 - youths, 2 - young adults, 3 - adults, 4 - elders); Id.: ethnic identity, by the first age group stated by the parents; Mo - mother's ethnic identity; Fa - father's ethnic identity; if parent's mother and father were from different ethnic group, than e.g. !X, O means the mother was !Xun and the father Ovambo; 1st - 6th: languages ordered according to informant's proficiency, D - Damara, H - Herero/Otjiherero, A - Afrikaans, E - English, K - Kavango, O - Ovambo/Oshivambo, AB - Angolan Bantu. The Bantu parents and their languages were put in bold.

Damara (Khoekhoegowab)-speakers also had the greatest influence on the language use of the !Xun who were exposed to the Grootfontein urban environment. My socio-linguistic survey conducted in Grootfontein in 2008 revealed that the younger the generation and the more time the !Xun had spent in the Grootfontein urban environment or its immediate area (plots and farms in the vicinity), the more they used Damara. In the first age (6 to 18) group 80.5 % spoke Damara as second language, in the second (19 – 37) 72 - 78 %, for the third (38 – 56 years) it decreased to 54 % and for the fourth (57 and older) it was only 45.5 - 55.5 %.³⁶²

The reasons for the strong influence of Damara language on the

Grootfontein !Xun seem clear. First, it is due to the numeral strength of the Damara-speaking people in the township. According to the 2001 census, Nama-Damara was the second most used language at home of the Grootfontein dwellers (28.2 %) after Oshivambo . But my !Xun informants described the linguistic environment in Blikkiesdorp, most probably the poorest part of the township, where the !Xun are most concentrated, as predominantly Damara-speaking. About 80 % of the 92 !Xun older than 6 in the sample claimed or had it claimed of them that their “street language” in the township was Damara. It was even the first language for three of them (one in each of the first three age groups) and these three people also used Damara in their communication with family members.

A second reason reflects the fact that the “Damaras”, especially the Hai//om are next to the !Xun in the socio-economical hierarchy, which often means they occupy similar spaces in the township - they often cannot afford to buy or rent brick houses and so rent relatively cheap

362 I could not judge the extent to which the !Xun language as such in Grootfontein was influenced by Damara language. Nevertheless, it may be indicative that the Ju/'hoan San living in the former western Bushmanland regard the !Xun as ‘the ones who use many Damara words’. The !Xun in Grootfontein agree on this, and consider the language of the Ju/'hoan Bushmen as “deep”.

plots where they erect their tin houses. Some of them scavenge at the dump sites, as do some of the !Xun. Socio-economic and spatial proximity among the !Xun and the “Damaras” makes their interaction easier. Of the non-!Xun, it was only “Damaras” (probably mostly Ghom-Hai//om) with whom the children of “my” family at plot 1 played.

The whites, mostly Afrikaners, although not living in the location, play an important role in the !Xun’s mental world as former, present or prospective employers. The low self-esteem and feelings of helplessness of the !Xun are also sometimes in an unexpected way combined with pride in their skills as farm workers. Many adult !Xun men regard themselves as people who were taught by the Afrikaner farmers “all the farm work”: looking after cattle, ploughing with a tractor, gardening, watering or fencing (“Everything I know, the Afrikaner taught me”) and think themselves to be more skilled than other ethnic groups in this respect. These other groups, therefore, from the !Xun’s perspective, unjustly occupy a higher status in the social hierarchy. This illustrates the ambivalence of the underemployed adult !Xun men in Grootfontein with regard to their feelings toward their “traditional” white employers: they view the white master as a prospective agent of unfair treatment (some !Xun in Grootfontein do not want to work at the farms any more), but at the same time as a link to knowledge associated with a better life. Highlighting their relationship to white farmers, who made them bearers of skills that other non-white peoples, according to the !Xun, lack, is presumably a way of resisting and reversing, at least in their mental world, their low social status. As my main informant Kashe once put it: „The white people are stronger than the Ovambos”.³⁶³

These feelings of a certain emotional bond may be reciprocated from the side of some farmers and white employers in the town. The !Xun in the commercial farming area (or Bushmen generally) have for a long time experienced the status of a marginalised minority. The status of the whites changed after independence from a ruling to a ruled minority. Thus, they might view the Bushmen in some ways as “allies”.

Swart Tak during the period of my research

Former Bushmanland can be viewed as comprising of two areas: its eastern part inhabited traditionally by the Ju/’hoansi and its western part’s original inhabitants being !Xun living in the area of Omuramba Omatako.³⁶⁴ Until the 1970s the western part of Bushmanland was sparsely populated. According to Hohmann’s informants, it was inhabited by three „family groups“ (Familiengruppen) - one living in the area of Omatako and Bubipos, another in the area of Grashoek and the third around Nhoma and Olivantswater. Among these Bushmen existed kin relations (Hohmann 2004: 24). The third group were probably Ju/’hoansi.³⁶⁵ Elsewhere, Hohmann (2003: 228) refers to a Ju/’hoan San chief who told her in 1999 that in the past in the western part of Bushmanland he remembered Bushmen living only around Omatako and Bubipos.

³⁶³ The perception of personal !Xun identity may vary to a certain extent among different gender and age groups. The picture I was given, of the exploited, but skilled !Xun, was probably partly gender-, generation- and situation-based. The !Xun giving me this information were mostly men, who were providing or had to provide for the family and might have seen in me a prospective source of help.

³⁶⁴ The information provided in Thoma and Piek (1997: 20, 25) can give the impression that Grashoek and Kanovlei were traditionally inhabited by the Ju/’hoansi. However, my !Xun informants born in this area claimed that it used to be a !Xun area and the Ju/’hoansi arrived there only in the last century.

³⁶⁵ The genesis of contacts between the Omuramba Omatako !Xun and the Ju/’hoansi is worth conducting further research. The contacts, including intermarriage, certainly intensified when both peoples started to work at white farms.

Following the recommendations of the Odendaal Commission of 1964, whose aim was to apply apartheid homeland policy in Namibia, in 1970 a Bushman reservation called Bushmanland was established and by the government proclamation No. 208 of 1976 the „Bushmanland Homeland“ came into being (Botelle and Rohde 1995: 43, Marshall and Ritchie 1994: 5, 19).

In Tsumkwe in eastern Bushmanland an administrative post was established in 1959, and in a short time major changes in the lives of the local Ju/'hoan Bushmen were set in motion and they saw the progressive demise of their foraging economy. 25 Ju/'hoansi were living in Tsumkwe in 1958. Once the settlement scheme was established there with a shop, a police station and a Dutch reformed church, the Ju/'hoan San started to leave their *n!oresi* for the settlement. By 1965 the population of Tsumkwe was already 550 and in 1978 it had reached 986, half of the population in the region. Tsumkwe became associated with unemployment, violence, alcohol-abuse and the Ju/'hoansi started to call it the „place of death“. While in 1958 the Tsumkwe dwellers depended almost wholly on gathering and hunting, in 1981 this provided for only 11 % of their diet, most of their food being bought or given to them (Lee and Hurlich 1982: 330; Marshall and Ritchie 2004: 44 - 45; 59 - 60; Suzman 2001: 41; Biesele 1990: 7).

In the western part of Bushmanland major changes started at the end of the 1970s with the setting up of army bases in the area. Only from then did the development of this area begin and could it host a larger population. In the few years after 1978 around 3000 !Xun and their dependents from the northern part of the country and southern Angola, Kxoe San and also some Hai//om were settled in South African Defence Forces (SADF) army camps (the main one was at Mangetti Dune) in this part of Bushmanland and became largely dependent on the army. In 1989, when the SADF left the country, about half the Bushmen, who would have no employment opportunities in Bushmanland after the army withdrawal, were economically dependent on cash, food and services provided by the army, left the country for Schmidtsdrift near Kimberley in South Africa in March 1990.³⁶⁶ They may also have feared the vengeance of the black population for having collaborated with the colonisers. In the first half of the 1990s the Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (MLRR) took charge of the rehabilitation and the resettlement of the remaining Bushmen soldiers and their families in western Bushmanland. The implementing agency was, however, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) and the population was dispersed into 13 settlements, half of which were former army bases. By that time the majority of the people spoke various !Xun dialects. (Botelle and Rohde 1995: 17, 110, 115). The government and ELCIN carried out the land allocations. Following the failure of the Bushman welfare programmes, ELCIN pulled out in 1995 (Suzman 2001: 45).³⁶⁷

The constitution of independent Namibia guarantees to every citizen a free choice of the place of residence. Thus, after independence Bushmanland started to attract also Bantu (Kavango, Ovambo and Herero) settlers and also some Damaras. Some Ju/'hoansi from the commercial

³⁶⁶ The Bushmen were later resettled from Schmidtsdrift to former farm Platfontein. I visited the place in October 2011. Out of my inquiries came out that the resettled Bushmen were only Kxoe and !Xun from northern Namibia and southern Angola and not the !Xun of the Omuramba Omatako area. The former were apparently too uprooted from their original home areas, which exacerbated their fears about their return „home“. However, some of them use still to visit their kin in western Bushmanland, mostly with a car.

³⁶⁷ Botelle and Rohde (1995), who conducted their research in Bushmanland at the end of 1993 divided its area into four „social domains“ the western, central and eastern part and the Gam area. The !Xun I worked with in the area of Grootfontein had numerous relatives only in the western part of the western domain in the settlements along Omuramba Omatako, which appears to confirm that the !Xun did not live further eastwards in the area of Mangetti Dune.

farms also moved to Grashoek. In 1991 the population in western Bushmanland was 1 844, 85 % of them were Mpungu and Vasekele !Xun.³⁶⁸ These Bushmen are called by the Grootfontein area !Xun - /Turu (pl. /Turu-sṅ) or in Afrikaans Kavango !Xun.³⁶⁹ By 1993 only 4 % of the inhabitants of western Bushmanland had been born in this area. In 1991 the population of the whole Bushmanland was 3851 (Botelle and Rohde 1995; Hohmann 2004: 20), but by 2001 it was already 9002 (2001 Population and Housing Census: Otjozondjupa Region). According to my !Xun informants, the first !Xun started to settle in Swart Tak, which lay in the western part of former Bushmanland, just next the Rooddag gate settlement, at the very end of the 1990s.



Picture 21. Loading firewood cut by the !Xun along the road to Omatako in 2008. The wood was sold to South Africa.

Western part of the former Bushmanland is an ethnically and, in some aspects, even economically heterogeneous region. In 2007 Kashe and I visited four settlements where he had relatives: Swart Tak, where Kashe had his plot and hut, Omatako, a few plots near Omatako Valley Rest Camp and Grashoek. There were conspicuous differences in the ethnic set-ups of these places. In Swart Tak the majority of people were former !Xun farm workers with some relatives born in this area. In Omatako there were !Xun from northern Namibia and southern Angola and the Kxoe San, who used to work for South African army. But there were also !Xun whose relatives were born in this area and !Xun who used to work at the farms near the Red Line. Hai//om Bushmen and from the Bantu peoples, mainly Hereros, also lived there. The more secluded plots near Omatako Valley Rest Camp were inhabited by !Xun whose forebears were often born in this area and who also used to work at the farms, but they were intermarried with !Xun from the Rundu and Tsintsabis areas. In Grashoek, the

³⁶⁸ Known also as Sekele, Sekere and Vasekela (Brenzinger n.d.).

³⁶⁹ The !Xun from the Grootfontein area sometimes call the !Xun from northern Namibia *mahenge*. According to König and Heine (2001: 5), „òmähéngè or mähéngè is a term used by many !Xun groups to refer to other !Xun groups whom they find hard or impossible to understand.”

settlement consisted of a majority of Ju/'hoan San, who often had vital contacts to their relatives in former eastern Bushmanland, and there were also !Xun Bushmen, often former farm workers. Both groups seemed to live largely independently from each other. There were only a few non-!Xun living in Grashoek. In Rooidag, which neighbours Swart Tak, there lived many Kavangos in addition to the !Xun. The Bantu peoples settled mostly in sites along the main routes such as in Rooidag, Swart Tak, Kameelwoud and Omatako and much less in Grashoek or Kanovlei. In these settlements social relations were significantly shaped by tensions between the Bushmen and Bantu cattle owners. However, there were often also tensions between the various San groups.

The Kavangos, as they did in their home area in northern Namibia, used to cultivate the land and the !Xun could do some piecemeal jobs for them on their plots. The Hereros, who lived in the settlements along the road from Omatako Valley Rest Camp to Omatako, focused on cattle, which the Bushmen would herd. The situation in Grashoek was specific in that there was a tourism project, a „Historical Living Museum“, where the Ju/'San showed to tourists their „traditional“ way of life and sold art products. The project drew the interest of the tourists because those who were eager to see „traditional“ Bushmen did not have to go 100 kilometres further to Tsumkwe, but found „them“ just behind the Red Line. Many Ju/'hoan in the village made a living from the project. Since the !Xun felt themselves excluded from the project, it created some tensions between the two groups. In 2007 most of the Bushmen living at the settlements along the Omatako Valley Rest Camp and Omatako lived on cutting dry camelthorn trees for firewood, which was bought out by an Afrikaner commercial farmer, D. Kok. According to him, it ended up on the market in South Africa and India. That year about 150 San were earning some money in this way.³⁷⁰

Since Kashe had a plot and hut in Swart Tak, it became the most important settlement in former Bushmanland for my research. According to the Swart Tak Councilor Hermann, the first people to settle in this village were !Xun, who came there in 1999 from the commercial farms. According to the statistics I was shown by the settlement representatives, in 2005, when they did their own census in the village, there were 79 people living in the Swart Tak, of whom 67 !Xun were from the broader Grootfontein area, especially the farms, and 12 non-!Xun. The latter were an ethnically heterogeneous group consisting of five „Kavangos“, three „Ovambos“, two Mbundus, one Hai//om and one !Xun from northern Namibia. In 2007 there were also one Ju/'hoan man. In contrast to Kameelwoud or Omatako, in Swart Tak there were no permanently settled Hereros.

The minority of the non-!Xun had, in some important aspects, dominant roles in the settlement's social environment. The socio-economic hierarchy in Swart Tak was mirrored in the ownership of livestock. When we look at table 25 we can observe that in 2009 there were only seven people in Swart Tak, all of them non-!Xun, who owned livestock, donkeys excluded. Of these seven, however, only three owned more than 10 animals.³⁷¹ In 2009 and 2010 some !Xun possessed between one and three donkeys but no !Xun owned any other livestock. The !Xun often complained that their harvest had been destroyed by the black people's cows, goats, cows and sheep. The !Xun also blamed the black people's cattle for depleting the bushfood and the grass they used to build the roofs of the huts. Another point of dispute was that the only drinkable source of water in the village was a borehole with a water pump, whose engine was powered by diesel provided by the government. The cattle owners sent their cattle to drink there. As a result, the diesel was soon used up and then there was no

³⁷⁰ About the business project wrote the daily Namibian, San community sees the wood for the trees, 14.9.2007.

³⁷¹ In 1993 in western Bushmanland were only 9 owners of in total 450 cattle (Botelle and Rohde 1995: 113).

water for the people. Then, when the diesel was finished, the black people allegedly sometimes went to Grootfontein to buy new diesel, but were then hesitant to share the water with the !Xun.

Ethnicity	Employing	cattle	Goats	Sheep	Donkeys
Damara	2 !Xun	17	8		6
Herero	1 !Xun (Kashe)	12	6		
Damara	1 Ovambo	5			
Kavango		4			4
Ovambo	1 Kavango	2	41 goats and sheep in total		
Kavango			6		2
Herero				4	
Ovambo					5
!Xun					3
!Xun					3
!Xun					2
!Xun					2
Ovimbundu					2
Kavango					2
!Xun					1
!Xun					1

Even though they were in a minority, it was only the black people who provided work to the Bushmen. The Bantus were also the owners of the shops in the area where the !Xun bought their foodstuffs and alcohol, at what were much higher prices than could be found in Grootfontein. The relationship between the !Xun, or Bushmen generally, and the black people settling in Bushmanland was the source of tensions. The Bantus were regarded as occupying land that was supposed to belong to Bushmen and the influx of new Bantu families, especially Hereros, reported already in the mid 1990s (Thoma and Piek 1997: 31), with cattle was a constant topic of conversation in this part of Bushmanland. („I also cannot come to Kavango and take a land there. What will they say?“).³⁷² It also created tensions with the then !Kung Traditional Authority chief John Arnold,³⁷³ who was accused of siding with the intruding pastoralists. The situation was all the more confused because of the lack of clarity regarding landhold rights, with the government claiming to own all communal lands, but without formulating „adequate policies for the administration of such lands“ (Odendaal 2006). The !Xun who worked for them felt often exploited. The Bushmen also often complained about the black policemen in Rooidag. In 2007 there were, according to councillor Hermann, three police officers, two „Kavangos“ and one „Ovambo“, who were felt to side with black people in disputes. There were also no !Xun among the Rooidag gate veterinary officials controlling the movements of animals and animal products between the commercial farm area and the

³⁷² On the violent conflict situation in Omatako because of alleged cattle-theft committed by the San see Gewalt im West-Bushmanland, Allgemeine Zeitung, 28.7.2003.

³⁷³ Hermann, the Concillor of Swart Tak, told me in 2007, that he was prohibiting black people from coming to his village. However, the black people then allegedly went to the !Kung Traditional Authority chief John Arnold, who gave them permission to settle there. The accusation against Arnold became publicly known and the !Kung Traditional Authority was labelled as “the most disorganised and weakest in the country” (Namibian 2007a). However, Arnold claimed he was powerless to deal with the situation. On the more hopeful atmosphere in the process of creating of the !Kung Traditional Authority chief in Tsumkwe District West see /Useb (2000).

communal lands. Furthermore, some tensions were created by the Bantu men having affairs with !Xun women. By the latter half of my period of research, the !Xun also started to fear that the black people's witchcraft was directed against them.

How the Grootfontein and Bushmanland dwellers viewed and experienced the „other side“

What did the !Xun dwelling during the time of my research think of life in Bushmanland? What made them prefer to live in the township? Did they think of moving to Bushmanland? And how did the !Xun living in former western Bushmanland relate to Grootfontein? Why did they not leave the rural area for the town?

The view from Grootfontein



Picture 22. Resting in Blikkiesdorp.

Below I present the information about the relationships to Bushmanland of some of the heads of households living on 10 of the 12 plots, on which I focused my research.³⁷⁴

Plot 1

Kashe's family spent several years in Bushmanland after 1997 and became familiar with its environment. All of them went there because they wanted to try a have a different life there, after spending most of the lives at the farms. Kashe's parents later went back to the town, because they found life in Bushmanland too difficult. Other relatives of Kashe who had to provide for their families returned to farms, where they could, in contrast to the Bushmanland, generate some income. Kashe was the only one to acquire his own plot in Bushmanland and for years used to move there. Even when in Grootfontein, Kashe did not give up on the idea

³⁷⁴ The data are missing for plot 4 and 11. /Xae from plot 5 was mostly difficult to meet, since he spent much of his free time in Single Quarters, and was mostly drunk. The !Xun from plot 9 moved by 2010, when I was collecting these data, to a plot next to Grootfontein.

that one day he would go back to Swart Tak and live there. His father Willem also often talked about going to Swart Tak with Kashe to work on their „own land“. Kashe's brother Andris told me in 2007 that one day he would ask the then !Xun traditional authority chief John Arnold to give him a plot in Omatako, where he could engage in agriculture. A year later he planned to go to Bushmanland to a plot near Mangetti owned by his !Xun „friend“ with whom he worked at that time at farm Kamatete. Kashe's family had many relatives from the mother's side in the western part of former Bushmanland.

Plot 2

I described how a group of the !Xun was transported from the „traditional village“ to western Bushmanland to start a new life there, but after few weeks had moved back to the town because there was „nothing, only the bush“. Some of them were from plot 2, including its „owner“, Max. Max also had relatives in Omatako, but even though they told me in 2007 that he would be welcome there, he did not want to go to Bushmanland and instead preferred to stay in Blikkiesdrop, even though it meant often living on scavenging at the dumpsites. Max's son Jakob once spent some time with Kashe in Swart Tak. The latter, however, complained that Jakob was „lazy“.

Plot 3

Paul, the „owner“ of the plot, stayed in Bushmanland for, in his words, only „two weeks“ in 2001. Paul claimed to have left the farm in 2001 with some corrugated iron sheets to build a shack in Swart Tak, where he had relatives. However, he soon decided to go to Grootfontein. Since then he had never returned to Bushmanland. Paul gave me two major reasons for this: he did not know the area and it was very hard to make any kind of living there. „I was born here (Grootfontein). We all (the !Xun living in the Grootfontein area) were born here,“ claimed Paul. According to him, the major problem in Bushmanland was the lack of employment opportunities: people had to wait until the rainy season began, which is usually November, to start their agricultural activities. Paul, who was used to regular work at the farms or in the town, could not imagine living like that: „I cannot only sit so, I must work.“ In his view, the !Xun in that area would be economically inactive for half the year and have to wait passively for the rainy season. However, then it was very important to constantly check the plants because the free roaming cattle and goats could quickly destroy them. In this context, Paul recalled a story of when a stray cow owned by one Damara moved from /Káandu to Swart Tak, where it destroyed Paul's brother's field and the brother had killed the animal and eaten the meat with his family. However, he was arrested and spent „one year“ in prison. Despite the two brothers he had in Swart Tak, Paul gave no thought to moving there: „It's maybe only to visit somebody (there) and not to stay.“

Plot 5

Neither Mathias, the breadwinner of the family, nor his wife Veronika thought seriously of going to Bushmanland in the near future, although both had some kin there. Veronika's two sisters lived in Tsumkwe in former eastern Bushmanland and she used this link to send two of her daughters there. In contrast to Grootfontein, it was possible to study there without being asked to pay the school fees, which the parents were not able to cover. Mathias had „family“ in Omatako in western part of Bushmanland. Since he knew there were almost no employment opportunities and he had to look after his family, he preferred to stay in the town or to work at the farm, where he could earn some money.

Plots 6-7

Angula, head of one household at this place, claimed never to have been to Bushmanland. He said he had relatives in the area of Mangetti but most of his kin lived at the farms, in Grootfontein and also in Koblenz.

Piet's household seemed to have a closer kin relationship to western Bushmanland. I first had the opportunity to talk to him only in 2010, since he did not spend much time in the town. In 2008 there were only two daughters living at the shack in Blikkiesdorp while attending school in the township. However, all of them moved to Mangetti, which was home to Piet's wife's sister and his „uncle“, the following year. When I met Piet in 2010 during his short visit to Blikkiesdorp he claimed to be living in Bushmanland because he could grow maize there. Furthermore, his children attended school there. However, life in Mangetti was also apparently not easy for them. In 2010 Piet claimed he would stay in his shack in Blikkiesdorp for a few days and return to Bushmanland, his children and wife, who went with him back to Grootfontein, however, would remain in the town.

Gideon, the head of another household from this plot, who was regarded as one of the local !Xun „foremen“, said that the only relative he had in Bushmanland was his sister's daughter working for NBC radio in Tsumkwe.

Mathidle, the head of a female-headed household, said she had only her sister in Bushmanland, but she did not know where and she had never visited the area. „I'm used only to this side.“ She had most of her kin in the Grootfontein area.

Plot 8

Andris, the head of the !Xun household at this plot, had never thought of moving to Bushmanland and there was allegedly only „one“ person living in this area whom he regarded as belonging to his family, but he did not know where the person lived. Andris said he had been in Bushmanland only once. This was for a „few days“ visit to Luhebo before independence. Luhebo was the site of a South African army base at that time and his relative was working there as a soldier. At that time Andris was a farm worker.

Plot 9

Old Frederik and his wife Flita, who were allowed to stay at plot 9 by its white owner, had come to Grootfontein from Bushmanland. They had spent most of their lives at the farms and went to Bushmanland for approximately the same length of time as Kashe's parents, that is in the second half of the 1990s until 2001. They worked there for a Damara called Thomas whose cattle Kashe's father also tended for some time. They left this region for the same reason as Kashe's parents - life in Bushmanland was too strenuous. The !Xun of this plot still had some relatives in Omatoko. However, according to them, it was usually their kin that paid visits to them when visiting Grootfontein and the !Xun living in the town did not visit Bushmanland.

Plot 10

Piet, the head of one household at plot 10, had relatives in Gam in the east of former Bushmanland who he said had their own plot. Piet visited them sometimes. The problem was, however, that it was distant and he had to pay about 50 NS for one-way transport.

Plot 12

When I talked to Petrus, the breadwinner of the plot, and his wife Magdalena for the first time in 2008, they claimed that after losing work at the farm in approximately 2007, they had been thinking of moving to Grashoek settlement in former western Bushmanland, where Petrus' relatives lived. They gave me as their reason for not going there a lack of money to pay for a lift. However, later on it turned out, that they did not tell me the truth. In 2010 when I asked Petrus the same question, he told me they preferred to stay in Grootfontein. Petrus claimed to have a house in Omatako and that he had grown up in this settlement. However, he planned to move back only when he was old and unable to work. Petrus did not want to go there now and gave as a reason that there was no work in Omatako and, thus, no money to buy even the most basic of goods. My perception is that when I was told by him and his wife in 2008 that they wanted to move to Bushmanland, they may have been saying this because they thought that I had the idea that where they lived was unsuitable for habitation and they may have felt that I found Bushmanland a better place to live. Petrus must have been well informed about the situation in Omatako since he had siblings living there who occasionally visited Grootfontein. When I came to Grootfontein in 2010, two of them, his brother and sister, were living with him at the plot in Blikkiesdorp, where they had meanwhile moved. The brother had found work as security guard in Grootfontein, the sister was still a child and was just staying with them.

The !Xun, who stayed in Grootfontein, found the life there more bearable. Their attitudes to Bushmanland might vary from simply strongly negative to more complex attitudes. Importantly, it is highly probable that some of the reasons would be very similar in many aspects to those that would be presented by any non-whites working as the !Xun did at the farms or in the town. Thus, they cannot be regarded as specific to the !Xun, but, to some degree, general for farmworkers and township dwellers.

No employment in Bushmanland

Most of the !Xun had spent most of their lives at the farms, where they received a salary. Without generating any income, they could not acquire any food and any of the necessities they were used to buying and providing for their families. Although struggling, they were more used to living in a cash-economy than the !Xun in Bushmanland.

Bushmanland as an unfamiliar environment

Many !Xun had never been to Bushmanland and regarded it as an alien environment - both socially and environmentally. Some of them decided after only a short stay in the area to return to the farms or to Grootfontein. Many of the !Xun spent their lives at the farms close to Grootfontein and knew the town well as well (from staying there or visiting it) and, therefore, regarded it as a familiar space in which they were used to moving and looking for work. They also knew many farmers and house owners in the town. „I'm used only to this side.“ „We all were born here“. Generally, the more time a person spent in a certain area, the more secure he or she felt about staying within this space.

Little or no kin in Bushmanland

Many !Xun in Grootfontein had kin in the town or farms, but not in Bushmanland, making it for them a foreign and insecure social environment. As has been demonstrated, following kin was a key mobility pattern for the landless !Xun.

Prospect of working on the „own land“

Many !Xun who were still able bodied knew that if they ever wanted to engage in agriculture, which they learnt at the farms, they could do so only in Bushmanland, because it was easy to

be allocated land there. Therefore, some of them did not give up on the idea that one day, they might move there. However, the experience of farming in Bushmanland was often negative for many !Xun, including Kashe.

The majority !Xun environment

Most of the settlements in the western part of Bushmanland are ethnically heterogeneous. However, in some of them there are large communities of local !Xun who were born in the area or had been working at the nearby farms and have kin in this part of Bushmanland. This gives its members a feeling of being masters of the land there to some extent and they enjoy there a different feelings of group collectivity and solidarity to the !Xun in the township, where the !Xun constitute a small ethnic minority at the bottom of the social hierarchy. This was especially strongly felt in Swart Tak, where former !Xun farm-workers comprise an absolute majority.

Kashe felt among his own people in Swart Tak and, in this particular respect, enjoyed staying there much more than in the town. In Grootfontein he belonged to the lowest socio-economic strata and the constant encounters with better off people only reinforced this feeling. Swart Tak was literally „Bushmanland“ for Kashe. The village councillor Hermann was a relative of his and the village dwellers were able to decide about public issues at their meetings and at the level of various committees (for water affairs, police, school and so on), whose members were, given the ethnic composition of Swart Tak, predominantly the !Xun. In the town Kashe was a poor *zula* man, in Swart Tak he was in charge of the community control committee, and his tasks consisted of going through the settlement and giving people notice about the next community meeting. Kashe was selected to this post since he was known for walking at a very fast pace.

The view from Bushmanland

I talked in individual or group interviews with many adult !Xun men, who were living in former western Bushmanland, specifically in Swart Tak, Grashoek, Omatako and near Omatako Valley Rest Camp, about their perception of living in Grootfontein and whether they were contemplating going there. In all instances, they agreed that even though life in Bushmanland was difficult, they did not regard living in Grootfontein as a better option. They gave several reasons for this:

Close kin living in Bushmanland and adjacent farms

In most cases, their kin, especially the closest (nuclear family and parents), also lived in Bushmanland and the farms behind the Red Line. They often did not have many relatives in Grootfontein. These !Xun were used to moving between their kin in Bushmanland and farms closer to the Red Line. Thus, for example, Johannes (fourth generation), who lived next to Kashe in Swart Tak claimed that he was not thinking of moving to Grootfontein since his children were living in the farm area near Mururani, which is the very north-east part of the commercial farm area and he used to visit them regularly.

The !Xun in this part of Bushmanland often had relatives in Grootfontein, but these were fewer in number and they were usually more distant kin than those living with them in Bushmanland. When in 2007 I asked Faleke, a man in his thirties, living in Grashoek, why he did not move somewhere else, he said he could not since his father was living there. When I

asked the same question the latter, he said he had to stay in Grashoek because his son was there.



Picture 23. Resting near Omatako Valley Rest Camp.

No experience of working and insufficient contacts in Grootfontein

Few of the !Xun „settled“ in Bushmanland had any experience of working in Grootfontein and its adjacent farms. As has been seen, many of the !Xun who decided to settle in Grootfontein did so after working at the farms close to the town or even in the town itself. Without the presence of kin and contacts to various employers, which could only be established by staying in this area for longer periods, it would be more difficult to acquire work there. The !Xun in Grootfontein could capitalise on their numerous relatives and friends in the search for work . Thus, Emmanuel, Kashe’s affine living close to Omatako Valley Rest Camp, said that Kashe could live in Grootfontein since he knew “many people” there, but for him it would be difficult because he did not have many „friends“ in the town.

Lacking marketable skills to find decent employment. Life associated with shame

Many of the !Xun from Bushmanland felt that only people with some education could succeed in Grootfontein. The adult !Xun men, many with no formal education at all and illiterate, lacked this key requirement. They knew well that those without work in the town could live there by collecting and selling empty bottles. However, this was viewed as a rather desperate strategy. Thus, living in the town was for many of them a „life with hunger“. Some of the !Xun who went to Grootfontein and lived a *zula* life were regarded as „lazy“ people, who did not want to work and only liked to drink alcohol, which they bought with the money earned by selling empty bottles.

Emmanuel told me a story about one !Xun man living with his children at the Total petrol station in 2007. According to Emmanuel, the man came from Omatako to a farm run by a Herero, but one Herero worker „took“ his wife and the owner of the farm chased him away. The Herero who „took“ his wife, however, refused to take care of her children and, thus, they left the farm with the father. The mother did not want to live with her family anymore because the Herero could provide better for her. The father, who felt too ashamed to return to Bushmanland, stayed at the station and was indulging in drinking. I could not verify the facts behind this story. Even if it was distorted and twisted, it fuelled the conception that life in Grootfontein was miserable.

Returning to Bushmanland from the town after living on *zula* might also be difficult because of a lack of money to buy food when coming back. Thus, the returning !Xun would become a burden to their kin.

Life in Grootfontein is just about money

The !Xun in Bushmanland knew well that they could not get any food in town unless they had the money to buy it. According to Petrus, a disabled !Xun living near Omatako Valley Rest Camp, „in town you pay for everything, for electricity, water and (renting) the house.“ In fact, for the !Xun living in the town, this was often not true. All of them paid rent only rarely, since in practice the payment was not enforced, and in Blikkiesdorp, where most !Xun lived, they did not have access to electricity. Moreover they could collect water from public water taps. When it comes to the rent, Max, the „owner“ of plot 2, paid it twice in 2005, in 2006 three times, in 2007 two times, in 2008 once, and in 2009 three times, even though some of the payment could have been met by his former white employer, with whom he had a good relationship. Thus, by November 2010 Max' rent arrears at the municipality stood at 7 000 NS.³⁷⁵

However, Petrus' notions about life in Grootfontein indicates that the perception of living there was dependent on the disposal of money were deep-rooted among the Bushmanland dwellers. In Bushmanland there were two ways to acquire food without any income: 1) by gathering bushfood or 2) engaging in agriculture, with the latter not always being very successful.

According to the !Xun in Bushmanland, if a person had work in Grootfontein, then it might be better to stay there. If not, it was better to stay in Bushmanland. Since the town dwellers were expected to pay rent for the houses/plots, the !Xun in Bushmanland regarded it as more secure to have a plot and house in Bushmanland, where they did not have to pay anything. Thus, Jan, the „owner“ of a plot near Omatako Valley Rest Camp thought that even when working in Grootfontein it was wise to have a house in Bushmanland to which it would always be possible to go.

No place to stay

Living and working in Grootfontein would require a place to stay, which was difficult to obtain since the municipality was trying to slow down the influx of people to the town by only occasionally allocating plots. Some of the !Xun from Bushmanland had relatives in the town with whom they could overnight (mostly) for a few days when in town, but it was not possible to move there with their family for a longer period. Emmanuel living near Omatako Valley

³⁷⁵ In fact according to the municipality officials the rent is not regularly paid by most of the township dwellers which seriously affects its budget (see e.g. Namibian 2010).

Rest Camp went to the town mostly with his wife and some of their children. But he struggled to find accommodation in Grootfontein and complained that the !Xun at „plot“ 12, where they used to sleep, did not like them to stay there. Emil, a pensioner from Swart Tak, claimed he did not have any „family“ to stay with in Grootfontein and when he went there he slept not with the !Xun, but with his „Damara“ and „Ovambo“ friends. Indeed, when visiting Grootfontein, many !Xun from Bushmanland spent several nights at the Total petrol station.

Grootfontein is dangerous

Grootfontein was associated with crime and, especially the risk of being robbed. This risk hardly existed in the communal area because of its small social environment where people knew each other and the culprit could be more easily found. Thus, for example, Petrus, the disabled man living close to Omatako Valley Rest Camp, who could move only by sitting on the ground and pushing himself along with his hands, told me in September 2007, that during his last visit to Grootfontein in order to withdraw his disability grant money he had been robbed of the full amount of 370 NS. Two men had taken hold of his arms from behind and stolen the money.

Cheaper foodstuffs and necessities

For the !Xun living in Bushmanland, Grootfontein was not only viewed as a negative space. The prices of basic foodstuffs and other necessities the !Xun needed to buy were much lower in Grootfontein. In fact, the owners of shops in Bushmanland only resold goods bought in Grootfontein and at much higher prices. Thus, many !Xun from Bushmanland, be they farmworkers or pensioners, went to Grootfontein after receiving their wages or salary in order to do their main shopping for the next month (mealie meal, sugar, tea and so on).

The !Xun in Bushmanland knew there was a better health care service in Grootfontein and that in the event of serious illness or injury they could be properly helped only at the hospital in Grootfontein. However, since less serious health problems could be treated at the clinic in Omatako and the ambulance service from Bushmanland to Grootfontein worked well as well, they did not mention it explicitly as an advantage of staying in town.

Since there were also primary schools in Bushmanland, they did not view it as an advantage to stay in the town for their children's schooling. In a few cases the children were sent from Grootfontein to the schools in Bushmanland because they were free of charge.

Generally, on the side of the !Xun men living in Bushmanland, there was no prevailing feeling that life in town was better and its Bushmen dwellers did not enjoy a higher status in their eyes.³⁷⁶ Since many !Xun from Bushmanland often visited the town and could meet with the !Xun living there, they knew how each other was faring. Many of them could also remember the time when many !Xun lived at the Total petrol station and under the trees opposite the SPAR supermarket. When in 2007 I discussed the perception of the Grootfontein !Xun dwellers with Kashe's relatives near Omatako Valley Rest Camp and asked whether the Bushmen staying in Grootfontein were not regarded by the !Xun in Bushmanland as people with a higher social status, my premise was rejected. Jan, the „owner“ of one plot, claimed it was not possible to be admired for living in the town, if a person does not have a job there.

³⁷⁶ The perception of the life in Grootfontein might have differed to some extent by people of different age and gender. Thus for example one young single mother living near Omatako Valley Rest Camp told me, that she liked more the life in Grootfontein than in rural area, since things were cheaper there, she had there also kin she liked, and could buy there cosmetics.

Only a person who could provide well for the family was likely to receive respect. Therefore, people known to have been eking out a living in Grootfontein could not expect any extra respect when visiting Bushmanland.

There were also no success stories of !Xun who had become successful and rich in Grootfontein and who would inspire the !Xun in Bushmanland to go to Grootfontein as well. On the other hand, it was evident that the !Xun men in Bushmanland often highlighted the instances of the !Xun who were leading a miserable life in the town. They did not talk about the numerous !Xun employed as yardworkers in the town, but more often those, who were surviving on *zula*. It was evident that by painting the life of the Bushmen in Grootfontein in such bleak colours, they could justify their own struggling existence in the Bushmanland.

Conclusions

Many of the !Xun dwelling for a long time in Grootfontein and in Bushmanland would claim with the same intensity that life on the other side is, or would be, „bad“ for them. The perceptions of those in Grootfontein and in Bushmanland of their respective spaces give us, to significant extent, the answer to the question why both of them prefer to stay in their area and not the other.

For both the presence of kin, and most importantly of close kin, is crucial: parents want to be close to their children and vice versa and there are also strong bonds between siblings and their families. The !Xun feel socially secure if close kin are nearby. If close kin concentrate in the urban area, other kin may move there as well and the same applies to Bushmanland.

The !Xun often say they are in a certain area because they were born there, they are used to it and know it. In fact, this does not have much to do with the physical characteristics of the region, but more to its social environment. Growing up or spending a long period in a certain area makes it a socially familiar and, thus, a secure environment for the !Xun. During this period they may well have developed rich social contacts: with the kin, work providers (mostly families of white farmers with houses or kin also in Grootfontein) and friends, who might be non-!Xun. They know who they can turn to in case they need some assistance or work. In more far away areas they would be socially isolated and it would be a more insecure environment. There is also a practical problem associated with this: unless staying in the *buitekamer* of their employer and if there are no close kin living in the town, there is nowhere a person could reside.

Thus, many !Xun from Bushmanland would say they could not settle in Grootfontein since they would not know where to find work. As life in the urban environment depends on the availability of cash, these !Xun associate the life of the unemployed in the town with *zula*, which they regard as less dignified form of existence than struggling in Bushmanland.

On the other hand, many !Xun from the town, all of whom had spent significant parts of their lives on the farms, cannot imagine living outside the cash economy, the working routine associated with it and not being able to access certain things with their income. Many of them are not used to subsistence agriculture, doing piecemeal work for the Bantus, or gathering bushfood. Thus, a Bushman who grew up in the immediate area of Grootfontein can say that in Bushmanland there is nothing, „only the bush“. And a Bushman from Bushmanland could similarly argue that in Grootfontein you can only gather bottles. Such a statement reflects their fears and strengthens their convictions of Bushmanland as a better place to live. People

from both Grootfontein and Bushmanland might also have bad personal experience of life on the other side and their negative attitudes could be supported by negative stories they have heard about particular individuals eking out a living “over there”.

Thus, life in neither the urban nor the communal area is generally „objectively“ better, the perception depends to a large degree on its social familiarity to the assessor and to what extent this person is used to life there in all its aspects.

There are, however, some aspects on which the !Xun in both areas would agree. Namely, in town there is a higher level of crime and those living there are over-dependent on cash. In Bushmanland, on the other hand, there are next to no employment opportunities, the erratic rains make it difficult to cultivate crops successfully, but because of the many !Xun living there, it is a socially more agreeable environment than the township, where the !Xun constitute small minority.

Economic and coping strategies of the urban !Xun dwellers

The “traditionally” living Bushmen have been reported as sharing by the night fires stories about hunting and their tales. In the Grootfontein urban environment these stories have been replaced with evenings filled with constant discussions about work opportunities, permanent conflicts with employers and other workers, about not receiving the promised wage and the hardship to get protection by the “Labour”, i.e. the local branch of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare.

From the point of view of an outsider, the !Xun living in the township may look like a homogenous group of impoverished people. Closer inquiry, however, reveals socio-economic differences among them that are noticeable mostly only by the !Xun themselves. When excluding dependents (children, unemployed mothers looking after their offspring, disabled persons) and frequent and numerous short-term visitors, with a certain generalisation we may divide the !Xun who want to stay in the town “permanently” or at least for longer periods and therefore *built their own shack*, that is have a place to stay in the township, according to their main economic activities³⁷⁷ or source of income into four groups with overlapping “borders”:

- 1) !Xun preferring long-term employment
- 2) !Xun preferring occasional employment
- 3) !Xun preferring to *zula* (looking for bottles, scrapped metals and scavenging)
- 4) !Xun pensioners³⁷⁸

Long-term work: salary – credit vicious circle

The !Xun in the first category intended to stay in the town permanently and could do so since in most cases they had acquired their own plot from the municipality. Most of the !Xun households³⁷⁹ were headed by men.³⁸⁰ The men were typically employed as yardworkers by

³⁷⁷ Instead of „economic strategies“, social scientists often use the term „survival strategies“. Even though I could observe at close hand the severe economic hardships of many !Xun, I avoid using this term for it has, in my view, too strongly emotional connotations, evoking the impression that all the economic activities of the studied people are focused only on „survival“, which is not generally true for the Bushmen, even though they make up the economically lowest stratum of Namibian society..

³⁷⁸ The study of the economic strategies of the !Xun made me confront the concept of the traditional Bushmen’s immediate return economy values as opposed to delayed return economy attitude or Barnard’s „foraging mode of thought“ vs „accumulation mode of thought“. However, since in this study I deal with people who have been in intensive contact with white settlers for a century or so, becoming part of their socio-economic system, and were in various ways exposed to their cultures and to the cultures of Bantu agriculturalists and pastoralists, I will not elaborate on this matter in this thesis. The question of the existence of possible forms of such different economic values at the farm and in the urban environment is certainly worth analysing. However, owing to its complexities, it should be dealt with carefully to avoid drawing possibly artificial „borders“ between the modern !Xun (or Bushmen) and the non-Bushmen.

³⁷⁹ As is well-known the term „household“ is rather problematic in the case of the Bushmen, and for non-Bushmen as well (see e.g. Sylvain 1999: 378 - 379, Dieckmann 2007: 254 - 7). Given the mobility of the !Xun a household’s composition is often very fluid, and it may comprise people who are physically absent, typically working at the farms, but who contribute to it financially or by remitting some food (de facto vs. de iure members). The mutual, or in some cases rather one-sided, support between households frequently makes the „borders“ between them loose. In the text I will often refer to the „nuclear family“ of Kashe, by which I mean him, his two children and until 2007 his wife. They often comprised households with other people as well, for example, Kashe’s mother’s „sister“, his parents and other visiting kin.

³⁸⁰ Interestingly, Sylvain (1999) observed many female-headed households in Epako.

mostly Afrikaners, but also by people of German and English origin, who owned a house in the town, and in fewer instances by Coloured, Damara or Bantu people. The !Xun generally preferred to work for the whites, from whom they received higher and more regular wages. Less commonly, !Xun men worked in the town as shop assistants, cleaners, security guards or drivers. !Xun women were generally employed less often than the men since they had to look after the children and the household. They often worked as domestic workers for the non-!Xun as well. The work of the men at white people's homes usually lasted from 8 a.m. till 1 p.m. Since many house owners did not need or could not afford to employ a worker the whole week, some !Xun worked at two or three places. The !Xun were able to secure only unskilled work. Strikingly, personally I did not come across a single !Xun in Grootfontein who was employed by the government: no !Xun I knew worked at municipality, in the hospital (not even as a cleaner), as a teacher, in the police force or as a soldier at the nearby military base, any of which would secure a better permanent income.



Picture 24. Cooking in Blikkiesdorp.

There were several reasons behind this. There was high unemployment in the town.³⁸¹ The !Xun, mostly former farm workers, had no skills that were marketable in the competitive and densely populated urban environment except for manual jobs (I came across only a small number of literate adult !Xun in Grootfontein). Furthermore, because in the 20th century the !Xun had lived in small numbers in the town and because of their high mobility between Grootfontein and the farming areas, communal area and other urban areas, they were at a disadvantage in terms of accumulated social capital in the urban environment that would help them to secure better-paid employment. Payment for one day's yardwork was usually 30 NS. But not everybody managed to secure employment five days a week. The average monthly

³⁸¹ In the Otjonzondjupa region there was a broad unemployment rate of 37,3 % in 2009/10 (NHIES: 2012: 44).

income of the !Xun working in the town was approximately between 400 and 700 NS. Wages reaching 1000 NS were exceptionally rare. According to the Namibia Household Income and Expenditure Survey, the "severely poor" poverty line was 184.56 NS monthly per capita in 2003/2004 and 277.54 NS in 2009/10 (NHIES 2012: 151). Since the !Xun breadwinners usually had several dependents, these families often fell into this category. Generally, since the !Xun belonged to the most impoverished strata of Grootfontein's inhabitants and had little negotiating power in terms of their work conditions, their employers - always non-!Xun - were often able to taking advantage of this disparity. There did not seem to be a significant difference between the income generated by the !Xun farmworkers and the longer-term employed Grootfontein dwellers. The latter mostly did not want to work at a farm for non-financial reasons: because of bad experiences when working for the others, their age or their physical inability to engage in strenuous work.

Importantly, as shown below, in contrast to the *zula* men, those !Xun working in the town for long periods were almost always abstinent and dedicated church-goers, and, therefore, more disciplined in many aspects of life. The !Xun in this category also had, in all the cases I observed, families with several children. Thus, they were under constant pressure to secure an income for them and could not afford to be unemployed. The situation of these working !Xun and their families could be very vulnerable. If dependent on only one place of employment and losing that job, the breadwinner might struggle to find another long-term job for months and in the meantime have to turn to casual jobs and kin. If used to regular work, the !Xun tended not to want to *zula* as *zula* activities did not secure enough money for their families and they seemed to be ashamed of it. Occasional work or *zula* was only a temporary strategy for these !Xun until they found new long-term employment.

I gathered data on the economic strategies of several households in Grootfontein with a long-term breadwinner, mostly men. The first interviews were in all cases conducted at the beginning of December 2010.

Mathias, Blikkiesdorp, plot 1 (till 2009 No. 5)

In December 2010 Mathias worked as a cleaner in the town and earned a salary of 440 NS per month. Veronika, his wife, stayed at the home and took care of three children (in 2009 when Mathias had the same wage, there were five children living in Blikkiesdorp). But the last salary, which Mathias got on the 25th of November 2010, was only 390 NS since the employer deducted 50 NS Mathias had borrowed from him. When I asked them on 13 December 2010, about two weeks after receiving the salary, how much money they still had, Veronika told me they had just 30 NS. But she had to give the amount to an „Ovambo“ vegetables seller from whom she was buying food on credit. From the 390 NS Veronika and Mathias gave 120 NS to an „Ovambo“ from whom they bought meat. Then, they also had the unexpected expenditure of 150 NS because they needed to reimburse their relatives for losing their cell phone. The rest of the money was spent predominantly on basic foodstuffs such as 20 kg of mealie meal, which Mathias usually bought at the township's Hakahana shop for 41 NS. Even though Veronika and Mathias gave away almost all of their money, they still owed about 120 NS for meat they had from another „Ovambo“ (they were buying meat on credit from three „Ovambos“) and they also had to repay 135 NS for 100 NS borrowed from a „Kavango“ friend. Veronika and Mathias knew the 20 kg of mealie meal would not be sufficient for their family until the end of the month. When the mealie meal was finished, Mathias would ask one of his "sisters" living in the township (the wife of the !Xun pastor Ephraim) for a few kilograms and he also went to his „uncle“, who was employed as yardworker in the town, and

if the need arose also to another „sister“ living in the location. Veronika could also ask for some assistance from one of her sisters living at a farm, mostly when the sister visited the town. Finally, Mathias and Veronika also asked other !Xun from plots 1 and 2 for some food. Veronika said that sometimes they were also assisted by Kashe, although apparently rather sporadically.

On 9 December 2010 Mathias told me he had left his job as a result of his dissatisfaction with his salary. The white employer allegedly gave him much less money than he had expected, since he also deducted money for corrugated tin plates he had given Mathias allegedly long time before. Mathias planned to look for a work with whites in Grootfontein after the holidays at the beginning of the next year, when they would return to their homes, since during the Christmas period they often vacationed and it was difficult to reach them. However, he was not able find permanent work in 2011. First, he found temporary employment at a plot near Grootfontein, where he cut a bush for three months and went home only at the weekends. His salary was 700 NS per month. Then, he found work again in the town as a night security officer. The wage was relatively high - 1240 NS per month, but after two months he was released as the owner of the property hired a security company to do the job. After this, he occasionally he had two days' work as a yardworker in the town for around 30 NS per day. Mathias became virtually unemployed and he and his wife struggled to get help from their relatives. Mathias claimed he was sometimes helped from his brother, who worked at a farm and allegedly earned around 1000 NS a month. When they met in the town, the brother gave him some money. His wife Veronika was sometimes given 100 NS by her father, who was living at the farm and receiving a pension. Even though in 2010 Mathias claimed he would prefer to work in the town, as he had done in the past, a year later, and still without permanent work, he said, he was considering going to the farms for work and leaving his family in Blikkiesdorp.

Household headed by Mathias at plot 1 – work and vage

Mathias		NS
2008 - 2010	cleaning an office in the Down	440
2011	- three moths work at the plot - two months employment as a security worker in the town - unemployed occasional yardwork	700 1240 30 per day

Paul, Blikkiesdorp, plot 3

In December 2010 Paul worked six half-days per week at three different places. On Monday he did yardwork for an Afrikaner, for which he earned 150 NS per month. On Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday he did the same work at the yard of another Afrikaner, for which he earned between 300 - 500 NS per month depending on the quantity of work. However, this second salary was the last time in effect only 200 NS since the employer deducted some money he had loaned him (Paul had to repay him 900 NS he had borrowed for a funeral and 300 NS for a water drum). Additionally, Paul was also given 150 NS per month by this white man's wife for cutting grass for the family's horses. On Thursday and Friday Paul helped a couple of pensioners and was paid 120 NS for this. What is more, they would also buy him some food. This made up to 920 NS a month in total.

However, Paul also struggled to get by on this income. In 2009 the people living at this plot could heavily rely on the pensions or disability grant of four people - Paul's wife parents, her

father's „brother“ and Paul's disabled granddaughter, who could move only on her knees due to an earlier polio infection. However, in 2009 and 2010 the 3 people receiving pensions died.

Paul was also rather an exception since, during all my field research trips to Grootfontein between 2007 and 2010, he also raised a few chicken, pigeons or ducks, which he occasionally sold (see below). In 2010 there were 14 people living at the plot, of whom one was receiving a disability grant and four others, including Paul, had work. The other 3, however, all earned much less money than Paul and one of them, /Xae, who occasionally did some yardwork for a family in the Coloured location, seemed to spend most of his income on alcohol in the Single Quarters. Thus, the burden of providing for the people on the plot lay heavily on Paul. Paul said that after receiving his salary he would buy 10 kg of mealie meal, he claimed he could not afford to buy any more at one time. When I asked Paul on 11 December 2010 about how much money he still had, he said he had given away his last 100 NS a few days earlier.

Although Paul did not manage to live on his income till the end of the month, he could ask one of his employers for a loan which was then deducted from his next salary. If he said there was hunger in his family, he was usually given some food (not extra money) by the pensioners. He also bought some basic foodstuffs on credit from an „Ovambo“.

A year later, in December 2011, when I came again to Grootfontein, I could observe that Paul's situation had, to some extent, deteriorated. He worked only on three days a week for the same employers and his total monthly income had gone down by up to 200 NS. As a result, he stopped selling the domestic birds he bred and his family ate them more frequently than they had before.

Household headed by Paul at plot 3: work and wage

Paul		NS
2008-2009	Doing yardwork at several places, in 2009 they were four	?
2010	Monday: yardwork for the whites	150
	Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday: yardwork by another whites	300-500
	Cutting of grass for the horses for them	150
	Thursday, Friday: helping a couple of white pensioners	120
	Petty entrepreneurship – selling of chicken, ducks, pigeons	<u>?</u> 720-920+?
2011	Monday: yardwork for the whites	150
	Wednesday: yardwork by another whites	300
	Cutting of grass for the horses of the last mentioned whites	150
	Friday: helping a couple of white pensioners	<u>120</u> 720

Angula, Blikkiesdorp, plots 6-7

In December 2010 Angula was doing yardwork for two different whites in the town. At one place he received 400 NS per month and at the other, 200 NS. The total amount of money he received at the end of November 2010 was only 500 NS, because of a different pay arrangement with the employer that month. On the 4th of December Angula claimed to have only 20 NS remaining. The money had partly been used on food (10 kg of mealie meal, 2 kg of sugar, tea, soups) and soap. He had also repaid 150 NS to an „Ovambo“ for food on loan and had given back 150 NS borrowed from his „uncle“. He was also repaying a loan for clothes he had bought for 335 NS in the PEP shop in the town, although up to the beginning of December 2010, he had managed to repay only 50 NS. When I talked with him about a

week later, he claimed he had no money but that there were some food reserves at his house that would last until his next salary. However, he planned to take another loan from the same „Ovambo“ who had lent him the 150 NS. He did not usually ask his employers for a loan.

Household headed by Angula at plots 6-7: work and wage		
Angula		NS
2008	yardwork by an Ovambo yardwork by a Damara	200 <u>150</u> 350
2009	yardwork by the same Ovambo yardwork by a Herero	200 <u>250</u> 450
2010	yardwork by a white man yardwork for another white man	400 <u>200</u> 600
2011	yardwork by a white man yardwork for the son that white man yardwork by a Coloured man small entrepreneurship - reselling of bought sugar and firewood	400 120 <u>250</u> ? 770 + ?
Angulas' wife Menesia		
2009	domestic work by Hereros	150
2009-2010	Unemployed	0

When I talked with Angula a year later on 28 December 2011, his economic situation was similar. On that day he claimed to have only 30 NS in cash, all the rest had already been spent on food and Christmas presents for his family and the next wage was due only at the end of the next month. He claimed that there was already some food in the house and that he would receive 30 NS each week from an Afrikaner for whom he did yardwork one afternoon a week and that he would earn some money by reselling small quantities of sugar and firewood. The day I interviewed him he did not have any credit to be repaid.

Mathilde, Blikiesdorp, plots 6-7

During the period of my research, Mathilde was usually single and, thus, the head of the household. Until second field research in 2008, she could rely also on her mother's pension, but then her mother passed away. Mathilde worked in a restaurant facility, where she was cooking and cleaning, and she earned what was in comparison with other !Xun in the town a decent salary of 900 NS. She was also able to eat at her place. After receiving her salary, Mathilde usually bought 10 to 20 kg of mealie meal and often some clothes for her children. In 2010 she had eight children, four of whom still lived with her. She received her salary on the 2nd of December 2010 and two days later she claimed to have 300 NS left. Thus, in two days she had used 600 NS. In addition to buying food, she had repaid a 150 NS loan from her white employer and she used a further 200 NS to repay a street seller for a loan on clothes. Mathilde claimed the remaining 300 NS might suffice until the end of the month. If not, she would ask the „Boer“, as she called her employer, for a loan. She would not ask other people: „If I don't have (money), then I don't have, then I stay only so.“ Once a month she also asked her daughter Martha, who lived at another place in the township, for some assistance (money, food).

I regarded Mathilde as kind of a rather exceptional independent !Xun woman, who managed to have on a long-term a salary often higher than her male peers working in the town or at the farms. However, when I came to Grootfontein in December 2011, I realized how fragile her economic situation was. I learnt that in August 2011 she had lost her work. Since that time, she had worked, but only for two weeks, as a domestic worker for an Afrikaner woman in the town. But she left since the latter was allegedly constantly complaining about her performance. Mathilde wanted to find another job and hoped that her former employer might open a new restaurant in the town the next year. Mathilde said that during this period of unemployment she depended heavily on the help of her daughter Martha, who was employed as a domestic worker.

Household headed by Mathilde at plot 6-7: work and wage

Mathilde		NS
2008	working in fast food restaurant of SPAR supermarket (cooking, washing dishes)	500
2009	working in another fast food facility	600
2010	working in the same fast food facility	900
2011	Losing the job; employment as a domestic worker for only two weeks	

Andris, Blikkiesdorp, plot 8

Andris was in receipt of a pension of 500 NS and was employed as a yardworker for 300 NS and where he received every month food rations, which were allegedly worth about 100 NS. Andris always received his salary at the end of the month. His wife Getrud stayed at home to look after the five children who lived with them. When I asked them on 4 December 2010 about the money they had disposed of that day, Getrud told me there was nothing left and for this reason she had just borrowed 70 NS from an adult daughter, who lived with her own family in the township. Andris claimed that he bought 10 to 20 kg of mealie meal and basic foodstuffs such as tea, cooking oil and necessities such as soap each month. The rest of his income was quickly swallowed by the repayment of debts. At the beginning of December 2010 they had, by !Xun standards, a large debt on clothes and blankets. They still had to repay around 600 NS for blankets that had cost 1000 NS and to repay 800 NS for other clothes. When the money from his job ran out, Andris asked his daughter for help, borrowed some money from his employer or asked for assistance from the !Xun pastor Ephraim, who was his relative. The pastor could hardly refuse the request since Andris and Getrud gave a „tinth“ of 40 NS each month to his church, which they also attended.

One year later, in December 2011, Andris could still rely on the pension and he had also kept his job as a yardworkwer. However, they still had a debt of 600 NS for the mentioned blankets. On 27 December 2011 they had something between 160 – 170 NS in cash. They claimed that since Andris would get the pension at the beginning of January they should be able to manage to live on the money until then. However, they highlighted the fact that they were lucky that it was a holiday period and all of their children had been sent to relatives. The children’s absence relieved a significant strain on their budget.

Household headed by Andris at plot 8: work and salary/pension

Andris		NS
2008	yardwork for whites – five days a week plus food rations pension	300 <u>370</u> 670
2009	yardwork for the same whites – three days per week for 30 NS per day	cca 360

	yardwork for another whites – two days per week for 30 NS per day pension	cca 240 <u>450</u> cca 1050
2010	yardwork for whites three days a (plus rations for 100 NS) pension	300 <u>500</u> 800
2011	yardwork for whites three days a (plus rations for 100 NS) pension	350 <u>500</u> 850

Piet, Soweto, plot 10

Piet earned 700 NS a month. When I asked him on 4 December 2010 how much of the money remained, he said had a few NS. He had to repay 203 NS every month for a DVD/radio he had bought in the town. He also paid 200 NS for the water (a much higher debt for water had still to be settled) that led to his house. Piet had also repaid 5 (!) debts to four „Damaras“ (one debt for 100 NS and three of 50 NS) and one „Ovambo“ (100 NS) for food stuffs (mainly mealie meal and meat). A debt to another „Damara“ had still to be settled. Piet claimed there was almost no mealie meal at home when I was interviewing him and he planned to buy 50 kg mealie meal on credit. Piet said he could improve his financial situation by doing overtime, for which was paid 20 NS per hour. He occasionally asked his relatives living in the township for some food, but no money, because they mostly did not have any either. Piet also said his family sometimes received food from the Omulunga primary school attended by his children.

Household headed by Piet at plot 10

Piet		NS
2008-10	Working for company constructing wind pumps	700

When we look at the financial situation of these !Xun families, we observe some strikingly similar tendencies: all of them had considerable expenses immediately after receiving their salaries. First, they had to buy basic foodstuffs such as mealie meal, sugar and tea, which were supposed to last for some time. Second, they had to repay debts to the township's shopkeepers (mostly Kavangos and Ovambos), who sold food at far higher prices than the town's supermarkets did. Sometimes they also had to repay debts for clothes bought from Bantu street sellers or money borrowed from their white employers. The basic foodstuffs, however, did not last until the next salary and the !Xun had to bridge this period without their own financial means. The interviewed !Xun claimed they frequently ran short of money a few days after receiving their pay, although this period might in fact be sometimes longer. They asked their close relatives (most often parents, children and siblings) in the township for money or food. They were also able to seek assistance from kin at the farms, mostly when these relatives were visiting the town to shop after receiving their own wages or pensions. A third option they had was to ask their white employers. However, since most of the !Xun relatives were in a similar situation and could not assist each other significantly, the result was that food had to be bought on credit again, which led to a vicious circle. For the similar use of credit by the Hai//om in Outjo in the Kunene region see Dieckmann (2007: 265 - 266).

The financial situation of these families allowed them to acquire only basic foodstuffs and cheap Chinese-made clothes in the South African PEP retail store or on credit from Bantu street sellers. Given their limited access to financial resources, the most prestigious items they could afford were cell phones, radio/tape recorders (the cheapest radios and cell phones sold

for around 200 NS), blankets, mattresses, utensils, and a few sheets of cheap corrugated iron. They mostly bought the cheapest products sold by the Chinese shopkeepers in the town. Only a very few !Xun could afford a TV. None of the !Xun I met in Grootfontein owned a car that they could run. Some of them had acquired an old bicycle from their white employers.

It seems that almost all of the non-food products the !Xun could afford to buy (for instance, clothes, shoes, utensils or cheap electronic devices such as radios and cell phones) were imported from China. It is, thus, Chinese products that allow the Bushmen to acquire some objects associated with a decent life.³⁸²

Interestingly, in 2010 after conducting these interviews about their economic situations, Kashe claimed that they were lying to me. Kashe did not believe that they had no money left a few days after being paid and was convinced they must have had some reserves, of „maybe 300 – 400 NS“. Kashe mentioned Getrud, the wife of Andris from plot 8, by name: „Getrud, she is not without money.“ Kashe said he often encountered her in the business centre of the town talking to people and telling them she had no money, but, in fact, according to him, she was only *skelm*. Despite Kashe’s suspicion and even though the !Xun may have presented their situation in the bleakest terms, it appears the general tendencies they described to me reflected reality.

!Xun with occasional employment

When it comes to occasional employment, !Xun often do short-term construction work such as building houses and laying pipes for the municipality or private companies. They may also do yardwork for two or three days a week for a few months followed by a period of unemployment or piecework such as helping in building a house/shack in the township or repairing of a car for a non-!Xun, who can afford to pay maybe 50 - 100 NS. Importantly, the !Xun with occasional employment were often single men, who did not have to look after the family and, therefore, could easily leave a job if they regarded the conditions of employment as disadvantageous. They could also often rely on the support of the kin with whom they were living since, as single men, they were not such a heavy burden on the family.

In the past, before he had his own family and when he was living at the plots and farms, Kashe was also an example of a !Xun occasionally engaging in work. During my research in Grootfontein Lukas, the brother in-law of Kashe’s brother Andris, was a good example of this. He did not *zula*, and preferred to work as a yardworker, but during the time of my research he did not work for anybody for any great length of time and when he did work it was never for more than three days a week. Since he was a single adult man, he did not have to provide for anybody except for himself and he often used a strategy of eating at someone else’s fireplace. For example, he sometimes used to go to a plot near plot 2 where some !Xun with a slightly higher income were living and cut firewood for them. In return for this he could eat with them or drink some tea. In his case, the reason for his not engaging in *zula* activities may not be that he felt ashamed of doing so, but that he found it too strenuous and that he knew that with the help of some of his kin he could somehow manage. Some !Xun who knew him claimed he was just „lazy“.

³⁸² Namibia imports consumer goods largely from South Africa. Although their quality is higher than that of the Chinese products, their high prices are prohibitive for most of the population (Grobler 2008), not to speak of the Bushmen.

!Xun living on *zula*: the case of Kashe

„Ek *zula*“ (I *zula*), „Ek gaan *zula*,“ (I live on *zula*) or „Ek het dit *gezula*“ (I got it by *zula*) was the way Kashe described how he lived in Grootfontein. Kashe talked about himself as a „*zula*-boy“ and he knew the famous song of Namibian singer Gazza „*Zula survive*“ well.



Picture 25. Kashe searches the roadside for bottles.

Kashe defined *zula* as looking for things you need such as dumped bottles, metal plates or clothes, that did not belong to anybody. The one who finds them becomes their legitimate owner. According to my !Xun informants, *zula* is a strenuous activity and demands a lot of effort. Thus, in a broader sense *zula* may also be used also for poor !Xun women who try to help themselves by having acquaintances with better-off non-!Xun men who then provide them with food and money. It is used in a similar way in Afrikaans among Namibian Khoekhoegowab-speakers and, possibly, by other socio-linguistic groups as well. The word seems to be of Nguni origin and is commonly used in the Tsotsi taal of Gauteng province in South Africa. According to my informants from Gauteng's townships, its meaning there is very broad, ranging from making an effort or conceiving a plan to acquire money to looking

for and finding things, (or, for thugs, to go to steal). In „isiZulu the term means ‘to roam’, ‘to wander about’” states Molamu (2003: 120) in his Tsotsi taal dictionary.³⁸³ Colenso (1861: 545) gives the meaning of *zula* as “to wander, rove, from place to place, float about, like a hawk, looking for prey”. Doke, Makeku, Sikahana and Vilakazi (1990: 899) state that *zulane*, (*ullu*)*zulane* is “(a) wanderer, roamer, vagrant, waif, tramp”.



Picture 26. Kashe sells bottles in the township.

Those !Xun in Grootfontein who *zula*, that is, those who look for discarded objects and live on the usable or sellable waste of other people, can be roughly divided into two categories: first, those living on selling refundable bottles, scrap metal or other materials; and, second, those scavenging at dumpsites. The division of the *zula* !Xun between those looking for bottles, metals or other goods and scavengers is not always strict. A person might pursue all or only some of these strategies. !Xun preferring occasional work might also engage in *zula* activities. Similarly, a person who had worked for a long time in the township but lost the job

³⁸³ I thank W. Haacke (pers. communication) for directing me to the word’s possible Nguni origin. Without knowing how the word got to Namibia, I may add that Ovambo and Kavango workers used to be transported by Witwatersrand Native Labour Organisation (WNLA) to South African mines (Marshall and Ritchie 1994: 37 - 8). Xhosa workers compound used to be also in Grootfontein.

might accept occasional employment but be virtually forced to search occasionally for scrap metal.

Each !Xun seemed to tend on a long-term basis to undertake some of the activities more than others. However, this might change in different periods of that person's life (for instance if they were single or had dependants) and also because of alcohol consumption. Stopping drinking alcohol (often associated with becoming a dedicated church-goer and being baptised) could accompany the transition from *zula* life to long-term employment. However, it can be difficult to move from the *zula* life to employment. *Zula* meant securing something of a living on a day-to-day basis and a *zula* men with dependants could struggle to enter a regular working relationship which meant having to wait until the month's end for a salary since they would have no money and food to bridge the period. The !Xun living in Grootfontein on *zula* regarded the farms as the only place to earn better money. If the !Xun in the township had their own shack, they could move between the two spaces.

The !Xun often associate *zula* life with alcoholism. The alcohol-addicted *zula* !Xun men look for empty bottles and scrap metals and, after selling them, buy *tombo*, cheap, home-brewed beer. Their alcohol consumption hinders their ability to be disciplined with their meagre financial resources, since they exchange most of their money for *tombo* immediately after receiving financial compensation and their alcohol-influenced behaviour, for example not coming to work for days, makes them unemployable for longer periods.

There were various attitudes towards *zula* among the !Xun in my sample. Some of them did not look for useful discarded materials at all. Some searched only for tin sheets and metal drums they could flatten and use as a construction material. Some looked only for scrap metals, some - for example Kashe - looked mostly for empty bottles and some even after thrown away food. Those who had some regular work mostly did not *zula*. However, this may depend on how many days the !Xun worked. If, for example, it was only two days a week, this person may also *zula*. Some of the !Xun, however, seemed to refuse to *zula* because they felt ashamed to do so. Kashe told me that in the past, when he started living in Blikkiesdorp, he sometimes used to *zula* with his brother Andris, who made most of his living at that time by doing yardwork. However, later on Andris stopped *zula*, especially the looking for bottles. According to Kashe, it was Andris' wife who did not want him to earn a living in that way and she sought to make him look for work at a farm: „He must look after only big money.“

In the eyes of the Bushmen the most despicable *zula* activity was collecting waste food. Collecting bottles seemed to be more accepted among the !Xun and, in Kashe's case it appeared to be regarded as a totally understandable economic effort as he had two young sons to provide for. There seemed to no stigma at all attached to collecting scrap metal. The extent of the stigma ascribed to the various *zula* activities varied according to the socio-economic status of the particular ethnic group. Thus, a poor Herero man living for some time as rentee in his own shack at plot 1 told me he felt very ashamed to have collected the metal plates to build his house at the dumpsite. On the other hand, to *zula* metals at the dump site was virtually unavoidable for most !Xun in the town since they could not afford to buy the corrugated metal sheets that would cover not only the roof but also the walls of their dwellings.

Below I will list the *zula* economic activities of the Grootfontein !Xun. In most instances I will base my data on the information I was provided with by Kashe or from my observations of him.

Looking for and selling of empty bottles

Table 26:
Kashe collects bottles on 3 October 2007

8:17	<i>Setting up from Kashe's house in Blikkiesdorp.</i>	N	got for 1 bottle
8:34	Windhoek Lager 500 ml	1	10 c
8:39	Richelieu Cognac 750 ml	1	20 c
8:40	Catestelo Ginger Fizz 750 ml	1	20 c
8:44	Richelieu Cognac 200 ml	1	10 c
8:45	Windhoek Lager 500 ml	1	10 c
8:47	Windhoek Lager 750 ml	1	20 c
8:55	Windhoek Lager 500 ml	1	10 c
8:58	Windhoek Lager 750 ml	1	20 c
8:59	Coca Cola 350 ml	1	50 c
9:01	Chateau Brandy 1l	1	20 c
9:03	Windhoek Lager 750 ml	1	20 c
9:07	<i>Kashe found 10 cents.</i>		
9:15	Windhoek Lager 500 ml	1	10 c
9:18	Tassenberger Wine 750 ml	12	20 c
	Castelo Ginger Fizz 750 ml	1	20 c
	Windhoek Lager 750 ml	1	20 c
9:24	Copperband Rhumba 750 ml	1	20 c
9:25	Tafel Lager 750 ml	1	20 c
9:27	Tafel Lager 350 ml	1	10 c
9:32	<i>Found a bicycle frame, planned to fetch it later.</i>		
9:34	Castelo Giger Fizz 750 ml	1	20 c
9:35	Windhoek Lager 750 ml	1	20 c
	Sedwick's Shery 750 ml	2	20 c
	Sedwick's Shery 350 ml	1	10 c
9:35	<i>Found a bicycle reflecting glass, will use it for his cart.</i>		
9:42	<i>Found a piece of torn plastic inflatable ball: „I'll make from it a sling for the children.“</i>		
9:44	Sedwick's Shery 350 ml	1	10 c
9:45	<i>Found small rusty drum: „I'll fetch it tomorrow.“</i>		
9:55	Monis Granada 200 ml	1	10 c
9:58	Windhoek Lager 750 ml	1	20 c
9:59	Sedwick's Shery 750 ml	1	20 c
10:07	<i>Cleaned the bottles in the town at a public water tap.</i>		
10:11	<i>In the H. Bogash shop he gets for two cola bottles 1 NS.</i>		
10:15	<i>Meets in the town his parents and his brother with his wife. He wants to buy afvalbene, but has not enough money.</i>		
Table continues on the next page			

Collecting and selling empty refundable bottles was Kashe's most important economic activity in Grootfontein. He claimed to earn up to 20 NS per day in this way. One gathering trip started at around 8 in the morning at his house in Blikkiesdorp and ended in the early afternoon, but sometimes, especially when meeting some relatives in the town, even later. However, I estimate that the money he earned was on average around 10 NS a day. This was also approximately the amount he earned on two days that I took part in the collecting of bottles with him (on the 3 and 4 October 2007). This was also confirmed by the receipts he was given for selling the bottles that I found at his shack. According to Kashe's notebook - Kashe was illiterate but concerning basic calculations numerate - in which he used to write figures he regarded as important, on 22 December 2007 he earned the amounts of 8,44; 13,5 and twice 10 NS, that is 42 NS in total for selling bottles and scrap metal. However, this was one of Kashe's more successful days or it is also possible that he sold items gathered on over a number of days. Moreover, he had been helped by one of his relatives and they shared the money.

After selling the bottles he would buy some basic food stuffs in the Grootfontein commercial centre and return home with (almost) no money left. Thus, for example, on 3 October 2007, the day when I accompanied him, he bought some mealie meal, *afvalbene* and a small sachet of spices and was left with only 1,05 NS. Similarly, on 7

October after selling the bottles he bought spinach, some tomatoes and an onion for 6 NS and

10:22	Tafel Lager 750 ml Clubman Mint Punch 200 ml	1 1	20 c 10 c
10:26	Clubman Mint Punch 200 ml	1	10 c
10:30	Buys in Etosha supermarket a sachet with spices for 1,7 NS		
10:35	<i>Buys afvalbene for 2.55 NS.</i>		
10:46	Mirinda 500 ml	1	40 c
11:00	<i>Going back from the town to the township</i>		
11:11	<i>Kashe rests for a while: „When the bottles are too heavy, I feel pain in my belly.“</i>		
11:17	Sprite 500 ml	1	40 c
11:18	<i>Searches through the waste bin at Five Three Bar in the township, but found nothing.</i>		
11:25	Windhoek Lager 500 ml <i>Since his bag is full, he puts the bottle in the pocket of his jacket.</i>	1	10 c
11:26	Coca Cola 350 ml	1	20 c
11:27	<i>Arrived at Royal House Restaurant, where he sells the beer and soft drink bottles</i>		
11:39	<i>Bottles sold</i>	<i>earned 3.30 NS</i>	
11:45	<i>Arrived at another place in the township to sell the wine and hard alcohol bottles.</i>		
11:58	<i>Bottles sold</i>	<i>earned 5 NS</i>	
12:03	Windhoek Lager 350 ml	1	10 c
12:09	<i>Bought in the Hakahana shop in the township 2 cans of maize meal for 4 NS in total.</i>		
12:20	<i>Returned to Blikkiesdorp.</i>		
	<i>Earned in total (one bottle was broken, 340 ml Windhoek lager bottles will be sold in the town)</i>	44	9.30 NS
	<i>Money spent in shopping</i>		8.25 NS
	<i>Balance</i>		+1.05 NS

returned home with less than 2 NS. Most of the food, which Kashe cooked in the evening, was eaten the same day. If there was any left over, it was warmed in the morning and Kashe and his sons finished it. Then, he had to look for the bottles again.

Kashe claimed it was possible to search for the bottles in the town at virtually any time. However, since there were many extremely poor people in Grootfontein, there was also a degree of competition among them. Kashe found the largest number bottles on Fridays and Saturdays and at the end of the month, when people had received their salaries and when they drank the most. The best period of the year was the around Christmas and New Years Eve. Kashe recalled that one year at that time he gathered many bottles, but, since it was a holiday and shops were closed, he could not sell them. Finally, since there were many people like him, they managed to convince the manager of a shop in the township to open just for them. On Sundays it was not possible to sell the bottles in the commercial centre as the

Etosha bottle store was closed and, thus, Kashe had to bring all the bottles back to the township. In the past when he had collected too many bottles, he left some of them at the stalls of women street vendors under the trees opposite the SPAR supermarket. He knew these women well and they made sure nobody stole them while he went to Blikkiesdorp to fetch Lucia to help him carry them back to the township. The worst time for gathering bottles was towards the end of the month before people received their salaries since they ran out of money and could not spend so much in alcohol.

Since Kashe depended largely on selling the bottles, in the course of time his knowledge of the best locations in which to find the most bottles and the best time to go there grew. His usual route passed through the township and ended at the town's commercial centre, where he sold the bottles at the Etosha bottle store, which offered the best prices in Grootfontein. There was also a shop in the commercial centre where he could sell soft drink bottles. In the township there were several places where various bottles were bought, although for lower prices than in the town.

In the township he would look for bottles in the bush near the streets and on small dump sites and in the town he found most near the supermarkets, where alcohol could be bought for the

Table 27: Kashe collects bottles on 4 October 2007			
8:30	<i>Setting up from Blikkiesdorp.</i>		
9:12	<i>Found an iron bar : „Ill cut it into two pieces and make two spears for the tourists.“</i>		
9:26	Sprite 350 ml	1	50 c
9:27	Pepsi 500 ml	1	50 c
9:29	<i>Found a metal pipe and broken pen. Checks it and decides not to take it.</i>		
9:43	Sedwick's 200 ml	1	35 c
10:02	Tassenberg Wine 750 ml	1	20 c
10:04	<i>Found a part of broken car toy. Will give it to his son Willem.</i>		
10:07	Widhoek Lager 500 ml	1	15 c
10:09	Castle Lager 750 ml ³⁸⁴	1	20 c
10:10	Fanta 350 ml	1	50 c
	Sprite 500 ml		50 c
10:11	Sprite 350 ml	1	50 c
10:12	Windhoek Lager 750 ml	1	20 c
10:13	Windhoek Lager 750 ml	1	20 c
10:22	<i>Found small water canister, but decided not to take it.</i>		
10:25	Tafel Lager 750 ml	2?	20 c
10:25	<i>Found a small cloth bag: „I'll attach it to my waist, put in it a bottle or will use it for gathering bushfood (in Bushmanland).“</i>		
10:38	<i>Washes the bottles at public water tape at Total petrol station.</i>		
10:50	<i>Searches thorough a waste bin by Windhoek bank.</i>		
10:52	Windhoek Lager 500 ml	1	15 c
	Tafel Lager 500 ml	1	15 c
10:54	Lemon Twist 500 ml	1	50 c
	Windhoek Lager 500 ml	1	15 c
10:55	<i>Searches through a waste bin by SPAR supermarket.</i>		
Table continues on the next page			

was there so frequently, and regarding this as an expression of the doctor's discomfort, he stopped going there.

Kashe was generally careful to return from his bottle gathering trip before sunset to avoid any prospective troubles. He was afraid of being robbed, assaulted by drunk men or caught by an gang that was allegedly cutting off men's sexual organs in order to sell them for the purposes of witchcraft. In 2007 Kashe recalled that one day when it became dark he was still in the Coloured „location“ when he saw a man standing ahead of him as if he was waiting for somebody. After Kashe passed by him, he started to follow him. Then he threw a stone at Kashe and hit him in the back. According to Kashe the man may have wanted to hit him in the head and steal what little money he had.

³⁸⁴ According to Kashe in 2008 ceased Castle brand bottles to be bought out. This could have to some extent affect Kashe's income from gathering bottles.

most advantageous prices in Grootfontein. Kashe's favorite place for looking for bottles was the former Coloured people location, today called Luiperdheuwel. Since this part of Grootfontein was quite far from the township, relatively few people used to look there for bottles and Kashe did not reveal this information to other people. In 2007 he went early on Mondays to the township's municipality office because at that time he would find there black refuse sacks with bottles which would otherwise be driven to the dump site. Kashe claimed that if he came to the place too late, other people would already have taken the bottles. According to Kashe, on some Mondays it was possible to find several sacks with bottles at this location. He also used to *zula* bottles at the Grootfontein state hospital since many people who waited there for a medical examination bought and drank a soft drink and threw the empty bottle in the waste bin. In 2010 Kashe told me he had also gone into the waiting room for people being treated for tuberculosis and before entering the room he always asked the hospital staff to give him a face-mask. However, after being asked by a doctor what he was looking for in the TB waiting room and why he

Kashe claimed that when staying in the town he was searching for bottles „every day“. Since he stayed mostly with me during my research, I could not observe him going about his usual daily business but still I suspect this statement was rather a generalisation, and that in fact he went looking for bottles most days. From discussions with Kashe and also the observation of the sharing practises among his kin, it was evident that Kashe looked for empty bottles several times weekly, but he did not have to go if there was sufficient food for the day or when he could rely on his parents‘ help. Sometimes he also could not go to look for bottles since he had other things to do such as going to the clinic with his sons, having to go to the business centre to buy something, or having to accompany his parents to the NamPost to withdraw the pension money. He was also dependent on the weather as when it was raining he would not *zula*.

10:56	Copperband Rhumba 200 ml Clubman Mint Punch 200 ml	2 1	35 c 35 c
10:57	Windhoek Lager 500 ml	1	15 c
10:58	Clubman Mint Punch 200 ml Copperband Rhumba 375 ml		35 c 35? C
11:00	Windhoek Lager 500 ml		15 c
11:01	Copperband Rhumba 200 ml Copperband Rhumba 375 ml Clubman Mint Punch 200 ml Tafel Lager 500 ml		35 c 35?c 35 c
11:02	Sedwick’s Shery 200 ml		35 c
11:15	<i>Selling bottles at Etosha bottle store</i>		
	<i>Earned (did not sell all bottles)</i>		7.85 NS
	<i>Money spent in shopping (spinach, tomatoes, onions)</i>		6 NS
	<i>Balance</i>		+1,85 NS

Kashe was well aware that collecting of bottles was a strategy of the very poor people. However, unlike many !Xun, he did not seem to be particularly ashamed of doing it. Thus, one day on September 2007 I saw Emma, Kashe’s mother’s „sister“, coming back from the town with an empty 340 ml Fanta bottle. When I asked her about it, she said it had been the first time she had taken an empty bottle, but I knew from Kashe that she looked for bottles as well. Kashe’s small sons, seeing their father collecting the bottles on an almost

daily basis, were already socialized in an environment where the collecting of empty bottles was a common activity.

As we can see from Tables 26 - 27 Kashe’s bottle gathering trips not only meant finding and selling bottles, but also enabled Kashe to find other objects of material culture that he could utilise. This will be dealt with in chapter “Material culture perspective”.

Selling of scrap metal

Kashe usually earned up to 20 NS from selling scrap metal. „If you get good (a lot of) iron, you get 40, 50 NS,“ claimed Kashe. But it was extremely rare for him to find so much iron. When I came to Grootfontein in 2008, there seemed to „iron fever“ in Blikkiesdorp. About five minutes walking distance into the bush from plot 1 was a place where people were digging old car wrecks out of the ground. Most of the diggers were Damara-speaking people. Kashe was convinced that the prices for metal were very high at that time and that selling it was very profitable. However, he was not right. The owner of one of the biggest places that bought scrap metals in Grootfontein told me in 2010 that in 2008 the prices fell rapidly and that they were at their highest in the years up to 2007. According to him, in 2007 he would buy one kilogram of scrap iron for 2 NS, but by 2010 the quantity had a value of only 80 cents. The bulk of the metal was sold to South Africa and India. Thus, Grootfontein’s poor people, including urban !Xun dwellers, made their small contribution to supporting the iron industries in those countries. The !Xun sometimes found some steel and other metals. In 2010

steel was bought out for around 5 NS per kilogram, brass for 10 NS and copper for 20 NS, but these prices reflect the difficulty of finding the metals. It was only in 2013 that Kashe told me he was looking for and selling also empty metallic spray cans.



Picture 27. In 2008 township dwellers, including the !Xun, were digging in the bush next to the township for scrap metals.

Selling of gathered firewood

Kashe sold firewood rather rarely and most often at the beginning of his stay in Grootfontein. In the bush next to Blikkiesdorp there was almost no firewood of high enough quality to be sold, only small branches suitable for personal use. To find harder wood that could be sold in the township, he had to go to the other side of Grootfontein next to the plots area. I have never witnessed Kashe going for firewood to this area. In 2007 he told me he used to go there with Lucia and the children. Since it was several kilometres away from Blikkiesdorp, it might take several hours to get there, collect the wood and return to the township. On their way back

home Kashe used to carry one large bundle of firewood on his shoulders, Lucia carried young Willem on her back and a smaller bundle of the firewood in her free hand. Anton, who also helped to look for the wood, followed them on foot. Kashe claimed to have either placed the wood in front of his house and waited until some passers-by stopped to buy it, as was by far the most usual method in the township, or he went to offer the wood to people on his own. Kashe earned mostly 10 NS for a larger bundle of firewood even though he often asked for 20 NS. When he and his family urgently needed some money for food and (in Kashe's case up to 2007) for alcohol, he had to accept smaller offers.

In 2010 I observed that there were many non-!Xun families in the town selling firewood in small bundles for 5 to 10 NS. Many of them purchased it from farmers selling wood in the township. When we compare collecting firewood with looking for and selling refundable bottles, we see that the former was more time-consuming as it required the covering of larger distances and the money earned was not significantly higher than the latter activity. During my research, the !Xun struggled to obtain their own firewood, let alone to sell it. The bush became so depleted that after 2011 the !Xun often had to buy their wood. Kashe struggled to acquire the 5 - 10 NS needed to buy a bundle of the wood. His father often bought it on credit. In December 2011 he owed 44 NS for firewood.

Selling empty batteries, found skins and bones

Kashe also used to sell empty batteries (small ones and car batteries), but the price for which they were bought was very small (in 2010 it was about 1 NS per a kg of car battery) and he only found them occasionally. During my research I have never seen Kashe with many empty batteries. He rather collected them one by one during his bottle collecting and when he had a number of them he would sell them to make some money. His income from selling of bones and skins was negligible. The price for the bones was very low. In 2010 it was about 20 cents per kg, it means to earn one NS one must find 5 kg of bones, which in the town, where people neither raised livestock nor slaughtered animals, was almost impossible. When living at the plots near Grootfontein, where bones from dead or slaughtered animals could be gathered, Kashe thought that the collecting of bones might be profitable there. However, he soon realized it did not pay well enough. During my research I have never seen him look for bones. Selling old skins could earn him much more. In 2010 it was possible to get 8 NS for one kilogram of kudu skin, for eland skin 5 NS per kilogram, for oryx skin 2 NS, for one goat skin around 3 NS and for one sheep skin 15 NS. It was generally only the farmers owning livestock herds who could make some profit by selling the skins. Although Kashe could just occasionally find a discarded skin at the town's dumpsite, at the end of 2010 he told me he had found only one skin over the past few months.

Looking at Kashe's whole income, when he went to *zula* bottles five times a week, he could earn around 200 NS per month. A further 100 NS could be generated by selling metals. Other economic activities such as selling discarded car and radio batteries, or skins and bones, brought in a small income.

Importantly, the presence of some of the elders receiving a pension at the plot where he lived, be it his parents or his mother's sister, had a significant impact on the way he would *zula*. Immediately after they received their pension, there was more food even for his nuclear family and he could often use their mealie meal „That time I *zula* maybe only the sugar,“ claimed Kashe. But as the pension money and food began to run out, he had to intensify his *zula* activities: „Then I must *zula* also the mealie meal.“

I estimate that Kashe earned about 200 - 300 NS per month by *zula*. This was approximately half of what the !Xun yardworkers earned, who may also receive food from their employers. But *zula* life had several advantages: 1) it was a reliable source of income, since it was possible to *zula* every day (bottles and metals were only not bought on Sundays); 2) the *zula* men, being on their own, avoided any employer-employee work-related tensions, such as conflicts about wages and food rations; and, 3) the possibility of resorting to *zula* life enabled the !Xun to easily leave a job whose terms they found too disadvantageous. For the !Xun who refused to *zula*, mostly because of the shame associated with it, and had dependants, it was more difficult. The disadvantage was that living by *zula* meant living from day to day. With the money earned each day Kashe immediately bought food which lasted mostly for one day. Were he not able to *zula* the next day, his family would have to rely on their relatives.

Scavenging



Picture 28. Cleaning and preparing food scavenged at the dump site next to the township.

If the *zula* life was an opportunity to sustain a livelihood without employment, scavenging dumped food meant direct access to food and a life outside the cash economy. In his first years in Grootfontein, Kashe often used to go with his relatives to the town's main dump site about 20 minutes walking distance from Blikkiesdorp. If he found there foodstuffs which he regarded as still consumable, he ate it on the spot. „Sometimes you find bread there, which is maybe only one day old, but it's still alright,“ said Kashe in 2007. According to him, it was possible to find potatoes, cabbage, tomatoes and sometimes even meat at the dumpsite. In these instances he took the foodstuffs home and cooked them. Furthermore, at the dump site there could be found metal sheets, metal drums, which could be flattened and used for the walls of the shacks, bottles, old clothes, old tools and other objects he could make use of.

However, the !Xun regarded going to the dumpsite as quite dangerous since it was in the bush, where people could be robbed or harmed. Therefore, they used to go there in groups. Kashe went there mostly with his wife Lucia, his mother's sister Emma and some people from the neighbouring plot 2. A number of poor people of various backgrounds, according to the !Xun, „Damaras“, Ovambos, Kavangos and Herereros, scavenged on the dumpsite, some people even lived next to the dumpsite, and there was sometimes competition to get the best things and he struggled to assert himself: „I don't get a chance to get to the things.“ Kashe claimed that there were also „Ovambos“ coming to the dump site to find meat, which they grilled and sold in the Single Quarters. This competition sometimes resulted in disputes and there was much swearing with the prospect of fights. According to Kashe, when the vehicles carrying the waste were about to be offloaded, different people ran to the truck and those who were physically stronger, thus the non-!Xun, prevailed. Kashe recalled in 2007 that one day a vehicle brought fruits and vegetables, he took some good items, but a non-!Xun took them from him. Later on he started to go there on Saturdays, since most people went there from Monday to Friday, when the waste was unloaded there. This meant that he would hardly ever find any food there, but metal plates, clothes and other things instead. Generally, people scavenging at the dumpsite felt ashamed of doing so, even though to different extents. According to Kashe, the poor people may have quarrelled with each other over the things they found, but when a white person, like me, went there, they would hide in the bush.

Except for the dump site, it was also possible to find some food, mainly bread, in black plastic sacks that the better off people put out on the roadside on certain days so that it would be collected and driven to the dump site. In 2005, when he stayed at the Total petrol station and then the nearby yard of the Herero woman Eben, Kashe used to gather partly rotten vegetables that had been thrown away by the women street vendors along the road opposite the SPAR supermarket. There was a chance to acquire some foodstuffs at the Etosha supermarket as well as some packages were damaged when transported to the shop and the food, such as sugar and mealie meal that spilled down on the ground could be taken. Kashe recalled that once he was able to obtain some mealie meal in this way at Etosha. According to Kashe, the people knew on which day and what time the supply trucks unloaded foodstuffs at the supermarket.

After my second field research trip in 2008 Kashe claimed he stopped going to the dumpsite and collecting discarded food and it really seemed to be true. Kashe was also concerned that the food found at the dump site may be harmful as it might be contaminated with infectious materials thrown away at Grootfontein state hospital.

The family of Max, the „owner“ of plot 2, seemed to depend on scavenging heavily in the years between 2007 and 2010. They were very withdrawn and I thought this was partly because of the shame they felt about the way they lived. Max had many children and grandchildren and since he did not want to engage in regular work in the town or long-term farm work they were struggling financially. Some of the children were his daughters with their own offspring. However, since their husbands were at the farms and they provided money for their families in Blikkiesdorp only erratically, the !Xun at plot 2 struggled to acquire food. Max and his daughters therefore used to scavenge at the town's main dumpsite. This was a generally observable pattern: scavenging !Xun were sometimes mothers with children who were badly provided for by their men. Generally, *zula* life is led by men. !Xun women did not look for the scrap metal and when looking for empty bottles, they mostly accompanied their men. However, they could go to the main dumpsite to search for food.

The only permanent income of the !Xun at this plot was Max's wife's disability grant, which she started to receive in January 2006. The money, which in 2007 was 370 NS, mostly lasted only for about two weeks (see table 28).³⁸⁵ I could sometimes see Max, his wife Erika and some of their daughters and grandchildren passing by plot 1 with plastic sacks filled with food they found at the main dump site. This food could sometimes suffice for more than one day. On one July day in 2008 they came from the dump site with plastic bags with 2-3 kilograms of meat and bones, some bread, a few onions and some cabbages and also a plastic can containing peanut butter. Erika, Max's wife, put all the meat into a bowl of water, washed it, threw some pieces of meat that looked spoiled away. Then, she cut the meat and vegetables into pieces and put into a pot with water and cooked it. Meanwhile the others ate the bread with peanut butter. Young unemployed men from this plot preferred to look for scrap metal if they came back to the plot from the farm.

23.11.2006	balance	3.88
2.1.2007	deposit	1.22/50/49.10
8.1.2007	balance	130.05
21.1.2007	withdrawal	52.63/30/18.92
22.1.2007	withdrawal	15.83/10/2.12
6.2.2007	receiving of pension	740
13.2.2007	balance	92.11
3.4.2007	receiving of pension	370
2.5.2007	receiving of pension	370
2.5.2007	deposit	2.92/100/100.80
10.5.2007	withdrawal	96.8/50/43.09
15.5.2007	withdrawal	43.09/25/14.38
21.5.2007	withdrawal	14.38/10/0.67
5.6.2007	deposit	0.67/50/48.55
7.8.2007	deposit	22.01/100/119.89
10.9.2007	withdrawal	42.64/20/18.43
13.9.2007	withdrawal	18.93/10/5.22
10.10.2007	withdrawal	49.54/30/15.83
7.11.2007	deposit	2.12/160/159.82
15.11.2007	withdrawal	92.11/50/38.40
19.11.2007	withdrawal	38.40/30/4.69
1.4.2008	receiving of pension	370
1.7.2008	receiving of pension (for two monhs)	690
Explanation: Deposit is money deposited to the bank account after receiving the pension; when three figures are on one line, the first one states the amount on the account before the deposit/withdrawal.		

In 2010 Kashe told me that Max's family situation had improved. According to him, some time earlier Max and his relatives had stopped going to the town's main dumpsite. „I always see them eating mealie meal,“ he observed. According to Kashe, Max could rely on bigger support of his kin living in the area of Grootfontein, especially at the plots.

However, when I came to Grootfontein in 2011 Max was still going to the dumpsite sometimes. When I talked with Kashe and Mathias from plot 1 about him, they made jokes that when at the farm Max thinks every day about the truck with dumped food coming to the town's dumpsite and cannot wait till the end of the month to be paid his salary so he can return to Grootfontein and rush to the dump site.

In 2010 Max's family was also intensively collecting discarded soft drinks bottle tops since there was an

advertisement in the OK supermarket that if you sent a certain number of the bottles tops in an envelope to Windhoek you could be entered into a draw and the winners would receive a car. They believed sincerely that they could win. Even Kashe did not have any doubts: „I know a Damara who has already won two cars in this way.“

³⁸⁵ Max was receiving also game meat in the framework of the support programme of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. In 2008 I saw by him five receipt vouchers with dates from April 2007 till January 2008. They continued to receive the meat also during my second field research in the middle of 2008.

The spending habits of zula men

Before moving to the category of pensioners I will describe the spending habits of Kashe as representative of *zula* men. It will show us how Kashe used the meagre financial resources he acquired mostly by *zula*. Kashe's spending habits are not only representative for *zula* men, but to some extent, also for !Xun with a regular income.

Kashe acquired most of his food by buying it. I gleaned the information on his spending habits either by observation or by seeing the pay slips he kept at his shack (see below Table 29 with 31 pay slips from the period August to October 2009).

Kashe bought only the most basic and cheapest food stuffs, and except for the mealie meal (eaten mostly two times daily), mostly in the smallest quantities: brown sugar (0,5 kg 3,55 NS), *afvalbene* (bones with small pieces of meat for several NS), instant soup (2,7 NS) used for making sauce, and sometimes bread (6 - 8 NS). Also, important was loose tea (20 g - 2,15 NS; all 2009 prices), which the !Xun drank with a lot of sugar.

The most expensive thing he bought in the reported period was a sack of maize meal for 28.5 NS, but the second most expensive was 1 kg of sugar for 7.95 NS. All the other things cost only few NS. Furthermore, Kashe bought only one item per shop, sometimes two and only rarely three or more.

With the money he earned from *zula*, Kashe would often buy a small pack of *afvalbene* in the town and in the township a big cup of mealie meal for 2.8 NS (at 2009 prices) for dinner. He would also buy a few lose sweets or sweet ice in a plastic bag for 50 cents from one „Damara“ woman in the township for his two boys, who always expected him to bring them something when he returned back home after selling empty bottles.

Kashe also regularly bought small quantities of tobacco (50 g – 2.95 NS).³⁸⁶ Among the few non-food items Kashe bought were necessities such as soap (125 g – 2.65 NS), washing powder (250 g – 6.75 NS; all 2009 prices) and matches to light his cigarette roll-ups and the fire for cooking.

Kashe, like other !Xun and also the township's non-!Xun dwellers, preferred to buy foodstuffs in the town's commercial centre, especially in the Etosha supermarket because the prices in the business centre of Grootfontein were significantly lower than they were in the township. In addition to Etosha supermarket, he used to buy foodstuffs in the town centre in the OK, SPAR supermarket or in the Minimarket.³⁸⁷

³⁸⁶ It happened on few occasions that when I gave Kashe the choice to buy for him either tobacco or some food such as sugar, in the case that there was still some sugar at his shack, he asked me to buy him tobacco.

³⁸⁷ When I went with Kashe to Etosha supermarket in 2008 to show me what goods he usually bought there, he gave me the following list: 1 liter orange juice for 10.80 NS, Oshikandela milk drink 125 ml, Rama margarine 125 gram for 2,65 NS, Blossom margarine 125 gram for 4,55 NS, Knorrox soups (oxtail, tomato and onion) for 3,55 NS and Knorr soups for 2,75 NS, salt for 2 NS, the smallest bottles of cooking oil, 5 kg mealie meal for 18,85 NS, Really rice for 6,45 NS, Five Roses loose leaf tea for 2,15 NS, coffee creamer (they did not have it, but allegedly for 7 NS), 2,5 kg Meme mahangu for 14,05 NS, 1 kg ACE maize meal for 6,55 NS, half a liter of milk for 8,70 NS, 1 liter Bergland Daires Omarere for 10,50 NS, 0,5 kg King brown sugar for 3,55 NS, Family choice sugar for 3,60 NS, bread for 6.99 or 7.99 NS (since there were no price labels and only sheet of paper with listed prices for all breads, Kashe could not know the price and thought wrongly it was only for 5 or 6 NS). Furthermore, he used to buy there 50 ml Nolemo Petroleum Jelly 3,80 NS, Orchard soap for 3,45 NS, Sunlight soap for 4,30 NS, 150 gram MAQ washing powder for 3,70 NS, 250 gram OMQ washing powder. In nearby OK supermarket Kashe was buying a half of a cabbage for approximately 7 - 8 NS, 5 kg mealie meal for 18,99 NS,

Table 29: Kashe's pay slips August-October 2008 ³⁸⁸		
Date	(number of items) bought stuff	price (NS)
August		
8	(1) Family choice sugar 1 kg	6,95
11	(1) loose sweets (6 x 0,25)	1,5
11	(1) Holsum 125gr	3,95
11	(1) Tau Motsoko tobacco 50gr	2,95
18	(1) MAQ washing power 150 gr	4,2
22	(1) loose sweets 3 x 0,25	0,75
31	(1) King brown sugar 0,5kg	3,55
September		
5	(1) Family choice sugar 1 kg	7,95
3	(2) Rama spread sachet 50 gr White bread sliced	2,25 8?
8	(1) Tau Motsoko tobacco 50 ngr	2,95
8	(3) Five roses loose tea 20 gr Sugar king brown sugar 2 x 0,5 kg	2,15 7
9	(2) 2 min noodles curry Fizz pops	3,1 0,6
10	(1) Tau Motsoko tobacco 50 gr	2,95
10	(1) Five roses loose tea 20 gr	2,15
10	(3) First white sugar 0,5 kg Royco Rich Oxtail soup 60 gr Knorr soup chilly beef (soup)	3,85 2,85 2,7
12	(1) Maverick Tobacco 25 gr	1,79
19	(1) Makalani sifted mealie meal	28,5
19	(2) Mona coffee Family choice brown sugar 1kg	3,85 7,1
22	(1) Bergland omaere 500 ml	6,75
24	(1) Family choice brown sugar 1 kg	6,7
October		
1	(2) salt Knorr soup chilly/beef	2 2
1	(1) Lion matches single	0,4
6	(2) tobacco King brown sugar 0,5 kg	1,99 3,99
7	(1) Lion matches single	0,40
7	(2) butter brown bread sliced	3,39 5,99
7	(2) Tau Motsoko tobacco 50G Fizz pop rockets	2,95 1,1
11	?	2,8
11	(1) Lion matches single	0,49
11	(1) Maverick black tea tobacco 25 kg	1,79
13	(1) Family choice white sugar 0,5 kg	3,75
25	(1) Lion matches single	0,49

In the township shops Kashe used to do smaller shops. For example, he would buy a big cup of mealie meal when he could not afford to buy a whole sack in the town. The local black shopkeepers adapted to the low purchasing power of the township's poor, but still at disadvantageous prices for the latter. The advantage was that they were nearby and in some of them Kashe acquired very small quantities of food, such as sugar, for a few NS on credit. In the case of Kashe the shop keepers did not record the debt in any book because the sums were

beef bones for 5 - 6 NS, instant soup (Maggi 2 Minute soup), two different brands of 50 gram tobacco for 1,75 NS or 3,19 NS. In SPAR supermarket, which appeared to be the most expensive, Kashe seemed to buy things rather seldom. He listed bread, small baby white bread for 4,60 NS, 50 gram Rama margarine for 2,20 NS, 1 kg Marathon brown sugar for 6,45 NS and 0,5, 1 and 2,5 kg Marathon white sugar for 3,6; 7 and 17,15 NS respectively. In Minimarket Kashe used to buy toasts (3 NS per one), sugar, bread for 8 NS, raisin bread for 5 NS, powdered instant drink for 60 cents for a sachet and 25 gram Maverick tobacco for 2,50 NS.

³⁸⁸ The below listed pay slips of course do not represent all the shoppings which Kashe made in that period.

too small. Kashe, though poor, was a reliable customer who always repaid his debts, which he settled mostly on his way back from the town after selling bottles.

In 2008 Kashe showed me 12 shops in the township that he patronised. Four of them were brick structures and eight informal house (shack) shops. He shopped mostly in the Hakahana shop (one of the brick houses).³⁸⁹ This was on the way from the town centre to his plot, it was near his house and the prices there, even though much higher than in the Grootfontein commercial centre, were still lower than in the informal house shops.

The owners of the eight informal shops were in four instances Ovambos (3x Kwanyama, 1x Ndonga), in three cases Kavangos (1x Gciriku, 2x Mbukushu) and one was owned by a „Damara“ woman.³⁹⁰ While in the town supermarkets Kashe did his „main“ shopping, in township shops he bought small quantities of food that he needed at a given moment: sugar for 1 or 2 NS, tea sachets for 30 cents each or a small bundle of tea in a plastic bag for 1 NS, for his sons sweets for 10 or 20 cents a time and biscuits for 50 cents, a bit of tobacco for 50 cents packed in a piece of newspaper, 50 cents for a box of matches or, so that he could see in his shack in the evenings, a candle for 1.5 NS.

In the township, he also bought small quantities of vegetables, such as tomatoes and onions, from street vendors, who were mostly Ovambos. For a larger onion he paid usually one NS, which was also the price for three smaller ones.

Probably, the most sought after food by the !Xun was meat. The problem was, however, that it was very expensive. Kashe usually went to the Vleiskor or Country Wild Meat Market in town where he would buy a small packet of frozen meatbones (in Afrikaans vleisbene), sometimes also called waste bones (afvalbene), for a few NS. He occasionally also bought a small piece of meat for 5 NS or so from the street vendors in Single Quarters.

Even though Kashe bought mostly essential foodstuffs if there was already some mealie meal, soup, sugar and tee at home or he felt he could afford it he could not resist buying what were for him were luxurious foodstuffs such as bread (6 - 7 NS), raisin bread, milk, orange juice (one litre for 9 NS in 2008, a small carton of cca 250 ml for 6.5 NS), cheese rolls (1.5 NS for one), potatoes, macaroni, or rice. He sometimes he bought several slices of salami in a supermarket or butchers. When Kashe bought these items, which we can regard as subtle and inconspicuous expressions of consumerism, it significantly influenced his meagre daily budget.

There were also several other objects and services that Kashe often bought. Kashe spent a significant share of his money on buying airtime for his cell phone in order to be in contact with his family and friends. The cheapest airtime available to buy was 5 or 10 NS, which was as much as he could earn in one bottle gathering trip. Call tariffs in Namibia are very

³⁸⁹ In the Hakahana shop, which had in 2008 Ovambo (Ndonga) owners, he used to buy in small quantities of mealie meal, instant soups for 2, 95 NS, 0,5 kilogram of brown sugar for 4 NS, small package of coffee for 4,1 NS, sachet with spices for 4,1 NS, candles for 1,5 NS and sweets for 10 - 20 cents per one for his sons. In the Royal Life Restaurant owned in 2008 by Ovambos (Kwanyamas/Ndongas) he used to sell empty bottles and to buy the smallest Rama spread for 2,80 NS, Holsum washing soap for 5,70 NS and *afvalbene* for 10 NS. In the Hakahana Minimarket Kashe he was buying bread for 4,50 NS, tea for 3 NS and mealie meal for 3 NS for a cup. In the Eldorado General Dealer he used to buy 30 gram Ariel washing powder for 50 cents and 600 gram mealie meal for 4,5 NS.

³⁹⁰ The father of the Damara woman owner of the shop used to stay also in Kameelwoud in former Bushmanland when Kashe was living there.

expensive for the poor poor !Xun. I observed Kashe spent his airtime very quickly, since he was buying airtime several times per month and sometimes his kin asked him if they could call from his phone. What also happened was that when Kashe received miscalls, be they from his family and meant just as greetings or from people who accidentally dialled his number, he felt obliged to call them back since it could have been something serious. He also felt there must be some airtime in his cell phone at all times in case he needed to call the police because he was afraid of a gang allegedly operating in the region killing people for their body parts.

Some !Xun in the township used to buy clothes on credit from street vendors passing by on foot or in a car. However, since Kashe used the money he earned selling bottles to buy food on the same day, it was extremely difficult for him to accumulate enough money to enable him to buy clothes or shoes. He could afford to buy them only when he was employed and receiving a salary, which was, as we have seen, only rarely. When he was in this situation, he would go to the South African chain PEP shop. In 2008 he recalled having bought there shoes for his younger son Willem for around 35 NS, and on two occasions socks for 5.99 NS. In the past he had purchased several pairs of tennis-shoes for his former wife Lucia for 44,99 NS and men's underwear for 7 NS.

Kashe occasionally had other small expenses. For example, he sometimes bought a plastic sheet to cover the roof at his shack. He would also occasionally buy Everyday long-lasting transistor batteries for 19,99 NS. (On the other non-food items Kashe bought see chapter on material culture) He also often paid small fees of five NS or so when he or his sons went to the doctor. He also had to pay for the hike to and from Bushmanland.



Picture 29. Kashe was objecting to his father buying expensive boerewors instead of mealie meal. The picture is from a leaflet I found at plot No. 1.

It has to be emphasised that until the beginning of 2007, when he stopped drinking alcohol, Kashe's expenditures in Grootfontein differed significantly from later. When I met Kashe for the first time in June 2007, it had been just half a year since he had given up alcohol. Up to the moment that he gave up alcohol virtually overnight, he and his wife Lucia spent a significant amount of money on alcohol and some !Xun behaved like this also during my the time of my research in Grootfontein. In the past Kashe used to buy the cheapest alcohol at the Single Quarters, where he paid only one NS for a litre of home-brewed beer. However, bottled alcohol, which they also used to buy, was much more expensive and was financially

ruinous for them. He and Lucia used to buy 750 ml bottles of Brandy Zorba (22,5 %), Clubman Aperitif (23 %), Seven Seas cane spirit (43 %), and Redd's (5 %) and in smaller bottles Clubman and Zorba and also Copperband and Sedwick's. In that period Kashe and Lucia could spend all their money virtually in one day and struggle to get something to eat.

It was illustrative to observe what the !Xun were buying during the Christmas period of 2011, which I spent with them. At most plots the festive dinner consisted of macaroni, rice and ketchup. Some cooked in oil fatcakes or bought bread. Others, more rarely, bought *boerewors* and frozen chicken meat (at plot 3 they killed one of the chickens they were breeding) and potatoes. There were only rare cases of someone buying a gift since money was so short. I recorded that Andris from plot 8 received a shirt, tie and socks from his grand-daughter and his wife Getrud bought a dress for each of her three daughters, which cost 48 NS in total, and she gave her son 50 NS. Getrud also bought shoes for 50 NS for herself, claiming, with smiling eyes, that „my man should not feel ashamed of me“. It is clear that the amounts that could be spent on gifts were very minimal. For example, Paul, the „owner“ of plot 3, spent the Christmas with his relatives at a plot near Grootfontein, where they had macaroni (no meat) as a festive food, but he did not take any food with him. According to him, since everybody knew he did not have any money, he was not expected to bring any.

I may add that Christmas at the farms used to be for the !Xun a better time, as some of them recalled. The !Xun could benefit from the fact, that Christmas was an important festive time for the farmers, who used to give the workers on this occasion extra foodstuffs such as sugar, tea or raisin bread, and, as Kashe recalled, sometimes alcohol.

Pensioners - !Xun households' assets

In Namibia all citizens 60 and older are entitled to the universal state old-age pension. The fact that Kashe's parents and his mother's „sister“ Emma were receiving a pension played a significant role in their „settling down“ in Grootfontein. Living in the town enabled them to have immediate access to their, limited, financial resources and to be economically independent to some extent. If there was still money in their accounts at the NamPost, they could withdraw it on any working day and buy food, the price of which was much more advantageous than in the farms or Bushmanland.

The pension they received was similar to the salary a !Xun man could expect to earn as a yardworker in the town. In 2008 it was 370, in 2009 450 and in 2010 500 NS. As the pension is regular and permanent, in cash-strapped !Xun urban households !Xun pensioners become assets. As Kashe's father once said: „In Blikkiesdorp all people say the old people must find food.“ Some pensioners, when still able-bodied, could also improve their financial situation by doing, for example, yardwork (Andris from plot 8), engage in petty business (Frederik from plot 9 did welding) or by working at a nearby plot (Kashe's father Willem at Lemoentji). However, *zula* life was too strenuous for them.

The way !Xun pensioner's dealt with their income and economic strategies in the town was very similar to the !Xun families with a breadwinner employed in the town. The !Xun elders also spent a substantial part of their money shortly after receiving it. They bought some basic foodstuffs, which were supposed to last for some time, and repaid (some of) the debts taken from Bantu small shopkeepers in the township. Given their small income, Kashe's parents occasionally spent significant amounts on expensive non-food items: most often radios, radio-tape-recorders, mattresses, clothes and medicine. These purchases had a significant impact on

their budgets, since, for example, a tape-recorder could cost between 100 and 300 NS. Shortly after withdrawing the pension money at NamPost, they also used to buy some tasty yet expensive foodstuffs such as dried fish, soft drinks such as coca cola, and *boerewors*. These expenses were also not negligible. A portion of *boerewors* could cost about 20 - 40 NS.

Since Maria and Emma kept their NamPost statements, I could see that they sometimes managed to keep some money in their accounts the whole month.

Date	time	money left (NS)
11.6. 2007	10:54	12.64
6.8. 2007	12:04	48.81
20.8. 2007	08:08	97.88
28.8. 2007	12:51	5.10
4.9. 2007	08:34	88.98

Thus, on 4 June 2008, according to one account statement, Maria withdrew her pension, but deposited 300 NS in her empty account. On 11 June she withdrew 100 NS, on 19 June another 100 NS and on 25 June 50 NS, on that day 33,06 NS still remained in her account after the deduction of all fees. In Emma's case, on 20 August 2007, more than two weeks after receiving her pension, there was still almost 100 NS in her account. On 4 September 2007 she withdrew most of her pension money from her NamPost bank account but still left almost 90 NS. On the same day she claimed to have repaid a debt of 50 NS for food in the township, she did some shopping (washing powder for 7 NS, a few tomatoes and onions and a small piece of meat) and as I could see she still had 140.5 NS in cash. Thus, she spent around half the money on the same day she had withdrawn it.

According to a few account statements I saw belonging to him, Kashe's father Willem, in contrast to the two women, withdrew all his pension money at once. After, he had to keep the money in cash at his shack, but it does not necessarily mean he spent it all at once. Willem occasionally asked me to give him a few NS for tobacco or food, claiming he did not have any. However, Kashe did not believe this and was convinced his father must still have some money left, but did not want to tell anybody.

I observed the shopping done by Kashe's parents on the 3 September 2007. That day Kashe's parents withdrew (part of) their pensions, which at that time were 370 NS each, and brought back to their home goods worth 233 NS. They bought some food stuffs at the Etosha supermarket, some fatcakes and fried fish from the street vendors and a radio tape-recorder by Chinese shopkeepers, who, to his joy, gave Willem a pair of socks as a „present“ for buying it. On the same day Maria claimed she had to repay „200 NS“ of her debts for food, for clothes and shoes and there were allegedly only 16 NS left. Since I could not verify this, we should approach this data with caution. However, we can generally observe similar spending habits as other !Xun in the town with similar incomes.

Kashe's parents claimed to pay about 150 - 200 NS each to settle their debts each month after receiving their pensions. In December 2010 Ovambo shopkeepers in the township allowed me to see Emma, Maria, and Willem's last records in the debt book. The overpriced goods they acquired in this way were: tinned beef and luncheon meat for 15 NS each, 10 kilograms of mealie meal for 33.5 NS, tinned Lucky Star fish for 15 NS, one kilogram of sugar for 12 NS, soups for 6 NS per sachet, spaghetti for 13 NS per package, cooking oil for 18 NS, tea bags for 50 cent for one, biscuits for 5 NS, small sweets for 1 NS a piece and candles for 3 NS each and a box of matches for 60 cents. Furthermore, there was also a rule that the provider of credit took occasionally extra fees of tens of NS for the service. In the debt book Willem's debt once reached 230.50 NS, Maria's 192.50 NS, but Emma seemed to buy on credit less frequently. This debt corresponds to the information they gave me verbally. All of them were

regularly repaying the debts, although not always at once. They knew, however, that unless the debt was repaid, they could not purchase new food on credit.

bought item	NS
white sugar	10.65
silver tea	4
white bread	4.8
raisin bread	3
8 pieces of fatcakes	4
coffee milk creamer	5.9
pieces of fried fish	5
1 liter coke	8
radio-cassette recorder (OP 106 Omega)	180
<i>Total</i>	233,35

Paradoxically, the !Xun were well aware of the disadvantageous terms when buying on credit and for this reason often criticised the „Ovambos” who provided it to them. „The Ovambos are clever, I'm stupid. The !Xun are sometimes stupid, no?” commented Kashe. At the same time, the !Xun heavily depended on such an economic mode and strove to maintain good relations with the credit providers so that they had access to food in (frequent) times of crisis. I was told by my informants that the Ovambo loan providers liked to sell things on credit to the pensioners because they know they had a permanent income. With adult men, who often changed employers and lost their jobs, the „Ovambos“ were more cautious

and for credit to be extended they must have known each other for some time and there must have been a significant level of trust between them. Since he did not have any regular significant income, Kashe could acquire goods for only a few NS in this way. In December 2010 Kashe told me the Bushmen were generally reliable at repaying their debts since they were also afraid of being bewitched by the black shopkeepers if they did not repay the money. He recalled that shortly before my arrival in Grootfontein that year one old !Xun who used to go to Single Quarters to drink *tombo* made by the Ovambos had died. Kashe was convinced the Ovambos had killed him either by poisoning his *tombo* or bewitching him because he did not pay back his debts. It does not mean, however, that the !Xun repaid the debts always in time. In July 2009 Kashe heard from the !Xun from plot 2 that his father had had a quarrel with an Ovambo woman from the shop where he usually took credit in the township since he was not able to settle his debt there. The woman had allegedly given Willem a slap.³⁹¹

Buying foodstuffs on credit also brought about some tensions in Kashe's family. When I came to Grootfontein in 2010, only Kashe's father of the elders was living in Grootfontein. His mother Maria and her „sister“ Emma were staying at farm Dismyn with Kashe's sister Kristine. According to Kashe's narration, which was probably to some extent simplified, his mother was complaining that Willem had forced her to buy things on credit from the Ovambos in the township and it was then that Kashe's sister decided that Maria should live at the farm.

Even though Kashe benefited from the presence of the pensioners, sometimes, when the elders ran out of the money, it was their kin, including Kashe, who had to provide for them. They also often accompanied the elders to withdraw money at the NamPost. This was to prevent the money being stolen from the pensioners on the street after they withdrew it. At the same time, it enabled the relatives to accompany the elders when they were shopping and to influence what would be bought.

³⁹¹ As usually when telling me some serious stories with some comic context but without bad end, Kashe could not stop laughing.



Picture 30. The shop where Kashe's parents bought groceries on credit. Notice the board on which is written: Geen skuld - No credit.

Owing to their advanced age, neither of Kashe's parents could see well. Maria also had increasing problems with walking, sometimes stumbling and falling down. Kashe once witnessed how his father on his way back from the NamPost was approached by a young „Ovambo“ who showed Willem a cell phone he allegedly wanted to sell. When his father leaned over to him, the young man took the pension money out of his pocket. However, Kashe stepped in and made the young man give his father the money back.

Similarly, the disabled receiving disability grants were also regarded as an economic asset. There were two of them in my sample in the town, a blind boy at plot 12 and a girl with crippled legs at plot 3. Kashe once said about the residents at plot 3 that „these people have enough things, they don't suffer,“ and he explained this by the fact that they had money thanks to the girl.

Although the !Xun avoided talking about this sensitive issue openly, living with the pensioners was regarded as a considerable advantage and there was sometimes a certain tension as to with whom the elders should live, who should have access to their money and how it should be used. In some cases, especially when still able-bodied and mentally independent, the pensioners disposed of the money themselves, they withdrew it at the NamPost office and either took the cash home or they took only part of it and deposited the rest in their bank accounts, out of which they subsequently withdrew funds. Even if they disposed of their money themselves, their kin benefited by sharing their food. However, the older pensioners who were not able to walk to the NamPost office often gave the disposal rights to access the money deposited in the bank account to one relative. That person was frequently envied by others and was suspected of misusing the money.



Picture 31. Life in Blikkiesdorp was in some ways easier for the pensioners than it was on the farms and in the communal area, especially when it came to withdrawing their pension.

The fight for Emma

Before my coming to Grootfontein in 2010, there arose a quarrel about where Kashe's mother's „sister“ Emma, who, when living in Grootfontein, virtually comprised one household with Kashe and his two sons, should live. Emma was a childless widowed woman, illiterate and innumerate, who seemed to be easily influenced by the people around her. „Emma follows the others (Emma gaan net saam)“, was the way Kashe characterised her dependency on the decisions of her kin. At the end of 2010 Emma was living at farm Dismyn with Kashe's sister. However, before then she had lived for several months with the !Xun living at the yard of a car repair company (my plot 12). According to Kashe, it was Magdalena, the wife of the head of that household, Petrus, who wooed Emma to live at her plot on the pretext that she would take care of her. However, Kashe and his father agreed that in fact Magdalena wanted to gain access to Emma's pension money. Petrus, who was a relative of Kashe, told the latter that Emma had authorised Magdalena to withdraw her pension money from her bank account. This meant she was in a position to dispose of it. Kashe suspected Magdalena used the money to support her own economic activities. According to Kashe, with the pension money she bought cloth from which she sewed dresses, which she then sold. Kashe was also convinced that Magdalena used Emma's money to pay for transport to Otjiwarongo to visit her relatives. Kashe had also heard that Magdalena misused Emma in that she took credit of 200 NS on her behalf for food in one of the township's small shops.

Kashe and Magdalena started to quarrel about Emma when Kashe tried to persuade her to come back to his father's plot in Blikkiesdorp. Kashe claimed that his only motivation was that Emma herself could dispose of her money, even though he would profit economically

from her presence, since she used to cook for him and occasionally gave him some money. Eventually, Emma returned to Blikkiesdorp, but later went to the farm where his brother Andris lived. Even in instances when Kashe disliked somebody, he usually behaved to that person in a way that did not suggest any tension between them. However, he ostensibly avoided any contact with Magdalena. Magdalena, was born to a !Xun mother and a Coloured man, but she did not speak !Xun as fluently as she did Afrikaans and Damara. Kashe, angry at her over the issue of Emma's pension, explained what he saw as her meanness by the fact that she was a „Damara“ (!) and that „she is not (his) family“. However, even when Emma was at the farm with his brother, Kashe was still concerned. He suspected that Andris' wife Angoste wanted to have Emma with her family in order to have access to her pension money as well. Kashe, who had a strained relationship with Angoste, also said to me that she had forbidden Andris from giving money to his parents despite the fact that they had brought up his second son.

The case of Emma also affected Kashe's relationship to his brother Andris. Kashe claimed to be concerned by the fact that as Emma was with him at his farm he could benefit from her presence financially. However, Andris did not want to buy any corrugated iron sheets to make a roof above Emma's room in Blikkiesdorp, in spite of Kashe's repeated requests for him to do so. There had been a plastic sheet cover at her shack, but the sun and rain had destroyed it. Kashe claimed that after Emma's return to Grootfontein she would have nowhere to sleep without having her shack being repaired. Kashe was so upset with Andris that he threatened to call the police to apprehend him and claimed that Andris and Magdalena, the wife of Petrus, were „the same“ (net dieselfde), bad people.

When I came to Grootfontein in December 2011, Kashe told me that in the January of that year Emma had returned to live at her house in Blikkiesdorp again. In the end Kashe bought a plastic sheet for her with the money I had given him when leaving Namibia. However, when I came to Grootfontein in April 2013, I learnt that Petrus and Magdalena had been given their own plot by the municipality at the extension behind Blikkiesdorp and Emma was staying with them. According to Kashe, her health was steadily deteriorating. This implied she had less control over the use of her pension.

Other strategies for accessing resources

Sharing, asking, networking

It was the primary responsibility of each household head to provide for their dependants. The !Xun would mostly share resources with close kin and the most important relationships were between the parents (or foster parents) and children, siblings, and also grandparents and grandchildren. As a result of the financial situation they typically find themselves in, the !Xun could share mostly only food and not money.

There was a culture among the !Xun of constant asking each other for one or two NS to buy tobacco or a little sugar. However, the higher amounts of 50 - 100 NS could be occasionally asked for and granted only among close relatives. The !Xun could further ask for food from other kin living in the township with whom they had a close emotional relationship and who could afford to give. The latter were, however, few in number. Some !Xun could ask occasionally for help also from close kin living at farms, who went to the town mainly after receiving their salary or on Fridays and Saturdays when the farmer drove the farmworkers there for shopping. The fact that they were receiving regular salary, and that when

encountered in Grootfontein they might be carrying plastic bags with food, might make it more difficult for them to refuse help. A meeting in the town could be arranged in advance by a cell phone call. Some !Xun used to visit their relatives at nearby plots and farms where they could also get some food and, in the case of close kin, some money as well. Resources were also shared with visiting kin, who could stay for weeks or months.

A common strategy of the !Xun for acquiring food was by eating with others. In this case the !Xun visited other !Xun when food was being dished out and the host had to follow the courtesy rules and share the food with everyone present. Children often ate at the household of their playmates.

Generally, the level of economic activity of each individual may depend on the extent to which the person may rely on the support of the kin. However, in the case of an unemployed able-bodied man it is generally expected that he looks for at least occasional jobs after a certain period and helps the providing kin with domestic chores.

The patterns of asking for assistance were influenced by differences in the economic situation of each particular !Xun. The !Xun knew what the economic situations of their kin were and who could afford, and was willing, to help them. Those who were known to be struggling and had many family members were not asked. However, even those willing to help could not be asked too often. Importantly, the working !Xun could direct their request for money mostly only to their close relatives. A *zula* !Xun could ask working kin for food, but the latter could hardly ask the former. When it came to giving each other food, the relationships between the !Xun ranged from reciprocal to more one-sided ones, depending on the income of each party. Helping also depended on feelings of mutual obligation and emotional closeness. When asking for food, physical proximity was also important. The !Xun living in the immediate neighbourhood asked each other more often than they did more distantly dwelling kin.

Generally, if it was known there was food at a house, its owner avoided behaving in a stingy way to close kin, since this could fireback on that person in the future, if and when that !Xun was in need. I witnessed situations when !Xun who had been employed for years lost work and unexpectedly became dependent on others.

According to the 2001 census, in comparison to other ethnic groups the !Xun built larger households with almost 11 people on average (data provided to me by the Namibian National Planning Commission). The more breadwinners or pensioners at a plot, the greater the chance someone could share resources. Tensions might, however, increase when resources dwindled, especially in the period before receiving the next salary or pension payment. Generally, the anxiety of having few or no financial means was lessened by knowing there were relatives at the plot who could assist them.

Kashe's network for acquiring food and money among the !Xun

Getting money and food (sharing food) with his close relatives

Kashe and his brother occasionally received 50 NS or so from their **father Willem**, but this seemed to happen only every few months. According to Kashe, his **mother Maria** almost never gave him money and when she did the sum was only around 10 NS. Kashe thought Maria occasionally gave some money to his sister Kristine. Kashe was also regularly given

some money by his **mother's „sister“ Emma**. She also often sent him to buy some food and he could take any money that remained after he had bought what was on the shopping list. Kashe's **sister Kristine** was another who sometimes gave him money when she visited plot 1 from the farm, but he complained that his **brother Andris** did not help as much as he had in the past.

When Emma and Kashe stayed in Grootfontein, they formed one household. She was a childless widowed pensioner, who never cooked just for herself, but always shared it with Kashe, his two sons and also with Lucia when she still lived with him. Kashe could apparently also capitalise on Emma's social connections in the church. According to him, his mother's "sister" would often bring home some mealie meal from her church friend. Thus, in Emma's presence Kashe could heavily rely on her help. In return Kashe helped Emma by repairing her shack and cutting firewood for her.

Kashe's parents help was similarly important for Kashe. If both were in Blikkiesdorp, they mostly cooked at their own fireplace and shared it with Otto, the second son of Kashe's brother Andris, for whom they were effectively foster parents. However, when there was more food, they offered it also to Kashe and his family. Kashe and his parents often also shared raw foodstuffs, depending on how much food they actually had at a given moment. In 2010 when Maria and Emma were at the farm, Kashe built one household with his father.

Since both of Kashe's parent's expenditure followed the pay day phenomenon pattern to some extent, Kashe could rely on their help more in the days after they withdrew their pensions. The closer they were to another payment, the more they were threatened by food insecurity.

Sharing with (visiting) relatives staying at his household

Visitors, especially if they wanted to stay at the plot for a longer time, may also be expected, depending on their individual capabilities, to share their food with their hosts. Thus, **in 2010 two relatives** of Kashe approximately of his age stayed with him in his shack. While one was recuperating from tuberculosis, the other found work in the town. The former, having at first no means to contribute to the household budget, ate with the others. But after regaining his health, he contributed to the household with money earned by *zula*. The latter also regularly bought foodstuffs that the entire household shared.

Asking his other kin living at plot 1

When I asked **Mathias and Veronika**, they told me that Kashe „always“ asked them for mealie meal, tea or, if they did not have any, for one NS to buy a little tea wrapped in a small piece of newspaper at the township shops. However, they said that if Kashe had some food and they were in need he also gave it to them, even though this did not happen often.

Asking kin living at other plots in the township

Kashe would occasionally visit some of his relatives at their plots in the township and ask them for assistance. Of the remaining 11 plots in my sample, he could receive help at only a few of them. In 2010 he told me he went occasionally to **plot 8**, where he could get some coffee and tea and „two weeks“ before our discussion they had also given him some food. In the past he had also received some help at **plot 3**, but the situation changed when its owner acquired an aggressive dog that was widely feared. At **plot 9** he felt welcome, but he did not seek help there. Kashe sometimes visited the !Xun at **plot 10**, but since he knew that they also struggled he never asked them for anything: „I cannot ask. We just talk. We drink tea and then

I go.“ It was the same with the neighbouring **plot 2**. Max, the breadwinner at that plot, was also badly-off and had many people depending on him: „Max has also a big family.“

Kashe never asked for help from the !Xun at **plots 6 and 7**. Their relationship was not as cordial as it was with other relatives. Thus, Kashe usually talked to them only when returning from a bottle gathering trip, sometimes remaining at the road behind the fence: „I see these people won't give you something easily“. Kashe did not ask for food from the !Xun at **plot 4**, who later on moved to **plot 3**. But in 2010 he recalled that /Xae once gave him two kilograms of mealie meal, when he met him at the township Hakahana shop. Kashe avoided the !Xun at **plot 11**, since Ágrob, the household head, had taken Kashe's former wife Martha away from him. It was also the same with the people living in 2007 at **plot 7**, who later on moved to another place in the township. Kashe could not stand Magdalena because she had persuaded Emma to stay with her and allegedly used her pension money for her own purposes.

The relationship to families with employed breadwinners who occasionally gave Kashe some food, that is the !Xun from **plot 8**, was in this respect one-sided. He used to ask them for some food, but was not expected to reciprocate, since he was regarded by them as very poor. The situations differed partly at **plot 1**, where Kashe lived, and the neighbouring **plot 2**. If he had some foodstuffs that others lacked, Kashe was occasionally expected to help anybody living at his plot. Kashe, however, complained that he was asked too often for assistance by the people of plot 2, who often lived on the proceeds of scavenging. The reason why was Kashe under constant pressure to share his food with the others at **plot 1** or **plot 2** was, that he could hardly conceal any food from them.

Asking coincidentally met relatives and friends

When Kashe went to the town's commercial centre, mostly during his bottle gathering trips, there was always a chance that he would meet some relatives or friends there who he could ask to share some food or to give him a small amount of money. This was often relatives living at the farm, who had come into town with the farmer to do some shopping.

I did not observe Kashe going to the town with the sole purpose of meeting kin. Some !Xun, however, do this. Thus, one morning during my visit to Grootfontein in December 2012, I saw Kashe's brother's son called Mannetjie walking from the township to the town. When I asked him what he wanted to do there, he said: „I will just look around (Ek kyk net rond)“. When the same thing happened the next day, he told me: „I just want to see the people and cars (Net die mense and kare kyk)“. When he returned that day back to Blikkiesdorp, I asked him in front of some of his relatives whether he had bought something in town and he replied that he had, but did not specify what. When I repeated my question, he said he had got 5 NS there by his !Xun relatives. To my question of whether he had obtained some food as well, he said he had bought bread with the money. When I retorted that bread cost more than 5 NS, he admitted he had in fact received 10 NS. He said that he ate the bread in the town together with his friends.

Asking his relatives at the plots and nearby farms

This was common for the !Xun living in the town, although not in Kashe's case. One of the main reasons seemed to be that his close relatives, such as his brother or sister, worked mostly at farms that were far from Grootfontein and Kashe could not easily travel there. During the period of my field research in Namibia, Kashe recalled having visited his niece's husband Piet (who had his hut and family and Swart Tak) only once at a farm nearby Grootfontein but he had received 10 kg of mealie meal there.

Eating with relatives

Although this did not happen regularly, Kashe could be fed when visiting some of his relatives as they were serving food. It happened more often that his two sons ate around a fire with the !Xun at plots 1 and 2 when food had just been prepared.

Getting food by people with charitable feelings

I have personally never witnessed Kashe being given food by people acting out of sympathy. However, in the past, when he still did not have a permanent dwelling place at his father's plot and lived at the Total petrol station, the women street vendors selling their goods under the trees opposite the SPAR supermarket would occasionally give him vegetables, mostly in the late afternoon when they were already packing away their produce and knew which vegetables would not last until the next day. Kashe said they were helping him out of sympathy towards his sons.

Asking at other places in the town

I know of only once instance when this occurred. Kashe told me that he once went to the Red Cross branch office in the township to ask for food. He got 0,5 kg mealie meal, but it was said that the only people receiving regular help from this source were those who were HIV positive.

Complaining, objecting, bad mouthing

Since the resources of the !Xun urban dwellers were generally very meagre, the !Xun appreciated those who assisted them and were very critical of those who, in their view, did not help despite their perceived means. These !Xun were accused of stinginess and slyness (*skelm*) and talked badly about. It appeared that the !Xun in the township used a kind of „complained discourse“ (on complaint discourse and narratives of neglect and abandonment see Lee 2003: 98 - 103) and by putting a person under constant pressure they increased the chances of sharing their resources. The lack of food led to considerable tensions among the members of some households.

It was only during my fourth field research trip in Namibia in 2010 that Kashe started to talk with me also about the tensions among his close kin, his siblings and parents caused by sharing food and financial assistance. During previous research trips in the area of Grootfontein I thought that Kashe's closest relationship was with his brother Andris. In 2010, however, Kashe complained that Andris “changed” and did not want to give him any money and food as he did in the past. According to Kashe, at that time Andris was earning at a farm a salary of 600 NS, he was also receiving monthly food rations and Kashe expected that occasionally he would give him something. „These people eat rice, macaroni, they eat as the white people,“ said Kashe of Andris's family. Instead of giving him something from time to time, Andris seemed entirely to go out of his way to avoid Kashe. According to Kashe, when his brother came to the town, he stayed just for a few hours in its business centre to do shopping and left for the farm without visiting his kin in Blikkiesdorp. Kashe then learned from others that his brother had been in town.

According to Kashe, Andris's reason for staying in Grootfontein for such a short period may have been to avoid requests for food and money from his family. Kashe's father shared his view that Andris did not help them enough. Willem objected to the fact that he did not help despite the fact that he and his wife Maria were for a long time the foster parents of his two sons: „We raised the children and God helped us with it.“ Willem expected Andris to visit him in the town and to give him 10 NS or so to buy some sugar and tea. Kashe supported this

position by saying that he occasionally charged Andris's cell phone with 10 NS airtime in the town, but was not helped in any way as thanks. Kashe painted Andris in a bad light by comparing him unfavourably to his sister Kristine. He said that when she came from the farm she „always“ gave him some money, as much as 50 or 100 NS. Kashe and his father agreed that the reason behind Andris's change of behaviour might be his wife Angoste, who allegedly did not want Andris to give them money and talked badly about Kashe. I do not know what Andris thought of Kashe, but it is quite possible he speculated that since Kashe was often living with their parents and their mother's "sister" Emma he lived on their pension. Moreover, everybody suspected Kashe was being given money by me („You stay with white people“), and that he did not want to share it with others.

When talking about Andris's perceived stinginess, Kashe and his father Willem seemed to build a coalition. However, when it came to sharing and helping each other, they often quarrelled and would accuse each other of stinginess as well. In 2010 Kashe's mother Maria and her "sister" Emma stayed at farm Dismyn with Kashe's sister and Kashe had to rely most on the assistance of his father. Kashe objected to what he believed were his father's profligate spending habits. Kashe told me that his father would sometimes lie to him about not having any money. According to Kashe, he had always some money left in his shack, but concealed it. In Kashe's view, his father often used the excuse that he had bought overpriced goods at the Chinese shop or that he had been cheated by somebody or that there were technical problems that meant he could not withdraw his pension at the NamPost. However, Kashe said that his father had never shown him the bank slip. Thus, at the end of November 2010 Kashe could not believe that his father could have run out of money because he had withdrawn a 1 000 NS from his pension account at the beginning of the month (two months pension in 2010). When Kashe and Willem had their disagreements concerning the use of the pension, the latter sometimes retorted: „It's my money.“ Kashe, however, complained that whenever his father ran out of money, then he would ask him for food or he bought it on credit from the Ovambos. Kashe, who had to provide for his two sons, could sometimes barely live on the *zula* money alone. Kashe often objected to his father wasting money on what he deemed were unnecessary luxury foodstuffs instead of buying mealie meal: „He eats as a white man. But if I tell him he must buy for me mealie meal, he cannot give me any mealie meal.“

When I came to Grootfontein in April 2013 the situation did not seem to have changed. Kashe was still objecting to his father buying large Lucky Star fish tins and bread instead of mealie meal. At the time Kashe had a few chickens in Blikkiesdorp and complained that he had to *zula* for mealie meal for the birds as well. He further complained that he often spent most of the day looking for bottles, coming back late and tired, but if there was no firewood (which Willem normally bought on credit), he had to search for it in the bush and then after returning he was expected to cook for the children and his father.

Equally, I often heard Willem's complaints about the allegedly scant assistance he was provided with by Kashe. One example is from November 2010: Willem had been sick for some time and since his wife Maria was at the farm, he depended a great deal on the food he was cooked by Kashe. I talked to Willem around noon time and asked him whether he had already eaten that day. He started to complain that Kashe did not give him anything. However, when talking about it with Kashe later, the latter retorted: „I don't know. This man always says I don't give (him anything).“ Kashe seemed to be irritated because of these constant objections to him and mentioned that, for example, the day before his father had asked him to buy some tobacco and he had willingly done so. On another occasion I heard them quarrelling (in Afrikaans, since they apparently wanted me to hear their grievances and take sides) about whether Willem objected to his son not giving him any food. Kashe

disagreed with this and both of them „threatened“ to leave Blikkiesdorp. Willem talked about moving to farm Dismyn, where his wife and daughter were, since people „are alive there“, and Kashe again „threatened“ to leave for his plot in Swart Tak in Bushmanland.

Kashe claimed that in order to avoid sharing with others his father cooked on his paraffin stove inside his hut, especially if he was eating food such as expensive *boerewors*. I never witnessed this situation, but, according to Kashe, when cooking the meat, his father was tactically outside in front of the door to his shack, which he closed. By this method he prevented somebody entering his house and seeing what food he was preparing, since if somebody wanted to talk to him, the person would have to do it outside where he was sitting.

Despite these tensions, I observed more instances when Kashe and his father willingly helped each other. Thus, for instance, on 10 July 2009 Willem came from the town where he had bought among other things a five-kilogram mealie meal sack for 25 NS, meat (pork belly) for 8.27 NS and sugar and tea. He did not put the mealie meal in his shack, but took it directly into Kashe's dwelling so that it was his son who could use it. The latter was also expected to share the cooked food with his father. He also bought two five NS cell phone airtime cards, one for himself and one for Kashe. Last but not least, he had purchased two small plastic cars for Kashe's sons. There was always a fair chance that there was enough food either with Kashe, his parents and his mother's „sister“. The tensions may have, however, increased when resources became small. This could happen especially in the time prior to the elders receiving another pension. During that time Kashe had sometimes to share with his parents the little food he acquired with his *zula* money.

Concealing

The !Xun often criticised each other for being stingy. On the other hand, they tried, as we could see above, to conceal their own, mostly very limited resources, be it food or money, and to avoid assisting others, especially if there was little chance of reciprocity. This created a climate of mutual suspicion. However, although people could hide their money, hiding food they brought home in plastic bags and then cooked was more difficult. The !Xun at the plot and even the kin at neighbouring *erven* often knew how much food others had, which made it more difficult to refuse help.

This was also the case for Kashe. As elaborated above, asking his kin, occasionally his neighbours or his former employer Eben for food was an integral part of his economic/coping strategies in the township. However, during my field research trips because of my presence there was always some food at his household and a few NS in his pocket, but when I was with him he would tell people he met in the township and who asked him for some help that he did not have anything.

Kashe always tried to hide the food he was carrying home. Thus, he put it in his black cloth rucksack or cloth bag, so that the !Xun neighbours could not see it and he took the food out only inside his shack. Kashe was sometimes quite worried when I bought him mealie meal in the town and he did not have a bag in which he could hide it. There was always a chance that somebody would see Kashe buying foodstuffs and would pass the information on. I often wondered why the !Xun, so often struggling with hunger, do not buy after receiving their pension or salary a 50-kg mealie meal sack, which would be sufficient for a nuclear family with many children for more than a month. There seemed to be two main reasons for not doing so. First, the !Xun regarded buying such a quantity of mealie meal as too big an

expenditure and one which would not allow them to acquire other necessities. Second, if other !Xun, similarly struggling with their limited resources, saw that such a quantity of mealie meal had been bought, it would be extremely difficult to resist their requests to share it with them. It was also impossible to bring a 50-kg mealie meal sack to the plot without it being noticed by the others. For this reason Kashe preferred to buy 5-kg sacks of mealie meal, which he could hide in his cloth bag.

Another problem was that when Kashe was preparing food outside the hut, everybody could see what he was up to. However, even if he cooked at the fireplace in the shack that he used as a kitchen, the Xun at plot 1 and also his !Xun neighbours at plot 2 would also easily find out since they could see that Kashe was in his „kitchen“ for a long time and they could hear that he was using utensils or breaking or cutting wood and branches for firewood, and could also see the smoke coming out of his shack.

Kashe often complained that other people came to his fireplace and ate there without ever reciprocating. In 2009 he complained that some of the young men from plot 2 used to eat, drink tea or just come to warm up at his fireplace, but they brought neither water nor firewood to him even though he often asked them to. Kashe also told me several times that if they did not change their behaviour he would not allow them to eat at his anymore. He talked in a similar vein about the two relatives of his who stayed in his dwelling in 2010. Kula, the son of Max from plot 2, ate with Kashe regularly. In this instance, however, Kashe never complained as Kula was assisting Kashe in the collecting of empty bottles, fetching water, looking for firewood and helping in the kitchen.

Kashe tried to make sure there was always food for his two sons. „The food must always be at the place.“ He usually gave his two sons their food in two small plastic cans, but often griped that his sons went outside the shack with the food and shared it with their !Xun peers. Kashe was upset that some of these children were still being weaned. Thus he reiterated to his sons, albeit with limited success, that they must eat the food inside the hut.

Saving

Given the meagre income of the !Xun, the high living costs and the pressure to share, it seemed to be impossible to save any money. Below is a description

Kashe's failed strategy: depositing the *zula* money to bank account:

In 2009 Kashe told me he had been thinking for some time about opening a bank account. Already at the end of 2008 when he was with his smaller son Willem in Grootfontein's hospital, he had inquired about doing so at the Standard Bank branch in town. In fact he did not go into the bank building to ask the bank officials but inquired with its „Ovambo“ security guard. He told him about his plan to make regular deposits of small amounts of 10, 20 NS or so in the account, which he would earn from his *zula* activities. The security guard told him that for 20 NS he would get a card with which he could withdraw money at the ATM outside the bank. In 2009 Kashe told me he was thinking that when he ran out of money in Bushmanland he could come to Grootfontein to withdraw the money and overnight in front of the bank or at the nearby Caltex petrol station because both places were guarded by security guards and were, thus, relatively safe. The next day he could return to Bushmanland. In this particular instance, Kashe saw in the bank account in Grootfontein a means that would enable him to sustain his living in Bushmanland.

29.7.2009, 11:12	NS
cash deposit	+50
deposit fee	-2,30
1.7.2009	
automatic debit	-4
1.8.2009	
automatic debit	-4
29.8.2009, 12:36	
cash withdrawal	-30
Fee	-3,71
1.9.2009	
automatic debit	-4
21.9.2009	
load to wallet (savings)	+7,70
1.10.2009	
automatic debit	-5
8.12.2009	
load to wallet (savings)	+0,08
8.12.2009, 13:14	
cash deposit	+23
cash deposit fee	-2,30
1.12.2009	
automatic debit	-5,75
11.12.2009, 12:24	
cash deposit	+13
cash deposit fee	-2,30
22.12.2009, 11:07	
cash withdrawal	-20
cash withdrawal fee	-4,37
29.12.2009	
load to wallet (savings)	+0,04
29.12.2009	
PREV BAL	0,30
Int payout	+0,04
NEW BAL	0,034

Kashe materialized his wish of having his own bank account on the 27th of July 2009 shortly after my third field research trip to Grootfontein after which I gave him 300 NS. That time he was however thinking of the bank account not as a means of sustaining his life in Bushmanland, but in Blikkiesdorp. His idea was to deposit a small amount of the *zula* money during the week and withdraw around 20 NS on Saturdays, which would allow him to feed his family over the weekend because on Sundays the shops did not buy bottles and he was usually without money: „At the weekends there is hunger.“ On the mentioned day Kashe set up his bank account at the NamPost branch in Grootfontein by depositing there 50 NS. When I arrived to Namibia the next time at the end of 2010 Kashe told me that he felt he had been deceived by the bank. He had the feeling that he had been depositing more money than he was withdrawing and suspected the bank officials were stealing it. Printing out Kashe's bank statement record (see Table 32) revealed what had brought about Kashe's feelings. Kashe deposited money in his account three times: 50 NS in July 2009, 23 NS in September 2009 and 13 NS in December of that year. But he withdrew money only twice: 30 NS in August and 20 NS in December. This makes 86 NS deposited and 50 NS withdrawn in total. Kashe did not know about the deposit and withdrawal fees and that there was also an automatic monthly fee of around 5 NS, which was a substantial amount of money given Kashe's meagre savings. Of course he might have been warned by the bank officials that keeping a bank account with a negligible amount of deposited money will not pay out, but as one of them admitted, they were not advised to do so. Kashe did not know of these disadvantageous regulations and it supported his regular feeling of a conspiracy on the side of black people. He claimed to have observed that the bank official behind the counter sometimes printed out two statements, one for him and the another one, with stolen money, the clerk threw in the waste bin. Thus, less than five months after creating the account, he stopped using it: „Now I see this money doesn't go forward, (it) goes backward.“

However, despite this first failed attempt to use a bank account, Kashe still thought it might be useful and on the 8th March of 2013 he opened a new account, this time at First National Bank. His idea was to follow his brother's son Small Willem to a farm near Otjiwarongo. There he would deposit

the money to his bank account, save it and only touch it when coming back to Grootfontein. However, this plan did not materialise, since Kashe allegedly realised he would have to take his sons with him and enrol them in a school in Otjiwarongo, which would be complicated. Nevertheless, he had another plan. He was thinking of going to plot Arina near Grootfontein, where Andris, the husband of his sister Kristine, was already working. He envisaged saving the money he would earn there in his bank account: „Then I'm a man by my own“ (Dan ek is man by my eie).

Kashe told me that he knew that if he did not deposit money in the bank account, he would spend it on something. It became obvious: the bank account would help him to avoid sharing the money.

Households fluidity, spacial redistribution

Another common strategy employed by the !Xun to decrease their economic vulnerability was to spatially redistribute their kin. Thus, children were often sent to relatives at other plots and farms. Conversely, some of the children of farmworkers would be sent to relatives in the town, often to attend school. There might also be pressure to secure the presence of pensioners. There was also a considerable household fluidity within the township. Thus, in 2010 Max's son Kula from the neighbouring plot 2 became part of Kashe's household. He continued to sleep at his father's *erf*, but during the day he would often help Kashe to collect bottles and do small chores in his household. The food he or Kashe prepared was then shared. Both Dieckmann (2007) and Sylvain (1999) observed household fluidity and fluctuations among the Hai//om and Ju/'hoansi as well.

Both authors show how the Bushmen living in different socio-economic spaces such as urban areas, resettlement camps, communal lands or commercial farms form a web of social links between which the San move in various directions, thereby "maintaining extensive kin-based networks throughout which resources are shared and mutual assistance is provided" is a way "to negotiate hardships as a landless and impoverished underclass" (Sylvain 1999: 9). Since the !Xun in the Grootfontein area live in a similar socio-economic environment, it is hardly surprising that they use similar strategies.

Capitalising on the relations and contacts with the non-!Xun

Some !Xun used to get loans of 50 - 100 NS from their white employers, which were then deducted from their salary. Some white employers could give the !Xun some building materials for constructing their shacks or, albeit more rarely, even place the !Xun in a house they owned in the township. The relationship to the whites for whom or for whose relatives they were working or may have worked in the past on farms was for these !Xun more important than the relationships to Bantu- and Khoekhoegowab-speakers and the Coloureds. Some !Xun worked for the non-whites as domestic workers under less advantageous conditions. They would also ask the !Xun to do short-term yardwork, cutting the bush fence or building their dwelling.

Furthermore, some !Xun used to ask Bantu- or Khoekhoegowab-speaking neighbours for food, which they would mostly receive without any expected reciprocity. Physical proximity played a crucial role in this case. However, this did not transform into a developing of personal closeness.

Kashe occasionally asked for some food from non-!Xun at the four neighbouring plots. He mostly asked the Kavangos living behind his father's plot, who also had a small informal shop at their *erf*. Kashe told me in 2010 that he „always“ asked them for some food and they would give him, for example, some mealie meal and approximately half a kilogramme of rice. At the other three plots, whose dwellers were Hai//om (intermarried with Ovambos and Hereros) and Kavangos, he rarely received anything. The Kavangos, who Kashe asked most for help, confirmed to me that the neighbouring !Xun asked them mostly for mealie meal and sugar.

However, they described the way the !Xun asked them as sometimes being non-direct and shy. According to them, the !Xun sometimes stood on the road next to the entrance to their plot and did not ask for anything until they were asked what they wanted by the Kavangos. The Kavngos said they were asked mostly by the Bushmen from plot 2, who often lived on scavenging on the dump sites. In terms of asking for food, the relationship of Kashe towards his neighbours was one-sided. It was only the Hai//om neighbours who occasionally asked for some help. However, they asked mainly the !Xun who were employed or were receiving a pension.

Some !Xun also maintained contacts with the Bantu or Damara people living in Grootfontein for whom or for whose relatives they had worked in the communal areas of former Bushmanland and Hereroland. Kashe used to pass by the house of his former employer Eben, a Herero woman, for whom he had herded cattle in Swart Tak, who would give him some food or empty bottles in return for doing small chores. Once he recalled having repaired a car that belonged to a relative of a Herero man in Grootfontein for whom he used to work in Hereroland for 70 NS. The !Xun also often capitalised on relationships with the non-!Xun to obtain old clothes. They were also given clothes from their white employers. The extremely poor !Xun even received clothes from township dwellers out of sympathy for their plight.

Some !Xun used to send their children to the state Omulunga primary school, where they could get a free lunch as all children, irrespective of ethnic background and even if they are not attending the school, are entitled to this. Sometimes they were given some foodstuffs to bring home, as well.

Dormant !Xun entrepreneurship

In the township of Grootfontein small entrepreneurship thrived, Bantu and Damara people ran small shops and shebeens or sold foodstuffs such as meat and vegetables at Single Quarters. The prerequisite for this activity was to have some capital to buy goods, which could then be resold at a higher price. The !Xun, however, lacked this capital. Given that, I observed only a few instances of very small-scale entrepreneurial activities among the !Xun.

One such case was Frederik. His former white employer had thrown away an old welding machine, but he managed to repair it and occasionally earned some money by welding for Bantu people in the township. Frederik claimed to ask for 20 NS for 20 centimetres of welding. He had to buy welding sticks, a packet of 40 cost 88 NS, but still seemed able to turn a profit. Frederik was convinced he offered his services for much lower prices in comparison with professional companies.

Another person who strived to earn some money by small-scale entrepreneurship was Paul from plot 3. Throughout my research in Blikkiesdorp he kept some chickens and pigeons. In 2010 he told me he sold chickens for 60 NS a time and a pigeon sold for 25 NS. However, in 2011, when Paul's monthly income decreased, he stopped selling the animals and his family started eating them.

In 2011 Kashe's brother Andris also kept some chickens in a makeshift cage in the backyard of Willem's plot and claimed to have sold a chicken occasionally for 30 NS. Andris started to breed the chicken by buying two at the farm in the same year. Generally, there were not many people in the township with poultry, since it was difficult to prevent that the animals being stolen. Paul from plot 3 solved this problem very effectively: he bought a large dog, who

moved freely in his garden. The dog was so feared that Paul successfully deterred not only prospective thieves, but also visitors, including Kashe.



Picture 32. Paul at plot 3 was the only !Xun In Blikkiesdorp to breed permanently a few chicken, ducks and pigeons, which he occasionally sold.

Kashe kept a few chicken in 2013 as well. He put them in the room belonging to Emma (she was living at another plot) and he virtually transformed her dwelling into a chicken coop. However, he was so afraid that they would be stolen that he let them out only if he was at home and could see them. Therefore, he too planned to acquire dogs to protect the plot, but first he would have to build a good fence around it, so that the dogs would not attack passers-by. Kashe also used waste materials to assemble small carts, once sold one for 150 NS.

Another case of a !Xun venturing to earn some money by entrepreneurial activities was Magdalena from plot 10 who bought some food stuffs in the town and made a small profit by selling hard-boiled eggs (she bought one egg for one NS and sold it for two NS) or reselling chips in smaller portions for higher prices.

Angula from (plots 6-7) sold on sugar and firewood. In 2011 he claimed that he bought 2 kg of sugar for 30 NS in the town and resold it in small quantities in small plastic bags for 1 NS a time. Similarly he was reselling firewood he bought for 50 NS from a Coloured farmer.

Generally, the profitability of all these entrepreneurial activities was very small with no tangible impact on their financial situations.

The *zula* man Kashe also hoped one day to earn more money by doing small business in Grootfontein. He had two notions, though given his economic situation they were at the time

unrealisable ideas. First, he hoped to start, as Frederik had, a welding business. However, for this he would have to accumulate several thousands of NS to buy the cheapest welding machine, a power generator and welding sticks.

His second plan was to start a small shop in the front of his dwelling, where he would resell basic foodstuffs and things such as soap and matches in small quantities. "Maybe if I have 300 (NS), I buy sugar and sweets and tea. The problem is to have the money. I cannot buy the things for 50. 100 is the same, 150 is the same," said Kashe in 2009. However, through collecting and selling bottles he was hardly able to save even 50 NS and even the working !Xun were living on credit. Kashe talked seriously about the idea of having a small shop at the plot in Blikkiesdorp, even in 2013. He said that he must realise it since he felt too weak to look for bottles and pull the heavy cart in which he loaded them for the whole day (on Kashe's plans see below the subchapter Shack in Grootfontein, hut in Swart Tak: many plans both sides)

Relationships of !Xun women with non-!Xun men

!Xun women often preferred non-!Xun partners, mostly Bantu or Damara, who were much better-off socio-economically than !Xun men. As a result, there was a high percentage of children coming out of these, mostly short-lived, unions. I gathered information on three forms of these acquaintances: 1) „stable“ unions when the !Xun women and non-!Xun men lived in one household and raised their children together; 2) there were cases (although few) of !Xun women, apparently mostly addicted to alcohol, who left their !Xun families and went to live with a Kavango or Ovambo man in Single Quarters. When the relationship broke down they went into another relationship, lasting for few months or so. The women always stayed at the man's place. 3) secret (sexual) relationships to which !Xun women left behind in the township with children by their !Xun men working at the farms were prone. The women were usually struggling financially and some of them engaged in scavenging. In 2013, during my last research visit to Namibia, I learned from Kashe that from plot 2 there were three women who had had such affairs with black (occasionally also !Xun) men. According to Kashe, they have these affairs for money. He claimed that for this reason they do not want to follow their !Xun men to the farms. Kashe told me that it is because of these relationships that many of the children at Max's plot are „mixed“.

In the literature there often appears the suggestion that female Bushmen engage in prostitution. However, it is apparent that the relationships listed as 2 and 3 are more complex and often contain the element of the women hoping to a find/have a long-term partner.

Avoiding of partner relationships from the side of poor !Xun men

The only „hard data“ I have on this strategy is from Kashe. Since he separated from his wife and was left with their children at the end of 2007, he purposely lived alone. He knew that the only women who would be interested in a relationship with him would be extremely poor !Xun women, who would not mind living with a man who was unemployed or living on *zula*. Kashe had many opportunities to start a relationship with such women. However, he did not do so for several reasons: if she was approximately his age, she would most likely already have several children and he would be expected to provide for them when he was hardly able to provide for his own two children. These women who would be interested in Kashe were

often also addicted to alcohol and since Kashe had had a troublesome relationship with an alcoholic woman before he wanted to avoid a similar situation again. He knew also that alcohol-misusing poor women tended to have concealed affairs with other men, mostly the non-!Xun.

This would also mean the threat of being infected with HIV, which he feared.³⁹² Even though it was not generally discussed, Kashe knew of a few cases of female !Xun with HIV. Given the pattern of sexual relationships of the !Xun, where the women often become partners of the men from other ethnic groups but the men almost always have relationships only with !Xun women, the virus probably penetrates the !Xun population predominantly through its women.³⁹³

Although Kashe's case is rather extreme, we may realistically assume that before entering a new relationship the !Xun men weigh up the „costs“ which may be associated with it, since it is generally expected that it is the men who provides for the family.

Intra-!Xun theft

Many !Xun men had the experience of ending up in police custody or jail for some period because of theft or alleged theft. But in all the cases I know of this happened on farms or at plots (the killing and eating of an animal, theft of maize). Interestingly, I have never heard of an instance of a !Xun stealing from a non-!Xun in the town/township. However, I have come across intra-!Xun theft in the township. Importantly, it happened among relatives, when the !Xun of one plot stole from their !Xun neighbours while the latter were away. The items were allegedly sold to the non-!Xun in the township (for more on this issue see subchapter Stealing things: it is nowhere safe).

Subrenting a place at the plot

Some !Xun could live in the township only because they were allowed by the non-!Xun to build a shack at their plot in return for some rent. Sometimes, however, the !Xun „owners“ of the plot then allowed their relatives to do the same. The usual rent was around 50 NS a month. However, since the subrenters were often in a bad financial situation, in practice some months they paid only 20 NS or so or no money was paid at all. Thus, Willem sublet a place at his plot 1 to the family of Mathias, who moved there from plot 5. Interestingly, until 2009 Willem was also subletting a place to an impoverished Herero family. Although the Hereros also seemed merely to be eking out a living and had serious problems with alcohol, they were still better off than Kashe's family and occasionally gave the !Xun also some food.

³⁹² According to the Sero Sentinel Survey from 2004 at the Grootfontein State Hospital 31 % of pregnant women who were tested were HIV positive (Namibian Centre for Communication Programmes 2006: 5).

³⁹³ Lee and Susser (2002) argue that the fact that the Ju/'hoansi population in Namibia and Botswana has not been much affected by HIV/Aids (in 2001 the infection rate was about 3.3 % of those aged 15-59 years) could be brought about, among other factors, by the Ju/'hoan's women high social status and autonomy in their society, enabling them to refuse sex with the men and demand the man use protection. The status of the male and female Bushmen within the commercial farming area of Grootfontein, with the men as the main providers, seems to be, however, less equal. According to Kashe, the !Xun do not use condoms often. If a partner were to insist on its use, it would indicate either that he/she is ill, which could lead to the break-up of the relationship.

Urban agriculture

This was virtually non-existent. The income from the instances of breeding a few chickens or some pigeons was negligible. Some township dwellers used to plant some maize at their plots. However, from all the !Xun I saw only Max from plot 2 planting.

Gathering bushfood

Blikkiesdorp lay next to the bush, but in contrast to Bushmanland, no bushfood that could play any significant role in the !Xun's diet grew there. For instance, eating the berries that grew very near his father's plot was of negligible importance to Kashe. He did use to pick some plants from the bush when was ill. Emmanuel, Kashe's affine living near Omatako Valley Rest Camp in Bushmanland, who visited Grootfontein quite often in 2007 - 2008 to attend his hearings at the court, was always complaining at how bad life in Grootfontein was in comparison to Bushmanland. „There (in Bushmanland) you can gather the things (bushfood), here you can't.“

Fluid reality: from *zula* man to foreman

The categories for the Bushmen staying for longer periods in Grootfontein - long-term employed !Xun, !Xun preferring occasional work and *zula* !Xun - reflect to some extent the social reality at a given moment, when each person has a tendency or preference for one strategy or more. However, the reality is quite fluid and not static. There were !Xun who fitted into one of these categories, but others did so less. Those who did may have not done so in the time preceding my research and may not in the future.

At the end of 2011 I observed radical changes of economic situation and strategies among some of the !Xun I knew in Grootfontein. This applied, for example, to Mathias from plot 1, Mathilde from plots 6-7 and Kashe's brother Andris at plot 1. Mathias and Mathilde, who were viewed by the others as people of some status as they had long-term work and steady incomes, suddenly lost their positions and did not manage to find another decent job quickly. Since both of them had several dependents, they appeared to be in a difficult situation.

A significant change of economic situation concerned Kashe and his brother Andris. When I came to Grootfontein in 2011, I found out that Kashe was at a farm, was regarded as a foreman by its owner and earning 800 NS per month, the highest salary he had ever earned. Kashe was the only worker who was allowed to drive the tractor. When the other workers were jealously asking him where he had learned to drive, he said to them smilingly: „I learned it with my cart (which he used when looking for the bottles in the township). You must drive the cart once and then you'll know.“ He was also proud that the farmer used him for doing more complicated tasks such as repairing the water pump: „I'm a mechanic.“

Only half a year earlier he was a *zula* man struggling to scratch together the money each day for some mealie meal and angry at his brother, who was working at a farm where he had earned 600 NS and got rations, but (seemingly) was reluctant to help his relatives in Blikkiesdorp. But when I came to Grootfontein in 2011 Andris was living in the township and since he was recovering from tuberculosis he could not do hard work. Andris had stopped doing *zula* in the town long before. According to Kashe, this was because he felt ashamed and his wife wanted him to work for a wage. In 2011, when living in Blikkiesdorp, and at the same time not being able to work hard every day, he had to resort to *zula* again so that he

would not have to depend too much on his kin. He started to do yardwork for a Coloured man in the town three days (8:00 – 16:00) a week. The salary was, however, only 150 NS a month. Andris claimed his wife did not have any problem with his doing *zula* on his free days because they needed the money.

Around this time, Kashe, the former *zula* boy, was, to some extent, able to provide for his parents and also for Andris and his family.

Conclusions: the overlapping of ethnic group and class

The !Xun perceived the differences in each other's economic situations. However, they knew that in comparison to the non-Bushmen as a whole they constituted an impoverished group. The fact that a !Xun *zula* man raised around 200 - 300 NS per month through his activities and a yardworker approximately twice that did not translate into any significant differences in their low socio-economic status as an ethnic group in the hierarchy of Grootfontein „society“. The small differences in intra-!Xun income were, at the same time, levelled by sharing.

It is apparent that most of the !Xun economic\coping strategies are not specifically !Xun, but similar to those of other Bushmen groups in similar environments (see Dieckmann's data on employment opportunities and income, expenses, purchasing habits, relations to the non-Hai//om, credit and sharing and networking of the Hai//om in Outjo (Dieckmann 2007: 257 - 272). The most important employment for the Ju/'hoansi in Epako (Sylvain 2009: 379), Hai//om in Outjo (Dieckmann 2007: 257 - 8) and !Xun in Grootfontein was domestic work. Moreover, these strategies obviously overlap, to a degree, with the urban dwellers of the town's lowest social strata irrespective of ethnic background.³⁹⁴ Thus, they can be explained rather by the socio-economic nature of the cash-dominated Namibian town/township setting in a commercial farming area characterised by limited employment opportunities and the oversaturation of the labour market by an unqualified labour force than by any „ethnic“-specific economic strategies. Some of the strategies even reach to the farming areas (expenses, credit, sharing). Some are not limited only to Namibia, such as employing social network, mobility and household fluidity, of the Karretjie People, the itinerant sheep shearers in the commercial farming Karoo region in South Africa, whose predecessors were the !Xam and Khoekhoen (De Jongh 2012: 125; Steyn 2009).

In the town's labour market the !Xun were competing for unskilled work with the socio-economically weakest members of other ethnic groups, groups which, however, constitute socio-economically more heterogeneous groups. The competition was not merely limited to domestic work, according to my !Xun informants. When it comes to scavenging at the town's main dumpsite, the main competitors for them are poor „Ovambos“ and „Damaras“. The same applies to *zula* men looking for empty bottles and scrap metals. In the case of the !Xun, and apparently other Bushmen groups as well, doing the most unskilled work in the town or living on *zula*, thus strikingly overlaps ethnicity and class. The overlapping of class and ethnic boundaries among the Ju/'hoansi in Omaheke is also highlighted by Sylvain (1999).

³⁹⁴ Although among the Hai//om in Grootfontein I observed more significant socio-economic differentiation than among the !Xun. This might be caused by their bigger population in the immediate Grootfontein area, their longer exposure to the urban environment than that of the !Xun, and intermarriage with the socio-economically better-off Damara people, who are Khoekhoegowab-speakers as well.

It was noted that pensioners often provide for the needs of the !Xun households and they have a similarly important role in poor households irrespective of the ethnic group.³⁹⁵

For the non-!Xun, for example the Otjiherero- and Oshivambo- speakers, the importance of the urban-rural (communal farms) linkages in mutual economic support with predominantly money remittances (and in the town cheaper foodstuffs such as mealie meal and sugar) flowing from the urban to the rural area and agriculture food products (meat, dairy products) in the other direction has been emphasised (Frayne 2004, Greiner 2008, Pendleton and Frayne 1998). „The emerging picture is not one of unbalanced, one-sided dependency“ (Greiner 2009: 8) The amount remitted depends on the income of the people involved. Bantu or Damara households within which there is a minimal transfer of sources belong to the lower income strata (Ibid: 4, Greiner 2008: 231). The remittances between the Grootfontein urban and farm/communal area was reported in the 1950s by Köhler.: „the Grootfontein Hereros send sugar, flour and boermeal etc. to their relatives in the Reserves, especially to Otjituu Reserve, during the winter months when the cows are dry. The Bergdamara send parcels to relatives on farms.“ In return the workers at nearby farms used to supply their kin in the location with fruits and vegetables (Köhler 1959b: 69).

The Grootfontein !Xun kin lives in the communal area of former Bushmanland and Hereroland. However, given the economically precarious situation on both sides - the !Xun in the communal area often work for Bantu (Damara) cattle herders for a small wage of 100 - 150 NS and food, their agriculture products (mostly maize, beans and pumpkin, livestock ownership is negligible) hardly cover their needs - there cannot be any significant transfer of resources. For the !Xun, more important, therefore, are the linkages to kin among the commercial area farmworkers than to small communal farmers.

Despite the perception among the !Xun of the differences in their income, given the expenses in the cash-dominated urban environment, these were in fact so small that they did not enable them to escape extreme poverty. Working !Xun and pensioners could acquire some food reserves after receiving their money, but these would rarely last for the whole month. The need to acquire more food and the desire to acquire some decent clothes (clothes as „social skin“ plays an important role in the socially heterogeneous urban environment as it sends signals about social status), electronic devices such as radios or cell phones and other expenses such as paying school fees, buying firewood, paying church „tithes“ (the !Xun often paid 20 NS monthly) and, occasionally, funerals costs, all perpetuated their indebtedness.

Moreover, the ownership of some of the consumer items demands further expenses - airtime for cell phones, batteries for radio/tape recorders etc. The financial struggles were exacerbated also by a tendency, although small, to food consumerism, in the sense of buying non-essential but tasty foodstuffs the !Xun regularly saw black and white people buying. One cool drink for 10 NS equated to almost 3 % of the 370 NS pension in 2008. Kashe's retired father used to buy *boerewors* occasionally, which could cost 20 - 30 NS and was eaten at once, which meant spending 5 - 8 % of the pension on one food item.³⁹⁶ Thus, it was sometimes the case that Kashe's parents spent all their money before they received their next pension and it was then this *zula* man who had to share with them the little food he acquired from selling bottles.

³⁹⁵ This applies to the Karretjie people as well (de Jongh 2003: 13).

³⁹⁶ If it comes to consumerism it worth to quote here from Marshall and Ritchie (1994: 119) about the spending habits of the Ju/'hoan from the beginning of the 1980s, when a Ju/'hoan soldier in Bushmanland was receiving by the army 600 Rand monthly: „They like radios, clothes and bicycles, rock music, liquer and cosmetics. The idea that a family would buy its quota of maize-meal and vegetables is as untrue of the Ju/wasi as it would be of us.“

Swart Tak: Economic and coping strategies

In Grootfontein there were three categories of adult !Xun with a regular income or who relied on an economic activity that enabled them to live there „permanently“ or for long periods. The first group consisted of !Xun who had stable employment, mostly yardwork. The second group were !Xun who earned a living through *zula* activities combined with occasional work while the third were pensioners. Generally, people could live in town for longer periods only if they had some source of income. In comparison, Swart Tak pensioners were the only group in any number that had some permanent source of income.

Many of the adult !Xun men with a house in Swart Tak used to work at the nearby farms behind the Red Line with some of them leaving their families behind in the village. Formally, the !Xun looking for work at nearby farms did the same as the !Xun with own shacks in Grootfontein who regarded the town as a kind of a „base“ (my term) to which they could return from the farms. Some of the !Xun thus stayed for most of the year at the farm while others might go to the farms only for seasonal work. When working at the nearby farms, they could also occasionally share their food rations with their kin in the Bushmanland.

Old Petrus's plot - Kashe's neighbours

Kashe's sister's daughter is the wife of the plot's owner's son

In 2003 it was Petrus who gave Kashe a plot next to his. On this plot Kashe built his hut. There were three „households“ at Petrus's plot and they frequently shared their resources, making the borders of the households quite fluid.

In the three households at this plot in 2009 three of the five adults present were pensioners. One household comprised of Petrus, his wife and two children of his son Piet. The second household consisted of Piet and his wife Popi with their other three children (they had five in total). Kashe's older son Anton used to stay there when he was enrolled in the kindergarten in Swart Tak and Kashe was in Grootfontein. When Piet worked at a farm, he left his family behind. They depended on the money he earned and the food he bought. When this ran out, they subsisted mainly on the mealie meal they were given by their relatives. Piet's brother Áron was also a member of this household. Áron was, however, unemployed and he also depended largely on the help of his kin and would often borrow money from them. The third household comprised an older !Xun couple, both of whom were receiving pension, and their daughter.

Emil's plot

The daughter of Kashe's mother's "brother" married the owner's son

There were four „households“ at this plot. One consisted of Emil, the owner of the plot, his wife Emma and their three children. Emil could stay „permanently“ in Swart Tak because he was a pensioner. In the second household were his daughter and her husband and their three children. Her husband was an exception to the general pattern as he was employed as a driver at the Nǀa-Jaqna Conservancy. The members of the third household were Emil's sister's brother, his wife and their four children. However, the man worked at a farm leaving his family behind. Finally, the fourth household consisted of Emil's son, his wife and their five children. Emil's son worked at a farm as well.

The economic strategies and sources of food of the !Xun dwellers in this part of former Bushmanland close to the commercial farming area included herding livestock belonging to

the Bantu (Damara) people, agricultural activities, which meant mostly planting maize, doing piece-meal jobs in the fields of the black dwellers of Bushmanland, gathering bushfood and poaching. Since it was barely possible to live on only one of these activities, the !Xun had to engage in several of these activities. Depending on the season and the availability of work, each individual had a preference as to which of the activities to engage in. According to Botelle and Rohde (1995), these mixed economy strategies were typical for the whole region of Bushmanland. Since even this approach often failed to ensure food security, relying on the support of the kin was as important as it was in the urban area.

Agriculture



Picture 33. Ploughing in Swart Tak. Large plot of Kamakende.

An important economic activity that the !Xun in Swart Tak engaged in was agriculture. They could use their experience as long-time workers at commercial farms in the pursuit of this activity. There were, however, only a limited number of plants that could be grown in Swart Tak with the prospect of success: in addition to maize, these were millet, beans, groundnuts, pumpkins and watermelons. However, the quality of the harvest depended on the mercy of the generally erratic rains, which varied both in time and geographically. In Swart Tak it was also next to impossible to grow any vegetables since it was difficult to ensure that the plants were watered sufficiently. The soil was fertile, but it was sandy and loose and thus any water quickly went down from the surface. It was also difficult to move water from the communal bore hole to the plots and when it was over-used, the pump would run out of diesel and there would be no water even for the settlement inhabitants. According to Botelle and Rohde (1995: 12 - 13), except for some places at Omuramba Omatoko, the water table in western part of Bushmanland was deeper than 130 meters and the „conditions for rain-fed crop production are extremely marginal“.



Picture 34. Some of Kashe's relatives in Bushmanland had donkeys and a cart. This picture was taken near Omatako Valley Rest Camp.

The !Xun planted maize mostly on small fields on their plots and the harvest lasted in most cases for a maximum of a few months. There was, however, one !Xun, named Kamakende, who managed to plant in larger scale. In 2010 he had a harvest of 70 50-kilogram sacks of maize, part of which he sold. Kamakende, a former farm worker, claimed that the other !Xun in Swart Tak did not harvest a good crop because they were „just sitting“ and did not work on their land. Many !Xun were apparently jealous of him. Kashe claimed Kamakende was successful since he had misused other people by asking them to work on his land, but then “not giving them anything” in return. When criticising Kamakende, Kashe claimed the bad rumours about that man had spread to Grootfontein and rationalised his behaviour by his alleged non-!Xun-nes: „The man is mixed. He takes not the rules of his (!Xun) mother, but he takes the rule of his father. His father was maybe Ovambo.“

Often when I came to Grootfontein, Kashe talked about his plans to plant during the next rain season. Besides the climate, there were many other variables that determined whether Kashe would plant and whether the harvest would be good or not.

First, Kashe had to get to Swart Tak early enough that he could prepare the land for sowing. To get to Swart Tak, however, he needed to have some plan on what he could live there until the harvest. Since he could save hardly any money when selling empty bottles in Grootfontein he knew he could stay in Swart Tak only when he would have work there. Thus he accepted an offer of work from the Herero Eben, even though he would receive only a meagre salary of 100 - 150 NS per month. When working for Eben in 2009, he planned to plant and grow some plants also on his land while taking care of her animals. However, he did not have time do so since he would first have to clear the bush there and prepare it for planting. Thus, he planted maize on Eben's plot with her consent.

Preparing the land meant having to remove the bush and, if possible, ploughing it. The latter was difficult to achieve since nobody was very willing to lend him donkeys. The easiest way would have been to ask his neighbour Petrus, but according to Kashe he would always say the donkeys were „tired“. If not able to plough, then Kashe had to turn the soil around each growing plant with his panga.

Kashe's effort to plant at Eben's plot was to reveal how complicated the relationships among the people in the village were. Kashe first needed the land at the plot to be ploughed but since his !Xun relatives and friends were not willing to help him, he asked Eben to persuade them. He borrowed a plough from a !Xun pastor from Swart Tak and the donkeys from Piet, the husband of his niece, but Piet's father, Petrus, allegedly gave consent to it only after Eben gave him some sugar. Thus, in the end Kashe not only depended on the work she provided to him, but also on her land and on her negotiation skills with his relatives. However, the maize he planted did not produce a harvest since it was eaten by goats and he blamed his relatives for not helping him to look after the field. In the end he also felt a degree of bitterness towards Eben and thought that if he had not worked for her, he could have had a good harvest at his own plot: „All people ate (had harvest), except for me.“

Kashe claimed that to clear a sufficient swath of land and achieve a good harvest it was necessary to have a number of people working on it. Thus, he often planned that one or more of his relatives in Blikkiesdorp would help him, but this never materialized. According to Kashe, one of the reasons why Kamakende was successful was that he was planting on a large field, he had three donkeys, which he could use for planting, and was assisted by his kin. The fact that the work on the fields was labour intensive was also observed by Botelle and Rohde (1995: 83).

In 2009 Kashe planned to prepare the land together with Jakob, the son of Max, the „owner“ of plot 2 in Blikkiesdorp. In 2010 he mentioned that he could be helped by his namesake Kashe who lived with him in Blikkiesdorp and he talked also about his brother Andris. According to Kashe, Andris would like to have worked in Swart Tak, but his wife allegedly did not want to go to Bushmanland. Furthermore, Kashe was also contemplating asking Aron, the son of Petrus, from the neighbouring !Xun plot, for help. Aron was unemployed and Kashe thought he might work for him only for a share of his mealie meal. In 2010 Kashe told me Kamakende had also asked him to help him prepare the land for planting, but Kashe excused himself by saying he had too much work with Eben. In fact, he was convinced that Kamakende had been trying to misuse him: „Maybe he thinks I'm stupid, but it's not so. I don't want to run always behind a clever man.“

Kashe needed seeds to plant on his own land. This would also not be easy, as he had either to buy it in Grootfontein, which required money, or he would have to get the seeds from the black people in Rooidag in return for doing a piecemeal job, such as cutting the bush on their land.

When the plants started growing he needed to protect them from other people's livestock roaming freely in the area and onto his plot. The wire fences used in the communal areas protected the fields from cattle, but not from smaller goats. When Kashe was alone, it was barely possible to look after the field because whenever he left his plot, there was the threat that the animals would get there and nobody would chase them away. Another threat to a harvest was insects, which in 2005 destroyed his pumpkin plants.

For a combination of these reasons, Kashe never managed to raise a decent harvest, despite three attempts in the rainy seasons of 2004 - 2005, 2005 - 2006 and 2008 - 2009.

Generally, most of the harvest in Swart Tak was consumed by the inhabitants of the plots. Some, however, was sold and the !Xun could generate some income in this way.

Herding the livestock of Bantu (Damara) people

Virtually the only opportunity for long-term employment in Swart Tak was to take care of the livestock, mostly cows and but also a few goats, of the non-!Xun. However, in 2009 only four of the seven non-!Xun people in Swart Tak owning some livestock, donkeys excluded, employed workers. In total there were five of these workers, three !Xun, one Ovambo and one Kavango. The remuneration the !Xun received consisted of a salary of approximately 100 - 150 NS and occasionally some food rations.

The workers also had access to the animals' milk. For example, in 2010 Kashe could milk three cows and in this way he could obtain up to 10 litres of milk a day. However, he often complained that there was not much mealie meal at home and that a person did not feel well after drinking too much milk on its own. Kashe could sell some of the milk to people in Omatako Valley Rest Camp, but he almost never did so. When looking after the cows, he did not have time to go the Rest Camp and if he did, people would start talking badly about him saying that he was herding the animals only because of the milk. At the same time, he was under pressure from other !Xun to share the milk with them.

Kashe worked in Swart Tak twice for the Herero woman cattle owner Eben, who was an absentee farmer who lived in Grootfontein. The first time was in 2005/6, but he left the job with the feeling of having been deceived, since he was allegedly supposed to receive 1500 NS for building a *kraal* for her. During that time, he also harvested some beans from his plot. In 2009 he started to work for her again. He had to look after her 16 cows and four goats and the work consisted of milking them, giving them water, ensuring that the young animals could drink their mother's milk, separating the young and adult animals, ensuring that the goats were back in the *kraal* in the evening, and looking after any stray cattle. The reason he started to work for her despite the bad past experiences again was that there were no other cattle owners in Swart Tak for whom he could work.

The relationship between the !Xun and the cattle-owning non-!Xun was ambiguous. On one hand, in my presence Kashe kept on complaining that Eben was paying him poorly. On the other hand, since the opportunities to access cash in Bushmanland were so scarce, he was also afraid he may lose the job. Since there were so few work opportunities in Swart Tak, Eben could easily find someone else to herd the cattle. Kashe told me that in 2005 that he had lost his job with Eben partly because a new „Ovambo“ called Johannes³⁹⁷ had come to Swart Tak from a farm and had wanted Kashe's job so he allegedly used every opportunity to meet Eben in Grootfontein and to tell her Kashe was a bad worker. Furthermore, in 2009 Kashe told me that his „Ovambo“ neighbour, whom he called „pastor“, who had worked for Eben in the past, wanted to work for her again. According to Kashe, the „pastor“ lost the job when he found a temporary work cutting bush by the road near Otjiwarongo, but after his return he started to talk badly of Kashe to Eben, for instance by saying that Kashe was looking after only two cows, who had both had calves and were giving a lot of milk.

Kashe received remuneration of 100-150 NS per month on average, but he had to travel to Eben to Grootfontein to be given the money. In July 2007 I observed two of his attempts to obtain some money from her. On 21 July, when Kashe came to Eben's shop with clothes, he was told by her to come the next day for the money. After returning the following day, she did

³⁹⁷ According to Kashe Johannes used against the !Xun the witchcraft.

not give him any money, but he received some mealie meal and she also gave him six empty bottles to sell in town.

The fact that in 2009 none of the !Xun in Swart Tak owned any livestock except for donkeys was a result of a number of combined factors. The !Xun typically did not have the money to acquire the animals. The black people at Rooidag sold a sheep or goat for several hundred NS and a cow for even more. Another reason for the !Xun not having domestic animals was that the animals often died after eating *gifblaar* (poisonous *Dichapetalum cymosum*) and it was difficult to prevent them from eating the plants. The !Xun also blamed the lack of means to acquire necessary vaccinations for the animals. The most desirable animals were cows and Kashe had „heard“ that some !Xun in Bushmanland had been given cattle by the government in the first half of the 1990s. According to him, many of them lost the cows because the Hereros persuaded them to sell the animals to them: „The Hereros talked the people round.“ Only as a secondary reason did Kashe admit that some of the Bushmen ate the animals, and that was why, in his view, the government was hesitant to give the Bushmen cows again. As the !Xun said, some of the deaths of the animals were caused by poisonous snake bites. A further reason might be the low fertility rates of the livestock, but this was not put forward by the Bushmen.

Piecemeal work for the the Bantu, mostly Kavango people

The !Xun from Swart Tak used to go to the Bantu people in Rooidag to do piecemeal work. However, they could do this before the rainy season started in November/December, when the black people were preparing their fields by clearing them of bushes, ploughing and subsequently sowing the fields. Later on from January to March they would weed the fields and then to May help with harvesting. The !Xun worked a few hours a day and received around 5 kg of mealie meal, five NS or were given home-brewed beer. Some !Xun also earned a little money or some mealie meal for constructing huts or making grass roofs for the black people.

From July till November there was almost no possibility of being given piecemeal work by the black people and because of the weather it was also impossible to work on one's own land. Kashe called this period „hunger time“. At the beginning of this period, he would move from Bushmanland to Grootfontein.

Gathering and hunting

In 2007, the year when I visited Swart Tak with Kashe for the first time, hunting did not seem to play any role in the life of its !Xun dwellers. Gathering did, but it was only a supplementary activity, although for some !Xun an important one. It became important when there were insufficient foodstuffs at home, especially mealie meal. In 1993 Botelle and Rohde gathered quantitative data in western Bushmanland according to which the Bushmen in this area regarded the gathering of *veldkos* as the most important food source after grants of government food aid (Botelle and Rohde 1995: 111). However, while acknowledging the importance of the food in actuality, I tend to believe that this might also reflect its social importance and the Bushmen might want to highlight their bad economic situation in anticipation of further aid following the survey.

Kashe did not conceal that the !Xun in Swart Tak, most of them being former farmworkers who were used to buying food, regarded the gathering of bushfood as a last option when acquiring food. According to him, a person could not live on *veldkos* for longer periods. He regarded it as „weak“ (swak) in comparison to mealie meal. He looked for bushfood mainly in

winter time, starting in May and June. During that time people who had some harvest from their own plots could still live on it for some time, depending on how successful the harvest had been. Moreover, in the months after the harvest there was no chance to earn some money in the fields owned by black people in Roodag, since this work started with the beginning of the rainy season. When staying in Bushmanland (Kameelwoud) in the second half of the 1990s, Kashe used to depend on gathering bushfood a lot due to the lack of job opportunities.



Picture 35. Most of the the !Xun in Bushmanland did not produce any agricultural surplus they could sell. The woman in the picture lived near Omatako Valley Rest Camp and during a trip to Grooffontein sold wild berries gathered in Bushmanland.

However, he did not do so later in Swart Tak. Even though I saw Kashe's !Xun neighbours in Swart Tak gather bushfood, Kashe claimed they did not rely on it to a significant extent. They also used to collect bushfood very near to their plots. There seemed to be two reasons for this: the bushfood, especially the „bush potatoes“, were more plentiful there and the women were also afraid to venture further into the bush because of dangerous animals.

Many !Xun men in Swart Tak used to hunt in this area after settling there but during the time of my research their bows and arrows would just be lying in their huts unused as the !Xun had stopped hunting because of the establishment of N̄a-Jaqa Conservancy, a community-based wildlife initiative. Formally, it has been illegal to hunt in this part of Bushmanland since the colonial period³⁹⁸, but since it was in no way enforced the !Xun did not know about this restriction. The N̄a-Jaqa Conservancy was gazetted as early as 2003, but apparently most of the !Xun in former western Bushmanland stopped hunting only when conservation guards started to roam the area on horseback. Some !Xun were convinced hunting became illegal only in the middle of 2007 and it was easy for the guards to find anyone who had hunted an animal since the poacher's traces could be easily seen in the deep sandy ground. Botelle and

³⁹⁸ On the legal regulations of hunting see Hohmann 2004: 42 - 43.

Rohde reported in 1993 that 85 % of the !Xun households in western Bushmanland were hunting (Botelle and Rohde 1995: 113). This figure apparently applies mostly to the resettled Bushmen from northern Namibia and southern Angola. It is, however, very probable that the numbers for the local !Xun must have been similar. On the one hand, those who came there from the farms may not be so skilled in hunting. On the other hand, they could utilise the experience of their kin born in and familiar with this area. I know of several of Kashe's relatives who hunted in the past in this part of Bushmanland.



Picture 36. Setting a trap for guinea fowl in Bushmanland.

Generally, even though many !Xun stopped hunting after the conservancy horse guards started to monitor the area, I was told that not all of them had done so. When I asked one of the men who was renowned for his hunting skills about it he resolutely denied he was still hunting. However, his relatives confirmed to me that this was not true. This unwillingness to talk about hunting was also reported by Botelle and Rohde, when 28 % of their respondents in western Bushmanland refused to discuss it (Botelle and Rohde 1995: 123).



Picture 37. Traps for small antelopes in Bushmanland.

The idea of the Conservancy was to a significant extent inspired by the Nyae Nyae Conservancy in the eastern part of former Bushmanland. This area was inhabited by the well-known and well-studied Ju/'hoansi. The N̄a-Jaqna Conservancy, was established as a community project and the idea behind its foundation was to protect the animals living in the area so that it would attract tourists and thereby benefit the Bushmen. Some animals were to be released in the conservancy again (most of them were depleted during the presence of South African army), so that they would live there in bigger numbers,³⁹⁹ and a source of income was to become the trophy hunters. The !Xun in Swart Tak thought the money and meat from the hunted animals was then to be divided among the village dwellers.⁴⁰⁰ In fact one of the reasons for initiating the establishment of the conservancy was to protect land rights of the Bushmen from intruding Bantu pastoralists. Even though there was some initial endorsement of the project among the Swart Tak dwellers, since the people did not soon start to benefit in any significant way, support faded away. The Swart Tak councillor Hermann told me in 2010 that the village dwellers had received meat only twice in 2008 and once in 2009. I have, however, to add that even if some !Xun in the area of Swart Tak hunted before the establishment of the conservancy, the numbers of wild animals in this area was not high and that the people could not have lived from hunting alone.

In the first two years in Swart Tak Kashe would set traps for guinea fowls and managed to kill with a bow few antelopes. However, when we came to Swart Tak in 2007, he was already afraid of hunting, claiming that if the people from the conservancy were to catch him, he would be imprisoned. He did not hide his disappointment with the very idea of conservancy: „Now I cannot kill even a bird, conservancy brought us only problems. They promised that during the winter time they earn money, which they later divide among us, but winter is over and the money is nowhere. Conservancy said that it would give us money, but we have never seen anything. Conservancy is just lying.“

Formal employment

In 2009 there were only a few !Xun in Swart Tak earning a regular cash income generated by waged work. Except for the few !Xun cattle herders who earned in this way less money than Kashe as a bottle gatherer in the town (sic), there were only three other Bushmen living in the settlement with a permanent salaried income: the councillor Hermann, who complained that he did not get his salary regularly; a !Xun working for the N̄a-Jaqna Conservancy as a driver and a Ju/'hoan man in charge of adult literacy courses (in Ju/'hoan and not the local !Xun dialect!), who also complained about his salary being paid erratically.⁴⁰¹

Importantly, while there were almost no opportunities for women to work in the western part of Bushmanland (unlike in the town, there was virtually no domestic work), adjacent to the farm area there appeared to be only a very small number of female-headed households. Botelle and Rohde recorded the female-headed households incidence in the whole area of former Bushmanland at only 2 % (1995: 17).

³⁹⁹ The first animals were released into the conservancy from a nearby wildlife trust in 2006 (Namibian 2007a).

⁴⁰⁰ On the initial process of the establishment of N̄a-Jaqna Conservancy see Hohmann 2004: 45 - 48).

⁴⁰¹ In the Omatako settlement, who had by 2006 around 2600 inhabitants were employed by that time only about 10 people (Namibian 2006), one of them was Kashe's Hai//om affine working as a cleaner at the clinic.

Government food aid

By the time of my research, the „Golden times“ of regular government food aid, which Kashe experienced in the second half of the 1990s, were in the distant past. According to the Swart Tak dwellers, the government delivered food once every few months. When Kashe went to Swart Tak, he was sometimes upset with his kin at the neighbouring plot because they did not receive food for him while he was in Grootfontein. According to Botelle and Rohde (1995: 111, 119), in 1993 the inhabitants of western Bushmaland regarded this as their most important source of food. At that time each registered family received 25 kilograms of mealie meal per month.

Kin support and other strategies

Strategies such as sharing, asking, complaining, bad mouthing and concealing were the same as in the urban environment.

As in Grootfontein, Kashe used to ask his relatives and friends in Swart Tak for food. He directed his requests mostly to his !Xun relatives living at a neighbouring plot. He asked especially at the household of Piet, his niece's husband. Furthermore, there were two other plots where he used to ask for food. However, they also often suffered from a lack of food and he could ask them mostly only after they returned with their donkey cart from a visit to a farm, where they in turn had obtained some food from their relatives. Kashe listed among the people who were also willing to help him his /Turu (!Xun from northern Namibia) friend living in /Káandu with whom he worked in Ozongune in Hereroland. In addition, Kashe used to ask some other !Xun less frequently. This applied to the !Xun wife of his Ovambo „pastor“ neighbour with whom he had a very tense relationship, or a !Xun called Boni.

However, as the people in Bushmanland suffered from a lack of both cash and food, relations among them as regards food sharing were sometimes strained. Kashe often complained that his !Xun neighbours, put a fence around their plot in such a way that when he was going to his plot, he had to pass by their houses. Thus, they could see if Kashe was carrying food and would ask him for some. At the same time, Kashe complained that since his relatives' plot lay ahead of his he could not see what food they were bringing to their huts. Kashe told me with bitterness that they first finished their food without sharing it with him properly and then started to ask him. Kashe singled out Petrus for blame.

Employment opportunities and the food were so scarce that some of the adult !Xun were helping their kin to work in their fields and for this they could eat mealie meal at their place once or twice a day. This was the case of Áron, the brother of the husband of Kashe's niece's Popi. Kashe used to help in a similar way at the plot of the councillor and his relative Hermann.

In Grootfontein, only a single person, or an adult daughter with children, who had been left or was not sufficiently provided for by her husband, could rely on the help of kin over a long period and the same held true in Swart Tak. The man was expected to provide for his wife and children, and if without any income and sufficient support of the relatives, a family could hardly stay in Swart Tak for any length of time.

Expenses: little cash, high prices

Even though Swart Tak was in a communal area, life there was also dominated largely by a cash economy. Many !Xun gathered bushfood, they ate but preferred store-bought food and their diet was largely based on the same foodstuffs as in the township: mealie meal, sugar and drinking of highly sweet tea.

Kashe always claimed that bushfood was „weak“, that it “stayed” in the stomach only for a short time and a person would soon become hungry again. Whether in Grootfontein or Swart Tak, the staple of !Xun was mealie meal. The shops in this part of Bushmanland offered similar foodstuffs. However, the prices in Bushmanland were significantly higher (see table 33). Thus, the cost of 10 kilograms of mealie meal in 2007 in Etosha supermarket in Grootfontein was 29,6 NS, in Grashoek the same sold for 40 NS (+ 26 %) and at Omatako Valley Rest Camp and in Omatako, 45 NS (+ 34 %). Given the fact that most of the !Xun could generate in Bushmanland far less income than they could in the township, the high prices of basic foodstuffs drained away what little cash they had.

As in the township the owners of the shops tended to be black people and they charged higher prices for two reasons. First, they made up for the transport costs, as they resold goods bought mostly in Grootfontein. Second, they used the fact that many of the inhabitants of the villages in Bushmanland could not afford or did not want to travel to a town 150 kilometres distant to do their shopping. The !Xun also claimed that the meat they were buying from the black livestock owners in Bushmanland was more expensive than that sold in Grootfontein. The local black cattle owners had only small herds and could not slaughter the animals often and, thus, there were not many possibilities to buy meat and little motivation to lower prices. Only pensioners could afford to buy meat from them with any regularity. Thus, when going to Swart Tak, Kashe often tried to buy some mealie meal and a bit of meat in the town for around 5 -10 NS, since in he could hardly afford to buy any more.

The !Xun could go to buy cheaper foodstuffs to Grootfontein, but then they would have to hitchhike and pay the owner of the car. In 2007 this was somewhere between 20 - 50 NS (in 2010 not less than 50 NS), for both ways the trip it would be up to 100 NS. Some older !Xun also found the travelling too strenuous. Another way to get to Grootfontein free of charge was in a government car or to get a lift with the family of the black cattle owner for whom the person worked or used to work. This was, however, difficult.

Because of the dependency on bought food the money of the pensioners or money remitted from the farms was spent as quickly in Swart Tak as it was in Grootfontein. The number of dependants and the extent to which the bought foodstuffs were shared with other kin was also a factor. Thus, pensioners, who received their money on a certain day in Rooidag from the United African Pension Paymasters delivery company, or people with some income indulged in the same vicious circle of receiving their pension or wage, buying some basic foodstuffs and repaying credit and since they usually could not afford to buy enough food to last until they next received a payment they soon took on new credit. Their financial situation was exacerbated when they spent money on alcohol.

Two !Xun in Swart Tak, the councillor Herman and a !Xun woman Old Olka, who was in receipt of a pension and worked as a domestic for a Damara family, also tried to run a small shop in the village, but since they did not have enough money to buy and sell larger quantities of food, their business remained rudimentary. For instance, they sold one- or 0,5-kg bags of sugar, tobacco, silver tea, instant drink sachets and loose candies. There was also a shop

owned by a Kavango in Swart Tak, but since it offered too few goods, the !Xun did mostly shopping in a shop owned by Hereros in Rooidag.

Item	Quant.	Grootfon.- Etosha supermark.	Grootfon. - location, Hakahana	Grashoek	Rest camp - main shop	Rest camp - shop at the camp	Omatako - Road House	Omatako - General Dealer
maize meal	10 kg	29.6	34.1	40	45	45	45	45
white sugar	1 kg	6.45	6.4	8.5			8.6	7.8
	2.5 kg	15.7	15.6	24			20	18
brown sugar	0.5 kg	3.25			4		4	4
	1 kg	6.55			8	7.5	8	7.5
Bakpro flour	1 kg	9.2	9		12		11.5	11
brown bread		4.5	5.2				7.5	7
Cooking oil	750 ml	9.4	10.99		12		14.5	12.5
ketchup	750 ml	7.6	9.95	15				
macaroni	500 gr.		5.49	8			9	9
rice		6.95	7.9				8.5	9
Instant soup		2.45	2.85	4	4		4	3.5
Wieners sausages		8.85	9.30	17		4.5	13	
luncheon roll		10.3	10.9	15				
Corned meat		9.6	11.5	15				
Lucky star tinned fish		4.7	5.5	8		6.5		
Silver tea		4	4.6		5	4.5	5	4
bier	740 ml	8.1	8	10			10	10
cola	500 ml	4.95	5.1	7			6	
washing powder - OMQ	250 gr.	6.75	6.5				8.5	8.8
soap (Orchard)	125 gr.	2.65	3.2	5	4			
matches		0.4	0.4	0.5				
candle	1		1.2	2	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5

When I stayed at Petrus' plot at the beginning of December 2010 everyone there suffered from a lack of money and food. Petrus wanted to buy some mealie meal, but he could not do so at the shop in Rooidag, since he was yet to settle his debt there. Thus, he and his son Áron went to the more distant Omatako Valley Rest Camp. However, they did not find mealie meal there, and Petrus bought one kilogram of sugar, some tea, two soaps and a large bottle of Clubman on credit. Old Johannes from a neighbouring hut told me before Petrus returned that day that he also did not have any mealie meal and hoped that Petrus would have get some on credit in Rest Camp. Popi (the wife of Petrus's son, who was working at a farm) claimed to have no mealie meal and also that she was depending on what she would be given by Petrus

and other relatives. When I asked them about their food reserves and money available at the beginning of that month, all of them claimed to have no cash.⁴⁰²

An illustrative example of the economic struggle in Bushmanland was Kashe's father Willem and his last stay to Bushmanland at the end of 2008. At that time he was receiving his pension and was also earning (or rather was supposed to be earning) a wage from his Damara employer. When at the end of 2008 Kashe went to Swart Tak to work there for the Herero Eben as a cattle herder, his parents followed him. Willem worked there for a woman who was employed in the Grootfontein state hospital and she was from a Damara family for whom Willem had already worked in Kameelwoud in the second half of the 1990s. His task was to look after three cows, remove the bushes from the plot and repair the corrugated iron houses. However, when I talked with Willem in 2009 about the work, he complained that he had been paid almost nothing by the Damara and also went without food rations. This meant that he had to buy food in Grootfontein and Willem claimed that his wife Maria was "dying" from hunger in Swart Tak. When Willem used to go each month to withdraw his salary at the NamPost in Grootfontein, Kashe accompanied him.

In Grootfontein the two went to their respective employers since both were living in the town and visited Bushmanland only sporadically and asked them for the money they were due. But Willem claimed the Damaras paid him only twice, once he was allegedly given 200 NS from the woman and once 100 NS from her husband. This small amount of money from her plus his pension were evidently not sufficient for him to live in Swart Tak since he was also buying food on credit at a Herero-owned shop in Rooidag and even after he and his wife left Bushmanland in April 2009, in July of that year he still owed 250 NS to the shopkeepers. Willem and Maria then left Swart Tak and went to farm Dismyn, where their daughter lived. According to Kashe, they went there „because of food“. When I went with Kashe to Swart Tak later the same month his parents gave him the 250 NS and asked him to repay the debt. A further problem was that Kashe's father had sometimes to pay for the hike between Swart Tak and Bushmanland for both himself and Maria. At 50 NS per one person for one way and 100 for both ways this significantly affected his budget.

Since there were very few employment opportunities, the !Xun representatives of Swart Tak were thinking of establishing a craft shop and offering tourists other activities that would give them an understanding of the lives of the Bushmen. They took the Ju/'hoansi in Tsumkwe as a model. The more "traditional" Ju/'hoansi have for a long time been targeted by developmental projects and the perception of the !Xun in Swart Tak was that the „projects“ existed mainly due to the support of interested white people. As Swart Tak councillor Hermann put it in 2007: „We don't have any source of money. We would welcome, if a white person would come to us, for example, for two months and teach us, how to do things. In Tsumkwe East there are white men who help them. We also would need them. So that we are as they are (Ju/'hoansi – note R. N.). Then, we could build our own shop and wouldn't have to go far to the shops of the Kavangos, which are very expensive.“ Hermann's idea was that thanks to the money generated by the tourist project the !Xun in Swart Tak would be able to run a

⁴⁰² Kashe was, however, convinced that all of them lied, and they had some money yet. If there was no food at home and no prospect that they could buy it, according to Kashe they would have looked more intensively for bushfood. If Kashe was right, they might not want to reveal, also in the front of him, what they really had to minimize sharing with him. However, if Petrus had still some cash, he had to no reason to buy on credit.

community shop offering basic foodstuffs, which the !Xun could buy at the same prices as in Grootfontein.⁴⁰³

In 2009 Hermann gave me a number reasons why the !Xun in Swart Tak were not able to set up a similar project of their own. In addition to not knowing anybody who would organise it - the !Xun lacked money to buy the bricks and cement needed to build a small craft centre. Even with the money, questions remained: How would they transport the construction material to Swart Tak? Who would provide them with the materials needed for making the craft objects? Hermann also admitted that many !Xun in Swart Tak, most of them former farm workers, did not know how to make some of the traditional material culture objects and he was contemplating asking some Ju/'hoan people living in neighbouring Rooidag for initial advice. Another problem was that some !Xun were generally suspicious about such communally-run projects. Some of them already made some art objects in the past and placed them in the shop in Omatako Valley Rest Camp and they knew that they were not sold well.

Conclusions

Even though the !Xun in Grootfontein suffered from a lack of cash, the opportunities for generating some income in Bushmanland were much more limited. Employment opportunities were rare and since the !Xun breadwinners could hardly sustain their families when staying in Swart Tak, they often went to nearby farms leaving their wives and children behind. These families then often comprised households with pensioners, whose role in Bushmanland was as important as it was in the urban environment.

The economic situation in the cash-strapped Bushmanland was exacerbated by the high prices of food: basic foodstuffs in Bushmanland cost dozens of percent more than they did in Grootfontein. Those who have some income, which mostly means the pensioners, often find themselves locked into the same pension - credit vicious circle as the !Xun in Grootfontein. Their situation and the situation of their dependants might be significantly worse if they spend money on alcohol.

Many !Xun families in Grootfontein rely on the income of the breadwinner, who was often a yardworker. The !Xun who stay in Swart Tak normally have to pursue mixed economic strategies. A !Xun cattle herder could have his own field, occasionally work on the fields of the Bantu people, build a hut or its roof for them and look for bushfood. Some of them might occasionally „poach“, though this is concealed. The income generating possibilities for !Xun women are minimal, which increases their dependency on their male partners and limits the number of female-headed households.

The only economic activity which could provide the !Xun with food security for longer periods is agriculture, especially the growing of maize. However, when the harvest is eaten,

⁴⁰³ In the village of Grashoek, only about eight kilometres distant from Swart Tak and inhabited mainly by the Ju/'hoan San, attracted income from tourists a „Historical Living Museum“ project. The project treasurer in Grashoek told me in 2007 that it brought in the most successful periods in the community up to 20 thousand NS weekly! A certain part of the money was used for the needs of the community (buying of diesel for the water pump, paying of school fees, buying of medicine for ill people etc.) However, it was apparent, that a substantial part of the money the people earned they used for buying alcohol, which seemed to have devastating impact on people's relations in the village. There were in 2007 two shops in Grashoek, one owned by a „Damara“ and the other by a „Kavango“. The latter shop offered also except of food clothes, which I did not see in any other shops in the villages in the area and which was a proof that the inhabitants of Grashoek performing in the “Historical Living Museum” had a higher buying power than Bushmen in the other mentioned settlements. A tourist project, though generating much less income, was also in nearby Omatako Valley Rest Camp (see Arnold 2000).

there are still usually several months to bridge until the new harvest. During this period the !Xun have to live on the limited resources they have and demands to share are at their highest. However, because of the erratic rains and other factors (eating of the harvest by livestock, insects, birds etc.) the harvest often fails. In this case the „hunger time“ is extended. Since there is also no demand for work at the fields in the period after the harvest in April/May to the beginning of the new rain season in November/December the !Xun cannot earn any money or food through this. It was in this period that Kashe, who had to provide for his family, had to move to the township, which at least gave him the security of being able to generate a small daily income by selling bottles and scrap metal.

Few !Xun could work permanently for the Bantu/Damara cattle owners. However, since they received only 100 - 150 NS monthly from the cattle owners, it was not possible to sustain living in this way for longer periods. That is also why Kashe worked for the Herero Eben only for a few months at a time, hoping his situation would be improved by a harvest. This was, however, never good and he left the job and went to Grootfontein.

For many !Xun seeking to sustain a living in Swart Tak it was crucial to have a strong kin support network. Without one, life was very difficult. In the second half of the 1990s, when surrounded by his close kin: his parents and siblings with their families, Kashe managed to stay in Bushmanland for years. In the period since he acquired his plot in Swart Tak, his close kin was, however, mostly at the farms and in the township in Grootfontein. Even though he could rely on some support of his kin in Swart Tak as well, this was not as great and the result was he stayed there for only a few months.

Material culture perspective: Grootfontein vs. Swart Tak

It is valuable to compare the life of the !Xun in the urban environment of Grootfontein and in the Swart Tak settlement in the rural communal area of former Bushmanland through the perspective of material culture. Emphasis will be put on the life of the Bushmen in the township. However, a comparison of the environments through a detailed look at “things”, will give an insight into the complexities of life in both settings and into their differences, similarities and connections and about Kashe’s, in most instances, unrealised aspiration of improving his life. The description will be based mostly the material culture of Kashe, who had a shack in Blikkiesdorp in the Grootfontein township and a hut in Swart Tak, and his kin. In this way we will also gain an insight into the complexities of the life of a contemporary !Xun adult man whose life is strongly connected to the urban environment. The look at material culture should enable us to understand better the economic life of the !Xun in the urban environment, including the factors influencing peoples’ mobility.

Clothes: revealing low status in the town



Picture 38. When going to the church, the !Xun wear their best clothes.

In Namibian township clothes often reveal social status. As regards all the objects falling under the category material culture, the way the !Xun dressed probably played the most important role in their social interactions with the non-!Xun urban dwellers. The first perceptions of Kashe and any evaluation of his socio-economic status was decisively determined by his dress. It was his clothes, his “social skin”, that categorised him automatically in the large socio-economically worst off social stratum/class of Grootfontein dwellers. It revealed at first sight his socio-economic inferiority and was, thus, a key factor

determining the attitude of other urban dwellers towards him. Especially as those other residents often might not know there were any Bushmen living in the town at all.⁴⁰⁴

Table 34: Kashe's dress in Grootfontein in November 2010		Kashe usually wore a ragged blue overalls jacket and a ragged shirt, both found dumped in Grootfontein. His trousers looked similarly distressed. I saw Kashe in three pairs of trousers in 2008, interestingly, he did not find any of them, but was given them - one pair by the wife of the farm Brandberg's owner, another by the mother-in-law of the Lemoentjie plot owner and the third by a sympathetic Damara woman from the township. When given to Kashe, all the trousers were already old. Kashe's shoes also gave a clue to his status. In 2009 Kashe had two pairs of shoes that he wore
trousers	Was given by his relative Thomas, who was staying for longer time at his shack.	
shirt	Found in Coloured location.	
shoes	Found, but one the lice was missing.	
hat	Found by the clinic in the township.	
Kashe's dress in Grootfontein in December 2011		
trousers and socks	Got by his relative Mathias from plot 1, who had got it by a "Damara" pastor.	
shirt	Found in Grootfontein.	
shoes	Got by his Damara friend in Windhoek.	
hat	Got by the German farmer he was working for.	
arm band (inscription Manchester United)	Found in Grootfontein.	

regularly. One pair he obtained at farm Brandberg and the other he found in Grootfontein. They were in a desolate state with the sole barely holding to the shoe. Perceptions of him were also reinforced by the ragged, dirty rucksack he usually carried on his back, his cart, which he had constructed from discarded materials and used for collecting empty bottles and, after he broke off with his wife Lucia, the frequent presence of his two small sons who also wore ragged dirty clothes.

At the same time, for Kashe it was almost impossible to maintain his clothes in a good state. They were already ragged when he found them, mostly at the main dumpsite, or was given them, and they became more worn out because of their being constantly used, including when worn while preparing food at the fire, gathering firewood and bottles and doing other jobs at his shack and yard. According to Kashe, the main reason for the clothes becoming so ragged was the result of his sweating and the effects of the sweat's salt. As I also observed, Kashe used the same clothes he wore during the day when sleeping. Kashe claimed that in order to avoid rapid decay of particular clothes he frequently changed them, so that none of them was worn without interruption for long periods. Thus, the life of some of his clothes was only a

⁴⁰⁴ The way how material culture reflects power relations could not be expressed more clearly as by Lorna Marshall, who observed the encounter situations of the !Kung with convoys of trucks of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Organisation (W.N.L.O.) that was taking Ovambo workers back and forth to the mines in Transvaal: "We had the opportunity to observe the !Kung contacts with the Bantu there. When the convoys – especially those returning from the mines – arrived, all the most naked, slender, little brown !Kung would stand in groups staring with awe at the big, black Ovambo with their mine uniforms, boots, helmets, headlights, and sunglasses, and their sewing machines and whatever other worldly goods they were bringing home to their wives. This was indeed the outside world to those !Kung. They told us explicitly that they feel shy, naked and inferior in the presence of these big black men with their goods"(Marshall 1976: 7).

few months. Kashe and his other kin at plot 1 were not indifferent as regards their clothes. I saw somebody washing the clothes at their plot and hanging them on the wire fence to dry on the sun almost daily. However, the frequent hand-washing and exposure to the sun facilitated the process of the clothes falling apart as well.

Most of the clothes I saw at Kashe's house in 2007 had been found at the dump sites in the town. Kashe often collected them in the belief that he might repair and wear them, but generally he did not do so. In 2007 he also had some clothes which he was given at the farm Brandberg, the last white farm where he had worked at and he was also given some clothes by his former Herero woman employer Eben in Swart Tak. He also received a few items of clothing from his parents, his mother's "sister" Emma and brother Andris. When I came to Namibia in 2008 he told me he had also been given some clothes for him and his children by a sympathetic "Damara" woman in the township, for whom he had once sold some firewood and who had taken pity on his struggle to provide for his family in Grootfontein.

Kashe used to buy clothes when he had work, but not when living on *zula*. During the several years of my research I have never seen him buy any clothes for himself. The cheapest clothes that could be bought were from the township street vendors. However, even these were beyond Kashe's reach. The !Xun, who were employed, occasionally acquired clothes on credit from black street sellers or bought them in the relatively cheap South African chain PEP shop.

In 2010 I felt that there was such a close relationship between Kashe and me that I asked him to show me literally all the items of clothing he had in his dwelling in Blikkiesdorp and to tell me how he had acquired them (see Table 35). If we divide the clothes, including the shoes, into two categories - those which Kashe found or was given (he had bought none), we see the following: of the 55 items, Kashe found 29 (53%) and was given 26 (47%). When he talked about the clothes he had found in the town, Kashe's explanation was that: "some people are rich people, they easily throw away the clothes." He also mentioned that at the beginning of 2010 he had found a shirt by a shebeen that was a bit tarnished with blood and he thought that someone must have lost it after getting drunk and fighting with someone else the day before.

As regards the 55 items, in only six or seven instances (23 - 27%) of the 26, when he got the item, he received it from his kin. However in at least three of these cases the relatives who gave it to him had found it as well. In 15 or 16 instances (57 - 61,5%) Kashe had been given the clothes by non-!Xun people (whites, Damara, "Ovambo", Herero, Coloured) who could be divided into his friends, former or current employers and, most importantly, people who were living in the township and were sympathetic to Kashe's plight. It was conspicuous that among the latter, who seemed to have been especially moved by the fact that he had to provide for two children abandoned by their mother, were almost only women. These women also gave clothes to Kashe's children. In 2010 Kashe's son Anton had 10 pairs of trousers in Grootfontein and he had been given all of them by one Damara woman.

Table 35: Kashe's clothes in Blikkiesdorp in 2010

jacket	<p>found</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 - Soweto (one was a leather jacket and one rather a vest) 1 - township 2 - main dump site 2 - town or near the town <p>given</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1- by a sympathetic !Xun policeman (allegedly !Xun from the Tsintsabis area) living in Grootfontein 1 - by a Herero with who Kashe lived in Kameelwoud, but who had a shack also in Grootfontein
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	1 - by the then Herero employer Eben living in Grootfontein
overalls jacket	found 1 - Coloureds location 1 - Soweto 1 - Industrial area 1 - Old Blikkiesdorp
shirt	found 1 - township 1 - Coloureds location 1 - Old Blikkiesdorp 1 - town given 1 - by „!Xun-Damara“ friend Fázi living in Grootfontein 1 - by his mother’s „sister“ Emma who found it 1 - by a symphatetic Herero woman living near Hakahana shop in the township
t-shirt	given 1 - either by his mother’s „sister“ Emma who found it, or by a symphatetic Damara woman in Soweto
trousers	found 2 - township 1 - near the main dump site 1 - in the Coloureds location given 1 - by a symphatetic Damara woman living in Soweto 1 - „!Xun-Damara“ friend Fázi living in Grootfontein 1 - „brother“ of a !Xun neighbour in Grootfontein 1 - his father’s „brother“ living at a farm 1 - by the then Herero employer Eben living in Grootfontein 1 - by a Herero with who Kashe lived in Kameelwoud, but who stayed also in Grootfontein 1 - by his relative Thomas, who used to stay at his house during that time
jacket	given 1 - by mother’s „sister“ Emma living in Grootfontein 1 - by the then Herero employer Eben living in Grootfontein 1 - by his father (Kashe said he had inherited it)
shorts	found 1 - Coloured location given 1 - by a symphatetic Damara woman living near Blikkiesdorp 1 - by the wife of the farmer of Brandberg (very ragged)
hut	found 1 - township given 1 - by his son Anton who found it in Grootfontein
cap	given 1 - by a Damara policeman Sam living in Grootfontein 1 - by his son Anton who found it in Grootfontein
shoes (pairs)	found 2 - township 5 - Coloured location given 1 - by a wife of a German for who did Kashe yardwork in 2010 (football shoes) 1 - by a symphatetic Ovambo living in Malanami 1 - by a symphatetic Damara woman living near Blikiesdorp (different than the one who gave him shorts) 1 - by a symphatetic Coloured woman in the Coloured location, it was women shoes for Kashe’s partner (which he did not have at that time anymore) and he wore them as well 1 - by a Damara policeman Sam living in Grootfontein

Kashe had significantly more clothes in the town than in his hut in Bushmanland (see Table 36). At the end of 2010 the ratio was 55:21. The main reason was that it was very difficult for Kashe, as well as for other !Xun, to acquire clothes in Bushmanland. The !Xun living in this part of Bushmanland got old clothes mostly at the farms, where they used to work, or less frequent as a reward for working for the blacks in the communal areas. The !Xun in Bushmanland only occasionally bought clothes in Grootfontein, depending on whether they had any money. Thus, a significant number of the clothes Kashe had in Swart Tak he had brought there from Grootfontein: seven out of the 21 pieces he found in the town and some of the others he received in Grootfontein from relatives. However, that there were far fewer clothes in Kashe's house in Swart Tak than in Grootfontein was also a result of the fact that in the period of more than a year between October 2009 and November 2010, when Kashe was living in the town, many things were lost from his hut in Bushmanland with Kashe claiming that they were stolen. Since there were virtually no well-off people living in Swart Tak, it was not possible to find any discarded clothes there and Kashe could also hardly acquire any by evoking sympathy and charitable feelings from the non-Bushmen, as happened in the town, since the majority of Swar Tak residents were poor !Xun.



Picture 39. Repairing old clothes in Blikkiesdorp.

In 2007 I counted 37 shoes (!) at Kashe's dwelling in Blikkiesdorp, although many of them were not in a pair. Kashe told me he had collected them with the prospect that he might still find another single shoe, which would have the same shape and size and then he could start using them. However, this must have happened only very rarely. In 2010 Kashe recalled an instance when he found next to one plot in the township a nice shoe. He thought somebody must have swept it away accidentally when cleaning the yard. He hid the shoe in a nearby bush, thinking that if the people found only one shoe at home, they would throw it away.

Indeed, soon after he found the other shoe there, took the one hidden in the bush and gave them to his younger son, Willem. However, when Kashe gathered shoes and various pieces of clothes, even if damaged, at Grootfontein's dump sites, he did so also with the intention of being able to take them to Bushmanland, whether for him or someone else.

jacket	found 2 - in Grootfontein (one of them he wore also when he was at the farm Alwyn) given 2 - by his father, who got it in at least one case by the policeman P. Spietkop
overalls jacket	found 1 - in Grootfontein
shirt	given 2 - by his mother's „sister“ husband 1 - Willem 1 - could not recall by who he got it
trousers	found 1 - in Grootfontein (training suit trousers) given 1 - by his sister's husband's brother 1 - got at farm Brandberg 2 - by Willem (one of them was torn by cattle, who got inside the hut)
sweater	found 1 - in Grootfontein given 1 - by his mother's „sister“ Emma, who found it
raincoat	given 1 - by the son of one woman from Swart Tak, who (she) used to look after his horses
cap	found 2 - in Grootfontein given 1 - by his sister's husband's brother
boots	given 1 - by his mother's sister's husband, for who the boots were too small (he used to stay in Bushmanland)

Generally, the aesthetic demands in Swart Tak, where there were relatively few people, the absolute majority of whom being former poor !Xun farm workers, were not as “high” as in the town, where many better off people lived, which was also evident from the way they dressed. Thus, in Bushmanland it was much less striking to be seen wearing ragged clothes or two different shoes. “There I see many people, who walk in two different shoes,” claimed Kashe. However, Kashe seemed to feel ashamed to do so in the town. In 2010 he recalled he once wore in Grootfontein two different shoes he had found. They were precisely the same shape, but one was brown and the other black. He was forced to do so because all the other shoes he had had fallen apart. It was, however, generally only the elderly (and apparently mostly men) who did not care so much about the shoes. Thus, Kashe's father often wore two different shoes in the town and he did not even mind wearing a pair of shoes that Kashe had often seen schoolgirls wearing. “A shoe is a shoe. My foot must just stay in it!” commented Willem with self-irony and a smile. When talking about these stories, Kashe and his father often burst into laughter. Once Willem found ladies shoes at the dump site and wanted to wear them, but since they were too small he gave them to his wife Maria. If Kashe found worn and even damaged shoes, he would consider taking them home as long as they had a firm heel, since it was possible to sew them or bind them with wires. Since shoes were expensive for the !Xun, they tried to fix old pairs as long as this was possible. Kashe's brother Andris used to repair

his shoes by sewing them with large pins, which he could make himself, threads from a piece of tyre or by patching them with pieces of leather from old footwear. Andris claimed to have learned this technique at the farm. For Kashe, the best place to find shoes were the Coloured location and places where the Ovambos and Kavangos lived, that is people from generally better-off ethnic groups.



Picture 40. Left picture: Same size, but different colours? An aesthetic problem in Grootfontein but not in Bushmanland. Right picture: the patched shoes of Kashe's mother's „sister“ Emma.

It was very difficult for me to notice when or if Kashe was wearing better clothes. From my point of view and, thus, probably from the perspective of any better-off Namibian people, irrespective of their ethnic background, he looked more or less the same all the time: a very poor man. Kashe, even though he knew his clothes were worn and ragged, differentiated among them, and did consider some more beautiful and having higher value than others. In 2010 when I asked Kashe what he regarded as his most beautiful item of clothing, he pointed to three shirts, which in all instances he had found.

For me, the most beautiful item owned by Kashe was his dark jacket, which he had acquired from Eben, his Herero woman employer in Swart Tak. It was also the only item Kashe put on a hanger. He claimed to wear it only on special occasions, for example to attend the church. Although he may have looked at first to be a very poor person in rags, he thought about what he was wearing and wanted to look good. Thus, I saw at his dwelling in Grootfontein in 2007 a woman's belt with coloured bijouterie crystals, which Kashe wanted to use to adorn his cowboy-style hut, because “it's nice”.⁴⁰⁵ In 2009 I saw among his things another woman's

⁴⁰⁵ In 2010 Kashe told me he had acquired two cowboy hats in Grootfontein. He found one and the other one lay a „Mahenge“ Bushman from Omatako Valley Rest Camp in his cart when talking with him and forgot it there. Kashe claimed he would give it back to him.

belt he had found in Grootfontein, which Kashe liked because it was golden coloured and had a striking look.

Although, the aesthetic demands in Grootfontein and in Bushmanland differed, better-off non-!Xun could hardly see any significant difference in the clothes Kashe wore in the town and in Bushmanland. However, whenever Kashe went to Bushmanland and Grootfontein, he wanted to look good and the day before he washed himself and took the clothes which he found looked best, which he washed as well. Although the aesthetic demands in Bushmanland were lower, when going there he wanted to look good in the eyes of the numerous kin and his friends in the village, whom he may not have seen for long time and who were interested in how he was doing. In both 2007 and 2009, when I visited Bushmanland with Kashe, he took with him one item of clothing that was slightly more exuberant than what he usually wore. In 2007 it was a cowboy hat with a string under his chin and in 2009 it was the jacket his Herero employer Eben had given him. However, both of his sons wore in Bushmanland the same clothes they did in Grootfontein. When we were with Kashe in Swart Tak in 2009 he felt very sorry for his older son Anton who had to wear all the time, day and night, the same outfit, what were in fact striped pyjamas, which Kashe apparently did not know. Kashe claimed he had no other suitable clothes for him.

Table 37: Kashe's clothes in S. Tak in September 2007	
blue overalls	found in Grootfontein
jacket	
shirt	found in Grootfontein
summer hut	found in Grootfontein
trousers	got at farm Brandberg
shoes	got at farm Brandberg
Kashe's cloth in S. Tak in July 2009	
jacket	found in Grootfontein
blue overalls	found in Grootfontein
jacket	
shirt	found in Grootfontein
trousers	from Herero employer
shoes	found in Grootfontein
Anton's cloth in S. Tak on 29 September 2007	
pyjamas	found in Grootfontein
Willem's cloth in S. Tak on 29 September 2007	
shorts	got at farm Brandberg
shirt	found in Grootfontein

I also did not observe that Kashe would look after himself much more in Grootfontein than in Swart Tak. Kashe, like other adult !Xun men I encountered in Grootfontein, did not take care too much to improve his look with jewellery. In 2007 I saw him wear as a wristband an inconspicuous common plastic black o-ring, which was used in a car or a canister as a sealing. However, then he stopped wearing it, because his son Willem was angry when Kashe refused to give him the wristband to play with. In 2010 he wore similar o-ring on both arms, this time it was made of components he had taken out of a broken CD player.

Kashe possessed several objects in Grootfontein that we can describe as toiletries such as the combs, scissors, tooth paste, mirror shard, a razor blade, a South African Airways toiletry bag with for example a pair of tweezers, hand-glass and a comb, but I have never observed Kashe using any of these, except for the razor blade (Kashe was afraid of using dumped razors) and one comb. Except for the razor he found all of these objects. Kashe shaved only infrequently, since he was proud of his small beard and moustache, because it made him look, in his view, like an "old man", an "uncle", which is associated by the township dwellers irrespective of ethnic background with respect. I have never observed Kashe cleaning his teeth (he did not have a toothbrush) and the rest of tooth paste at his house in 2008 was found by the children, who ate it as "sweets". Kashe told me he had sometimes bought the toothpaste and used it as a

“medicine”, when his two upper incisors came a bit loose after eating tough meat. The perfume bottle which I saw at Kashe’s shack in 2008 was also thrown away by other people.



Picture 41. Inside Kashe’s shack in Blikkiesdorp. Notice the price tag for 24,99 NS for the shoes he bought for his son.

Kashe washed himself in water warmed on the fire and washed his hair with the cheap MAQ washing powder, which his family used to wash clothes almost every day.⁴⁰⁶ He claimed that an ordinary soap would suffice only to clean the body, but not the hair, which he properly cleaned only after washing it three times with the washing powder. Kashe washed his hair only once every few weeks. I saw him only once washing his hair in Blikkiesdorp and also only once in Swart Tak during all my field research trips to Namibia. As a flannel he used the net bag in which onions or oranges were sold in the shops. Kashe used to cut his own hair, when it grew too long. He cut it with scissors. In 2010 I saw at his house two electric hair cutters. According to Kashe, one of them did not work because the on-off switch was broken and he planned to replace it with the on-off switch from the second hair cutter. He said he would use it then one day if he had access to electricity.

Wherever Kashe went, be it to Grootfontein or Swart Tak he had several objects in his pockets, which he found very important. There were keys to the padlock of his shack in Grootfontein and his hut in Swart Tak; his smoking “equipment”: some tobacco in a found snuff box, newspaper pages, often found in the waste bins in the town’s commercial centre (he had to take it to Swart Tak, where were no newspapers to be found), and small matches which he bought for 50 cents or so. Furthermore, he used to have one or two 20 NS phone cards with only a little money left on them and after 2009 his cell phone. In the beginning he had his cell phone in the pocket. However, when I came back in 2009 he already exhibited it by hanging it on string around his neck and thus it became part of his “social skin”. His loss of fear of being robbed was, however, based on the apparent misinformation he was given by some of his friends in Grootfontein. They told him that if someone stole the phone, police could locate it with a “computer” arrest the thief and give it back to its owner.

⁴⁰⁶ Dieckmann (2007: 260) reported that the Hai//om in Outjo also used washing powder instead of soap.

Shack in Grootfontein, hut in Swart Tak: many plans both sides

Grootfontein was a very diverse place in terms of housing structures, in contrast to Bushmanland, where the people lived either in shacks or huts. In its originally white area there were large family houses with gardens, in the former Coloured location were smaller houses, in the Herero, Damara and Ovambo location there were also brick houses, but yet smaller, and the residents of Blikkiesdorp lived in shacks and huts. The diversity of dwelling structures reflected the diversity in social status of the people living in them.



Picture 42. Another photograph from inside of Kashe's dwelling in Blikkiesdorp.

Kashe's father Willem acquired his plot in Blikkiesdorp in March 2004. However, as we have seen, this did not mean that Kashe could automatically move there. The problem was not a lack of space, the plot was large enough to build several shelters, and his father would probably also have welcomed the presence of his son, but there was no easily available material he could use to build a house. There are two main types of "simple" dwellings in the township built by poor people of different sociolinguistic groups. Both are rectangular in shape and have a wooden frame of vertically placed poles to which are fixed with wires and strings horizontally placed sticks. In one type, the less common, the walls are covered with mud, a technique "traditionally" associated with Bantu people, while the others are constructed with metal sheets made mostly from flattened discarded drums. The roof, and sometimes also the walls, were put together from plastic sheets and corrugated iron sheets.

In comparison to Grootfontein, where we came across many types of dwellings, there were effectively only two in Swart Tak, although they could be variously combined. They were similar to the two types of poorer peoples' dwellings in Blikkiesdorp. But the hut, whose walls were from poles, sticks and mud, had a roof mostly made from grass instead of plastic

or corrugated iron sheets. The other type of shack had walls made mostly of corrugated iron sheets acquired at the farms.

When I first saw Kashe's shack in Grootfontein and his hut in Swart Tak, which he constructed at his plot there in 2004, I had the impression that building the latter was easier, but Kashe told me in 2010 that the converse was true. According to Kashe, gathering all the necessary building materials in Grootfontein for one room could take only about a "week".



Picture 43. !Xun cooking in Kashe's kitchen in Blikkiesdorp.

Acquiring poles and sticks was easy in both Grootfontein and Bushmanland. In Swart Tak it could be cut anywhere, even at Kashe's plot itself. In Grootfontein it could be cut in the bush behind the township and it was often possible to get these poles in the township itself, since the trees were very often cut, when clearing the area from bushes to make space for the new houses construction. Then, according to Kashe, a person had just to collect the cut tree trunks and clear them of the small branches.

For many poor !Xun the most important source of discarded drums or rusty metal plates and plastic sheets was the main Grootfontein dumpsite near the township, but the dumped materials could occasionally be found on the streets of the township. However, the latter were sought-after objects in the township, and it might take some time for an individual to acquire enough drums or sheets to cover the walls of even a small shack. For this reason, when

moving into his father's plot in 2005, Kashe could first make only a provisional shelter from plastic sheets.



Picture 44. Kashe's kitchen after the rain.

In 2008 I counted that the dwelling room of Kashe and his family, his kitchen, the small passageway leading to the kitchen, the room of his mother's "sister" Emma and of Kashe's parents, were constructed with 228 pieces of tin plate in total. Interestingly, in most instances Kashe seemed to be able to say who had found a particular piece of metal plate. If it was him, he also knew where he had found it. In addition to flattened barrels and their lids, Kashe used parts of a thrown away fridge and flattened pieces of rusty car bodywork which he had acquired at a car repair company. He also covered some places with maize meal sacks. The

construction of Kashe's dwelling did not, however, provide sufficient protection during the rainy season. Thus, the black plastic sheet used as a roof partly fell away during the rainy season in 2007 - 2008 and, due to the immediate unavailability of suitable materials, he had to use small wooden desks, pieces of linoleum, and cartons and a broken broom handle to fix the shaky roof construction. Kashe underlay these with empty medicine bottles, which he often kept after he or his children had finished the medicine received at the clinic or hospital.

Kashe's and many other !Xun's favourite building material, one which they longed for, was corrugated metal sheets. This material, so typical of Katutura in Windhoek, the most famous of Namibia's townships, was unaffordable for most !Xun in the township. In the Pupkewitz shop in Grootfontein the cheapest corrugated iron sheet, 0,8m x 3 m in size, cost 50 NS at the end of 2012. Thus, even for a small house the sheet would cost several hundred NS. Some of the !Xun could afford to buy at least a few sheets for the roof.

At the town's main dumpsite it was also very easy to find the wires with which Kashe could bind together the wooden construction. It was also possible to find there wire used to bind grass for the cattle at the farms. In the township wire could also be acquired by burning tyres that contained it.

On the other hand, it was next to impossible to find metal sheets in Swart Tak, and those who lived in houses from corrugated metal plates got them at the nearby commercial farms. The !Xun, who did not have metal sheets, covered the wooden construction with mud, the only material readily available there. For Kashe, however, this created a difficulty since the most suitable soil was at some distance from his plot and he had to ask his relatives or friends who owned a donkey and cart to bring it to his plot. I witnessed this problem in 2009 when I travelled with Kashe from Grootfontein to Swart Tak and he found part of the wall of his hut damaged to such an extent by the weather that there was a hole in it and some !Xun from the village, according to Kashe, his relatives from the neighbouring plot, had broken in through the hole into his otherwise locked house and taken some tools and utensils. He wanted to repair the wall, but complained that he could not because the owner of the neighbouring plot did not want to lend him his donkey cart to transport the soil. Finally, he fixed it using the soil that had fallen on the ground. In 2010, however, the wall of the hut was in such a bad state due to exposure to rain that in most places only the wooden frame remained. In 2004, when Kashe built the hut, he had carried the soil in sacks, which on the heavy sandy ground was very strenuous. Initially he was helped by Lucia, but since it was strenuous she later gave up. According to Kashe, two men were able to bring enough soil to build a hut in "two" days, but, naturally a single man needed more time.

Acquiring wires in Bushmanland to hold together the hut's wooden frame was also not possible, the only way about it was to get them from the farm. Transporting the wire from Grootfontein would require the assistance of a "friend" with a car. Another difficulty in Swart Tak was acquiring enough grass to cover the roof. The grass was to be found further from the settlement than in the past, since the grass in the vicinity had been eaten by the livestock owned by black people and in some years it was destroyed by bush fires allegedly started by the /Turus. It took several days to gather the grass for one roof. Kashe, like other !Xun, preferred a roof made from metal sheets to grass, since the former were more durable and would not be destroyed by fire. Kashe was worried it could be set on fire by his sons playing with matches. Conspicuously, Kashe's hut in Swart Tak differed from all the others I saw in the village in one way: between 2007 and 2009 its grass roof and partly also the wall were covered by a big black plastic sheet, which he had found in Grootfontein and whose aim was to protect it from rain.

	material and the purpose/use of the object	how was it acquired
Kitchen		
walls	The basic construction consists of posts with a diameter of 5-10 cm to which are horizontally attached with wire sticks. To the wooden construction are bound with wires cut off and hammered out pieces of barrels and their lids and sides of a thrown away fridge and flattened pieces of car bodywork.	poles , metal material – found ; car bodywork – got at a car repair company
roof	Black plastic sheet covering it only partly; in 2010 the roof was fixed with a net used for binding goods transported by trucks or personal belongings pulled in trailers by the minibuses.	found
door	The frame is from poles, between them is a tin sheet and plywood, above the low frame is a plexiglas serving as “window”.	found

Bedroom (room 1)		
walls	pieces of flattened barrels, flattened pieces of car bodywork, black plastic, maize meal sacks, all together bound with strings and wires	found
roof	plastic netting, lorry canvas, translucent plastic above the table, so that the daylight can lighten it; heavy-laden with stones	found
padlock with key	attached to a chain locked the door to room 1	by !Xun friend from Swart Tak

Fireplace			
flat foundation	1k	lid from a barrel, ⁴⁰⁷ but could be any metal plate on which is placed tripod, pot or can	found
three-legged stand for a pot	1k	Kashe made from wire	made
stones	4k	served as a stand for a pot before Kashe made it from wires	found
bucket	1k	from metal, strongly damaged	found
brushwood		a bundle	collected by Lucia in the bush
<u>lid from a small plastic box</u>	several (k, r1)	for blowing up the fire, serves also as a shovel for waste	found
metal shovel	1 k	for ashes and waste	found
Stick	1 k	for manipulation with the fire and hot utensils	found
empty match box	2 k, 1 r1	for making fire. Kashe: „I can only ask somebody for a matchstick and make a fire.“	found
kindling	1 ⁴⁰⁸ k	used up exercise book	found by children

The plots, both in Grootfontein and in Swart Tak, were also fenced off. Since the plots in Grootfontein were small in comparison to those in Bushmanland, this process did not require so much wire and, importantly, it could be found at the dumpsite. As regards Bushmanland the wires could be acquired only at the farms. Thus, after getting his plot in Bushmanland, Kashe had cut thorny bushes on its borders with the bush for two years. Only in 2006 was he able to get his hands on some discarded wires at farm Alvyn. He drove the wire in a donkey cart lent to him by Piet, his niece's husband from Swart Tak. After starting working at Alvyn the same year, he managed to acquire more wire and this he moved to his plot in Swart Tak

⁴⁰⁷ The multi-purpose use of materials (drum lid used as fire foundation or as a cover for the walls) was typical for the !Xun in the Grootfontein area. It is probably general feature of the “Bushman” (on the Nharo see Guenther 1986: 111 - 112).

⁴⁰⁸ „k“ stands for kitchen, „r1“ for room 1 (bedroom/living room)

with his brother Andris' donkey cart to which he inspanned his brother's donkey and his own horse.

In Grootfontein and Swart Tak alike the !Xun padlocked their shacks and huts. Kashe acquired padlocks in three ways: he bought them, was given them by someone or found them. However, since it was difficult to find a functioning padlock with key, he would collect the dumped padlocks and keys independently and tried them to see if they would work together. According to Kashe, he sometimes indeed succeeded.

The spatial organisation of the plots in the two places Kashe lived also differed. The !Xun shacks in Blikkiesdorp are often glued one next to another and if standing alone, each offers up to three walls (except the one with the door) on which to build a new house. The huts in Bushmanland are built in clusters of mostly individually standing structures, their number at one plot depending on the number of people living there. Thus, for example in the case of Kashe's plot there was just one hut, but at the neighbouring !Xun plot there were several.

The position of the shacks and huts may mirror to some extent the social relations of their occupants. At Grootfontein there were several fireplaces at plot 1 in 2010. Kashe used a fireplace inside his kitchen and did not use a fireplace outside. His father cooked mostly inside his hut, but he also built an extra kitchen room. Lukas, the brother of Kashe's brother's wife had two fireplaces, one in front of his shack and another protected by a windshield. Veronika and Mathias had their fireplace in the front of their shack and protected by a windshield as well. In 2005, when Kashe started to live at this plot, its dwellers used to cook there at two fireplaces in the yard in front of the doors to the houses. However, this arrangement was not to last. Thus, initially Kashe used to cook outside his shelter, but later he moved to the kitchen in the backyard. Why? Willem told me his son had followed his advice to move the fireplace inside since "always" whenever the !Xun from neighbouring plot 2 saw him cooking, they came to him and asked for his food. Kashe's explanation was, however, different. According to him, his father did not like to see him to prepare the food he bought after receiving his pension, food such as *boerewors*, and, thus, badgered Kashe to move his fireplace to the other side. Of course, I cannot judge which version reflected the truth, but it is probable that, to some extent, both do. It is also worth highlighting that the kitchen built by Kashe's father had its door onto the backyard and people moving in front of the shacks could not properly see what he was cooking there. Since Mathias' and Veronika's fireplace was protected by a windshield, this also concealed what they were cooking to some extent. Thus, there was an apparent tendency for the dwellers at this plot to place their fireplaces in a way which might, to some extent, curtail sharing.

Kashe told me in 2010 that at Swart Tak his niece Popi had often told him to move his hut to their neighbouring plot, so that he could live alongside them. However, Kashe wanted to stay separate from them at his own plot because if he had lived with them he could have not escaped their allegedly constant demands for food. This was for me an interesting explanation since Kashe had during his stay in Swart Tak mostly a minimal income and at the neighbouring plot were four old people receiving a pension each month and his niece's husband Piet used mostly to work at the farm. I assume Kashe must have asked them for food often as well. Thus, if there was a tension with his neighbours in Swart Tak regarding food, it was probably mutual.



Picture 45. Kashe's hut in Swar Tak in 2010 after its walls were washed away by rain while he was in Blikkiesdorp.

Since Kashe's dwelling in Grootfontein looked at first sight so unsightly and provisional, it could easily be overlooked (as it was in the beginning by me) that Kashe tried to maintain his shack and that he was thinking of how to make life in it more agreeable. Thus, in the kitchen he constructed a kind of inner tin gutter which led away the water flowing on the kitchen's roof from the room next to it. The water was then collected in a bucket placed under the gutter and Kashe used this for washing the dishes. It was also because of the water that Kashe told me in 2008 about his plans to re-construct the roofs so that they would slope and the rain water would not stay in the plastic sheet and would flow away from the house. When using available building materials, Kashe took into account current weather conditions. Without more in-depth discussions with Kashe about the way he built his dwellings, it would also easily have evaded my attention that he made provisions for aesthetic criteria. Thus, for example, in early winter 2008 he also planned to make the roof of the kitchen from two plastic sheets, he wanted to put the worse one above, so that it could be exposed to the sun and the nice one, which would be visible from the room, below. In 2007 there was also a small piece of plexiglas above the door to the kitchen, so that one could look from the adjacent room into the kitchen as through a window. Kashe thought of aesthetic criteria also in terms of the construction of the walls - he put a large plate from a car bodywork (with the small opening door covering the hole for tanking), which he regarded as pleasing, at the front of the house, so that it could be seen by passers-by from the road.

After my first field research trip to Namibia in 2007, due to my then a priori notions of the "bad" aspects of life in the town, I tended to believe that Kashe would soon leave, in my view, rather dire conditions in Blikkiesdorp and settle at his plot in Bushmanland, where he could, as I thought at that time, live a more "dignified" life. However, talking with Kashe in 2008 about his plans for his two rooms in Grootfontein revealed to me convincingly for the first

time that in spite of all Kashe's criticism of life in Grootfontein, he considered it as a place where he definitely might live for longer periods of time.



Picture 46. Few things were left inside Kashe's hut in 2010.

This became apparent when Kashe told me that year he planned to rebuild the kitchen and the "bedroom": "Now I want to change this house." Kashe said he would enlarge the kitchen and change it into a "bedroom" and considered building a new "bedroom" next to the kitchen. He wished to change the "bedroom" into a small shop, where he would sell some basic foodstuffs and things such as soap and matches. He said he would start by selling a few items he would place in the shop: "Children will then see there is a bit of soap, people come and buy." After earning some money, Kashe wanted to pay a taxi to drive him from the business centre supermarkets with more foodstuffs, which he would resell and he would continuously enlarge his business: "Then, I won't feel a lot of hunger. Then I'll have maybe almost much money."

In 2009, when I touched upon his plans again, Kashe said he would still like to enlarge the kitchen, so that there was more space and he could move there more easily. When I came there at the end of 2010, the kitchen had been already extended. Kashe told me that during the warm months he started to sleep there as well, because it was colder there than in the "bedroom" and there were also fewer mosquitoes. In 2010 Kashe thought of turning the "bedroom" into a kitchen. He was also considering building another room for his relative and namesake Kashe, who was living with him in Blikkiesdorp while recovering from tuberculosis. And he thought of dividing the kitchen into two rooms, the first of which would be a new "bedroom" and the other would remain the kitchen. His plans to start a small business in Grootfontein did not materialise. By then he planned to attach a new room for the shop to the front wall of his "bedroom". In fact, Kashe came „closer“ to realising this plan only by finding two dumped bicycle baskets, which he claimed he would one day use for holding the foodstuffs to be sold. Notwithstanding Kashe's inability to realise his plans and

his usual complaints about the hardships of living in Blikkiesdorp, it was obvious that he associated his future strongly with Grootfontein.

	material and the purpose/use of the object	How was it acquired
Hut		
roof	wooden construction covered with straw; Kashe covered the roof and to significant extent also the walls with large black plastic sheet	poles, sticks, grass - local materials from the bush; plastic sheet - found in Grootfontein
walls	wooden construction built in the same way as in the township but was filled with soil	found locally
push bolt	attached to the door	found in Grootfontein (version 1), another day he said the owner was his father and he had just used it „because I needed it.“(version 2)
padlock		his brother Andris got it from their mother's „sister's“ husband Anton and „took“ Kashe's „nice“ padlock and let him the Anton's one

three-legged stand for pots	Kashe claimed to have had three of them in the past, but his !Xun neighbours took two of them from him	found
wind shield	<u>grate-formed metal car component</u>	found

Even though in 2007 I thought Kashe was going to move permanently to Swart Tak, which he, in my view, seemed to like more, in 2010 it was very clear that he was spending more of his time in Grootfontein. This did not mean, however, that he had given up thinking about life in Swart Tak. He was very upset that his hut in Bushmanland was becoming more degraded each year and was planning to repair it, but there were always some reasons that prevented him from doing so: not enough money to pay for the hike from Grootfontein to Bushmanland, no means for acquiring enough food to live for longer periods in Swart Tak, lacking the necessary means such, as a donkey cart, with which he could transport soil to his plot for the walls and having nobody who would help him to work on his field. Almost every year Kashe planned to grow maize at his plot in Swart Tak, but never accomplished it. He planned or rather dreamed of building there a new *kraal* for the goats he would one day acquire and in 2007 he also talked about setting up a small shop at his plot. In 2009 I saw Kashe with a conspicuous object I had not seen there on my visit two years earlier. It was a kind of plastic box with a picture of an African woman. I did not identify precisely the original purpose of the box, but I imagine it could have been an advertisement stand for mascaras exhibited originally in a shop which Kashe had found. He said he planned to use it as a cash desk in his prospective shop in Swart Tak. According to him, the holes in the stand would serve for inserting the coins with which his customers would pay.

Kashe also longed to buy a power generator in Grootfontein, which he could also move to Swart Tak, so that he would have a source of electricity there. This would enable him to power a fridge, which he would buy, and he could store there cool soft drinks he would then sell at his prospective shop. Having a source of electrical power Kashe could also use a light at night. In 2007 he had a broken car light in his hut in Swart Tak, which he intended to repair and one day use as a light in his house.

green carpet	r1	covers the floor	found
chair	3 k 2 r1 1 o ⁴⁰⁹	K: one had a metal frame to whose seat was wired a piece of carpet; another one was a small plastic chair and the third one was a crate for coke bottles used as chair. R 1: both plastic, one’s legs were fixed with wire; by the second one Kashe found a seat and legs belonging originally to different chairs and wired them together. O: plastic chair with one leg bound to the frame by wire.	found
table	1 k 1 r1	K: from metal construction from of an ironing board to which were attached small slabs and a plywood desk on which was laid a piece of plastic tablecloth. R 1: metal frame with above attached plywood and two plastic tablecloths. In 2008 Kashe put on them also a piece of curtain. In 2008 he found another ironing board frame he wanted to use for a table.	found
shelf	1 k 1 r1	K: a flat piece of a fridge wired to the wall. R 1: bicycle transport basket also wired to the wall (another one he found in 2009)	found
“washbasin”	1 k	Kashe had only a pipe leading from tank pit of a car to the tank . “When I get the washbasin I will bind it to the wall (in the kitchen), I attach a pipe to it and will lead the waste water away.”	found
blankets (2008)	5	I inquired about the blankets properly only in 2008. Out of the five blankets Kashe found two of them. He got one by a son of a Herero man called Sóngoro who used to live in Kameelwoud and who slept once in his house and let the blanket there. One blanket and a pillow got Kashe from a Damara woman from the township who felt sympathy to Kashe because of his plight of a father of two left by the mother.	found (2), got (1), ?(1)
“blanket”	6	Kashe had also some pieces of felt, which he intended to use for making another blanket; in 2008 he made a bed out of plywood desk put on empty paint tin cans .	found

The furniture Kashe had in his dwelling in Grootfontein and Swart Tak also gives us an insight into his endeavour to make life in each of the places decent and into the opportunities he had to do so.

The furnishings in Kashe’s kitchen and “living room/bedroom” in Grootfontein were very simple. Inside the kitchen was a fireplace consisting of a flat foundation in the form of a barrel lid and a three-legged stand for pots. The fireplaces of all !Xun in my sample looked virtually the same, both in Grootfontein and Swart Tak. However, in 2009 Kashe planned to upgrade his cooking place. In 2009 there was a new object in his kitchen: a fire grate. Kashe said it would enable him to utilise several pots at once and even though he did not manage to do it he planned to make a small foundation from concrete around the grate, so that it would look like a cooking-range.

Despite not having the financial means to buy furniture in Grootfontein, Kashe acquired some by finding, repairing or constructing certain items. For instance, he found an old green carpet, which he laid in his “bedroom”. Sometimes he found a plastic chair with a broken leg which wired to the body. For daily use he improved the stability of such chairs by putting them against the wall. He made a table from a metal ironing board frame and a shelf from a piece of dumped fridge or bicycle basket. Kashe later wired a wooden desk to the middle of the legs of the table, so that he acquired another shelf. He also attached a piece of plastic tablecloth to the wall behind the table, obviously for aesthetic reasons. In 2008 I saw also two new conspicuous objects in Kashe’s “bedroom”. One was a mosquito net, the only thing I placed in the category of furniture that Kashe did not find, but acquired from somebody. In

⁴⁰⁹ „o“ stands for outside

this case he was given it at a clinic, when he went there with his children. The other object was a new makeshift bed consisting of a found plywood desk, which he put on empty paint cans he had also found. Kashe made the new bed because during the rainy season water had seeped into the hut and made the blankets, which had been lying on the ground, wet: “Now the water can flow here, but it doesn’t matter.” He also wanted to have a real washbasin in his shack. But the only suitable component which he had acquired for realising his plans was a metal pipe from the tank pit of a car, which Kashe had found and wanted to use as a sewage water pipe.



Picture 47. Living in Blikkiedorp: Kashe’s shack is on the left and its entrance is on the side of the structure. The door in the picture leads to his parents’ room. Notice the yellow part of bodywork with the coverage for a tank pit. Kashe intentionally put it at the front of the dwelling so that it could be seen by passers-by.

In Swart Tak there was almost no furniture in Kashe’s hut, only one small table made from sticks fixed with wire and two plastic chairs and he slept only on blankets on the ground. The main reason seemed to be that it was almost impossible to find objects in Swart Tak that could be used for making furniture, it was difficult to transport any furniture or useful materials to Bushmanland and his hut was also too small to put much furniture inside. The two chairs had their own history of mobility. According to Kashe, he found one of the chairs himself and the other one was found by Willem during their stay at the “traditional village” in Grootfontein in 2003. Then after three months of working in Hereroland that year, Kashe literally „found“ the chairs in /Káandu settlement in Bushmanland. Kashe assumed it was Paul Spietkop, his father’s former employer, who may have gone that way to visit his relative in Omatako and taken his parents and the furniture with him. The same year Kashe transported the chairs by donkey cart from /Káandu to Grashoek and he had taken them with him on moving to Swart Tak. This illustrates that a damaged thrown away plastic chair was of a certain value for the !Xun and was worth transporting from one place to another. The transport of larger objects

from the town to Bushmanland was, however, possible only with a car, which the !Xun did not own.

Generally, the !Xun in Grootfontein had more furniture in their shacks than in Bushmanland and the reason lay above all in its easier accessibility there: thrown-away furniture could be found and repaired, and the materials found to construct it. Furthermore, the !Xun working as yardworkers in the town were often given some by their employers and because of the small distances could easily transport it to their shacks. For Bushmanland, the only source of furniture, and the materials and planks, which could be used for building it, was the farms. But unless helped by the farmer, it was difficult to get the materials to the rural settlements. However, there might also be a bigger social pressure on the !Xun living in the town to have attractive interiors of the dwellings than there is in the communal area.

The !Xun used to put their belongings into plastic bags and transport bags which they then hung on wires on the walls and ceiling. We might find a certain continuity of this practise from the time when they lived in simple huts made of bent branches and grass and also when they were living at the farms. However, this does not mean that the !Xun in Grootfontein and Swart Tak entirely lacked the desire to live “in a modern way”. There was a combination of several factors at play: they used to live without furniture “traditionally”; they could not settle at the farms and started to live for longer periods in the urban areas only after acquiring plots in Blikkiesdorp; because of the mobility and poor wages they could not acquire many belongings; and when eking out living, their priorities for using their limited financial means were the acquisition of food and clothes; and a certain role might also be played by spatial limitations in the shacks.

Tools: thinking of Bushmanland, taming horses, welding gates

As a wage labourer working in the yards of the blacks, whites or Coloureds or for the *zula* life in the township the !Xun needed only a limited number of tools: a broom for sweeping the yard (which Kashe's father did on Sundays), a spade or jimmy bar for making holes in the hard ground in which to insert poles for a house or fence, an axe for cutting the poles and firewood, wires and string as binding materials, and pliers for bending the wires. A hammer would also be useful, but any heavy object could be used instead. Making a broom was easy for the !Xun. If they could not find a discarded one, they would sweep the ground by binding together several small branches or using only a single larger branch. It also did not seem difficult to find wires or string in the town or at the dumpsite. That was, however, not the case when acquiring the other tools. During my first field research trip in 2007 I could see that Kashe had made by himself a hand saw from a dumped saw blade and a suitable metal bar he had found and his father possessed a jimmy bar, but in 2007 nobody at plot 1 owned an axe, pliers or a spade.



Picture 48. The wheel of Kashe's cart.

If they needed these tools, they had to ask their relatives at other plots to lend them to them. For example, in 2009, when Kashe's father was building a new room at his plot, he did not have his own jimmy bar because he had lent it to his "Damara-!Xun" friends in the township and so he borrowed one from his !Xun relative Mathias from plot 5. The real tool's owner was, however, Mathias' wife's sister.

Even though it did not seem to be easy to find any tools in the town, during the period of about 16 months between my third field research in Grootfontein in 2009 and the fourth in 2010 Kashe had found several items. He showed me with some joy that he had found an axe, hammer and pliers at the main dumpsite. Kashe had a different explanation for each find. Since the axe was small, Kashe thought someone must have thrown it away, because they wanted a bigger one. The hammer was damaged and the pliers had been, in his opinion, accidentally swept out with the dirt into the yard by a domestic worker. Furthermore, he had found during the said period a small screw, pipe wrench, long pliers, chisel, tightening strap (which he planned to use to bind firewood and scrap metal to his cart), a blade for a saw, the handle of a file (after finding the metal part of the file he would attach it to the handle); by then he had already constructed a hand saw for metals by attaching a found metal blade to a metal frame with a screw from a damaged meat saw, which he had also found in Grootfontein. He also had a scraper, spanner, garden pliers, adhesive for wood, emery paper

construction where he put up heavy items such as scrap metals that he was transporting. If there were only bottles, he attached a green plastic crate to the tin construction and placed them in the crate. The cart was steered with a long metal hollow handle from a vacuum cleaner. Although it was for me at first sight almost unrecognisable, Kashe strived to make the cart look nice by attaching to it components, which would make it look like a vehicle. Thus, above the wheels he attached two mudguards he made from a piece of tin sheet. Kashe fixed a thrown-away bicycle stand to the rear of the cart. He painted the rear of the upper tin construction green and brown and the wheels white. He was also constantly attaching additional found bicycle reflectors to the cart. In 2009 I counted ten of them on the cart. When I came to Grootfontein in 2010, Kashe showed me several new reflectors he wanted to attach to the cart, two of which were from a car warning triangle that had been dumped. Kashe also put two of the reflectors on the ragged bag he used to carry when going with the cart through the township in case he found so many bottles that he could not load all of them on the cart. The reasoning behind this was security: when coming back late, he was afraid of being hit by a car.

Table 41: Kashe's tools in Grootfontein

2007

saw for metals	1k	Kashe attached the blade with a nail to a <u>rectangular metal frame</u> ; Kashe had also another blade, which he intended to take to Swart Tak, once he would have attached it to a suitable handle.	found and made
broom	1r1	Kashe found the lower part and bound it with a rubber to a stick.	found
binding material		a piece of bicycle tube; Kashe: "I can bind things with it, like metal leg to plastic chair seat."	
curb for a donkey	2r1	black and red <u>strap from a a cloth bag (1), strong rope (2)</u> ; Kashe: "When I have money, I'll have a donkey in Swart Tak ; in 2009 Kashe took them to Swart Tak ."	found
hook for dragging down dry branches for firewood	1	Kashe found a <u>hook-shaped umbrella handle</u> and planned to attach it to a stick	found
wires	k,r1	for binding things together	found
strings	r1	for binding things together	found
used emery paper	r1	for polishing objects	found
adhesive for wood	r1		found
water tube	3	a long one: Kashe planned to use it once the water pipelines would be nearer to the plot; a short one: he had also a <u>piece of tube</u> , which he wanted to put around the metal bucket handle, so that carrying it does not hurt; another short one: he used it when filling canisters with water at the public water tap	found
sling	r1	Kashe made it at Brandberg farm, "but there were the birds were too few." He did not use it in Grootfontein either.	made
candle	1 r1	Kashe put the candle in a small glass bowl which he found and used as a <u>light in the night</u> .	bought

2008

welding electrode	1r1	Kashe wants to acquire one day a welding machine.	found
garden scissors	1r1	Kashe planned to use them for cutting the shrubs he would plant by the fence of his plot in Swart Tak .	found
spanner	r1	Nr. 13, Kashe claimed to carry it "always" with him when he went somewhere with his cart, so that he could <u>tighten the screws</u> .	found
paintbrush	r1	Kashe used it for painting his cart.	found
wood handsaw	3	Kashe made it from a suitable found metal frame and attached to it the found blade; he found also another frame, which he wanted to use for a metal handsaw.	found

fan belt (several)		“Maybe I’ll take them to Bushmanland , where people may need it.”	found
tyre valve	r1	“When I’ll have a donkey cart (in Swart Tak).”	found
a part of tape rule	r1	Kashe wanted to use it, but it was too damaged.	found
drill No. 12	r1	Kashe knew it was for cement and not metals. One day he might have a drilling machine.	found
screws (several)			
adhesive	r1	He would stick together wooden desks and plastic parts of radio.	found
scissors	r1	were broken, Kashe made one handle with wire and heated hard plastic	found
jimmy bar		borrowed from !Xun relatives	borrowed
weighting-machine	r1	It did not work; according to Kashe the machine shows whether you are physically well or not: “ <i>If you eat nicely, you can see.</i> ”	found
a kind of abrasive machine	r1	part of it was emery paper; Kashe claimed it was for polishing shoes, which may have been wrong	found

2010

axe, hammer, pliers, pipe wrench, long pliers, chisel, blade for a wood saw, scrapper, spanner, adhesive for wood	r1	For small home construction work. One day he might use it when starting welding “business”.	found
emery paper	r1	He wanted to use it in Swart Tak.	found
tightening strap		For binding the scrap metals and firewood when transported at the cart.	found

In 2008 Kashe showed me a metal number plate (number 2632), which was from a pick-up, and he planned to attach (but in the end he would not) it to the cart as well. In 2010 he also showed me two car badges, one from Nissan and the other from Volkswagen, which he also wanted to attach to the cart to make it look nice. When driving the cart he used to take with him the spanner No. 13 in case he had to repair the vehicle. Since the cart was used a lot, Kashe had to replace the wheels on occasion and when he saw some dumped in the town he took them home to use as spare parts. Kashe sometimes did not conceal his pride in his cart and in 2010 told me that once he had found a heavy piece of iron, which, thanks to his cart, he was able to take a long distance to the company that bought the scrap metal. There it turned out to weigh 60 kilograms, and they paid him an alleged 50 NS for the metal. In order to identify iron, Kashe carried with him a small sound box from a discarded radio that contained a magnet.

The cart was a tool he used exclusively in the town and it could not easily be used in the sandy area of Bushmanland. However, Kashe once mentioned he would use it there to transport the soil needed to build the walls of his hut.

I have not seen any other !Xun or even non-!Xun in the town with a cart similar to Kashe’s . Kashe definitely belongs among the more innovative of the !Xun in. Kashe, however, claimed there were two men in the township, one “Damara” and one “Herero” or “Ovambo”, who had constructed carts as well. According to Kashe, both of them were poor as well and they had copied him. From my point of view Kashe’s makeshift cart was a symbol of his low socio-economic status and when pulling the cart through Grootfontein, dressed in his rags and often accompanied by his two sons also wearing ragged clothes, he received a lot of sympathy from other people. But Kashe also found some comfort and a kind of self-esteem from his somewhat unique situation and the attention he attracted from other people. He also associated himself very closely with the cart and was convinced that many of the town’s residents knew who the “man with the cart” was. He told me two stories confirming this.

Once, he left his cart at the taxi rank next to the Caltex petrol station and went to *zula* in the commercial centre. But when he came back, he saw that a truck had parked in front of his cart and since it had been hidden behind the truck, someone had taken advantage of the situation and taken it away. On his way back to the township, some people in the Single Quarters called out to Kashe that they had his cart. They told him that they had seen some children pulling the cart and that they had taken it from them because they knew it was his. Another time, his cart was lost in the town. He was searching for it, but in vain. Then he called the police station. Kashe did not know the policeman he was talking to, but the policeman allegedly knew him, because he said he used to see Kashe with the cart and so promised to help him. Later on Kashe was told by some Hai//om people in the township that they had seen his cart in the bush when they went to drink wine there. Since Kashe was convinced the police were searching for his cart, he called the police station to tell them it had been found. Kashe thought that because so many people in Grootfontein knew his cart it would be difficult for someone else to steal it from him and use it.

By December 2012 Kashe had constructed three carts in total. One, to which he attached the Nissan badge, was his; he gave one to his father in order to transport firewood; and another he had sold for 150 NS to a Damara woman who ran a children's day-care centre next to the Single Quarters and he was in the process of constructing another one for her.

Kashe also wished to construct a bicycle to use in Blikkiesdorp. He thought that with a bicycle he could easily get to the town's commercial centre and that it would help him in his main economic activity in the town: "I'll build a bicycle and I'll be fast. Then I'll easily collect bottles and firewood." He had a good experience with bicycles, since, when staying at the yard of the regional governor office in 2003, one of his relatives had lent him a bicycle that he used to look for bottles. Kashe thought he would build a bicycle from discarded parts he would find in the town. The problem was, however, that he only found some of the parts and there were always some missing or that did not fit the others. In 2010 Kashe changed his plans. He told me he had sold his bicycle frame and that he would construct a bicycle "very easily" by buying its components from the company that bought scrap metals.

Table 42: Kashe's gathers discarded bicycle spare parts

2007: Kashe found several components, among them: frame of a tricycle (Kashe: "I won't sell it, it's for children"), two tires probably from a tricycle, tube.

2008: Kashe claimed he had found another needed parts and that for constructing a bicycle he would need only one wheel, tubes, tires and a belt. In 2008 Kashe also mentioned that if Anton would attend the school near **Lemoentjie** plot (if he would work there), he could be driven there by Max's son Izaak, who also used to stay there with them. Kashe had three bicycle frames, he intended to sell one as scrap metal, to use the second for constructing a bicycle for him, which he could use in **Swart Tak**; and third (small one) he wanted to use for constructing a bicycle for Willem.

2009: Kashe found one big wheel, but it did not fit to the frame he had; he wanted to buy two new wheels, so that his older son Anton could drive in Bushmanland from Swart Tak to the school in Rooidag.

2010: Kashe sold a bicycle frame to a company buying scrap metals, since it would be allegedly difficult to buy to it other suitable components. He found two brakes, a rear bicycle wheel and transmission gear for the bicycle for older son Anton and front bicycle wheel for younger Willem.

There were !Xun in Grootfontein who had bicycles, but they were few in number. In 2010 I asked 12 household heads whether they had a bicycle. Four of them did, but in two instances the bicycles were broken. This means that only in six had a functioning bicycle. However, since the !Xun typically did not have enough money to buy a new bicycle, they often acquired old ones at the farm. Thus, Angula (plots 6-7) bought one from a farmer for 350 NS.

Another object associated with Kashe's hopes about his future and economic activities was the welding stick I found he had in 2008. Kashe longed to acquire a welding machine. He wanted to have his own business welding gates, chairs, donkey carts and so on ("anything you may weld"). He had learnt how to weld at farm Klippan at the beginning of 1990s. He told me also several times he had heard in the radio about a course in welding in Otjiwarongo, a town about two hours' drive from Grootfontein. Kashe recalled it would take about 6 months and cost 100 NS, the latter detail seemed to me to be unrealistic. When I asked him that year to show me the things in Grootfontein's shops that he would particularly like to acquire, he led me to the Pupkewitz shop in the town and showed me a welding machine at the cost of 3030 NS. Kashe said that if he had money he would also buy a protective helmet, a metal saw and emery paper that could be used with metals. Kashe then took me to the Chinese-run STAR shop and showed me a cheap diesel generator which was for sale at 989 NS. Kashe wanted to power the welding machine with this and he would also use it for lighting at night. He also wanted to buy a drill one day. In 2009 Kashe still had the welding electrode and had a new plan for it. He said he would use it at Frederik's from plot 9 (Frederik owned a welding machine) to repair his cart in case it got broken. Accumulating the capital for the welding machine and power generator was for Kashe, as for almost any other !Xun I knew in Grootfontein, next to impossible. He moved to get closer to realizing his welding business plan through his limited *zula* means: he was collecting dumped, often damaged, tools. In 2010, as we saw, Kashe found many other tools, which could be used for construction, including the second welding stick.

If there were only a few tools that most !Xun needed on daily basis in Grootfontein, the situation in Swart Tak was somewhat different. Since it was virtually impossible to have waged work there that a person, let alone a family, could live on, many !Xun engaged, to various extents and with varying success, in agriculture. For the !Xun there an axe was an essential for cutting bush and firewood. Furthermore, a spade for preparing the land for planting before the rains was a must. Other important tools were a machete (panga) and an adze, which had many similar functions to the axe and panga but was not able to cut large branches of wood. Many !Xun also possessed a mortar and pestle for grinding corn. Nonetheless, the !Xun in Swart Tak, who were mostly former farm workers, did not make the mortars on their own, but 1) acquired them, mostly from black people or 2) used metallic components in the shape of a mortar from vehicles. In 2009 Kashe also had a wooden mortar, which he had found thrown away in Swart Tak, but it was damaged. None of the !Xun at the plots I visited in Grootfontein owned a mortar, even though it was an item used by some Bantu people. Since the harvest mostly hardly covered the needs of the !Xun in Bushmanland, they could not support their kin in urban areas.

One of the most prestigious objects some !Xun in Swart Tak managed to acquire were donkey carts. Looking at the material culture objects Kashe kept in Grootfontein and in Swart Tak, it shows he also wanted to acquire a donkey cart, but was still far away from making his wishes come true. As with constructing s bicycle it seemed to be difficult to find all the components needed to construct a cart.

In 2007 I saw in Kashe's hut in Swart Tak an inflator, several screws and iron bars, and a red reflector, which he wanted to use in building a cart. Kashe found all of these in Grootfontein. In 2008 in Kashe's Grootfontein home I saw a tyre valve, which he intended to bring to Bushmanland to use one day in the construction of his donkey cart. In 2009 he nevertheless complained that the !Xun in Swart Tak took some of the things, including materials for building a cart.

Tool	Quantity	Description	Origin
machete	2	Kashe claimed to have bought one in 1993 in Grootfontein for 19 NS and the other borrowed from Piet (the husband of Kashe's niece) in Swart Tak.	bought (1), borrowed (1)
axe (without handle)	2	for cutting wood	one belongs to Kashe's father, the other to Kashe's mother's „sister's" husband, who passed away
used emery wheel	4	Kashe: „I'll sharpen with it and axe and a knife“	Found
spade	1	agriculture work, making of holes	borrowed (by his kin?) in Swart Tak
chisel	1		found in Grootfontein
saw blade	3	for metals	found in Grootfontein
mortar and pestle	1	mortar shaped car component - part of the oil filter of a scraper ; pestle from a branch; 2009 found in Swart Tak a thrown away damaged wooded mortar	mortar - found by Kashe by the road near Swart Tak, pestle made Kashe
horse saddle	1	In 2009 he lent it to his „uncle's" son in Kameelwoud.	bought from a Herero employer for 200 NS
horse harness	3	borrowed by !Xun „friend“ from Kameelwoud	Borrowed
paintbrush	1	used for applying a disinfectant on the horse	found in Grootfontein
disinfectant	1	Jeyes fluid; Kashe had used it for his horse; in 2009 was still there, Kashe said he did not throw it away, because the children could find it and get harmed by it.	got by a !Xun „friend“ at a farm
brush	1	used for combing his horse; in 2009 was still there	found in Grootfontein
parts for donkey cart		several drills and iron bars, red reflector	found in Grootfontein
inflator	1	for a donkey cart; Kashe claimed Petrus had taken it, promised him 20 NS, but did not give him the money yet	found in Grootfontein
sling	1	wooden handle, rubber from car tube, small piece of shoe leather for placing there the stone; he wanted to make another sling from an Y-shaped handle of a kitchen tool (probably sieve)	made from materials found in Grootfontein
mousetrap	1	from wires; in 2009	made from found materials
„light“	1	car-light, Kashe wanted to make it functionable once he would have power generator	found in Grootfontein
„rake“		iron component connecting the rake and the tool	found in Grootfontein

The study of material culture objects reveals that Kashe hoped to acquire horses and also donkeys to pull the cart. Between 2007 and 2009 he brought new clasps and dumped ropes and a belt from old bags he had found and that he wanted to use as harness from Grootfontein to Swart Tak. In 2009 he still owned a saddle which he had bought in 1999 from his then Herero employer Sepi in Ozongune in former Hereroland and which he would lend to his !Xun friends in Kameelwoud. He also kept a paintbrush there that he used in the past to apply disinfectant to his horse, a brush for combing the animal, and boots that he used when riding the horse „When I get the saddle back from Kameelwoud (he borrowed it to his friend) then the shoes will begin to work again.“⁴¹⁰

⁴¹⁰ Kashe got the boots by his mother's "sister's" husband Anton. Kashe said the boots had been too small for Anton, which reveals his uncle probably did not buy them, but got them by someone.



Picture 50. In Swart Tak Kashe carved a roadside sign. He wanted to nail it to a tree on the road from Rooidag to Tsumkwe to advertise his services as a horse buster.

Kashe was very keen on horses and from time to time he also spoke about his plans to earn a living as a horse buster. He proudly claimed to have successfully tamed few horses owned by the Hereros in Bushmanland. In 2009 I saw at his hut in Swart Tak an object that confirmed that Kashe meant this seriously. There was a small wooden road sign in his hut on which Kashe had already carved out a silhouette of a horse's head (see Picture 50). Kashe's original aim was to place it on the main Rooidag - Tsumkwe road at the place where it joins the pathway to his house so that everybody could see what kind of service Kashe was offering.

In 2007 I saw seeds from the trees growing in the town in his shack in Grootfontein ("I'll plant them in Swart Tak, they will cast a shadow") and various other plant seeds he picked up in the town during his bottle gathering trips with the aim of planting them at his plot in Swart Tak. In 2008 he talked about taking his garden scissors to Swart Tak to cut the shrubs he would plant next to the fence of his plot. When I came to Grootfontein in 2010, he was still collecting plant seeds in Grootfontein with the aim of planting them in Bushmanland.

It was also striking there were generally almost no „traditional“ Bushman tools produced by the !Xun in Swart Tak and which would be “typical” for their ethno-linguistic group. Among the few tools which the !Xun used in Bushmanland and did not use in Grootfontein were walking sticks used by the elders and short *kierries* with which !Xun boys ran around and, up to the recent past, also bows and arrows.

I have no precise data on how many !Xun in that settlement had bow and arrows, since they were kept their tools inside their huts. However, it was apparent that many of the Bushmen did hunt before the area started to be monitored by the horse guards of the N \neq a-Jaqua Conservancy. It may be said that it was not only Kashe who had a bow and arrows, but also two old men at the neighbouring plot of whom Kashe was a relative. They claimed to have given up hunting because of the conservancy as well. The dust on the bows and the rotten iron tips seemed to confirm this. Kashe said that he made the bow I saw at his hut in Swart Tak in 2004 after acquiring his plot in Swart Tak. The bow sticks made by the !Xun were oval in shape, but not so regular as were the bows sold to tourists. The !Xun's bows were also much longer.



Picture 51. Different types of quivers from western Bushmanland: at the top is a traditional type nowadays made only for tourists; in the middle arrows and a quiver made by Kashe, the quiver is from car seat cover found in Grootfontein; the bottom quiver is made from a hard black tube and was used by one of Kashe's neighbours.

For the bow Kashe used a string found in Grootfontein. The arrows were made from a stick and its tips from a wire also used by the !Xun to make a three-legged stands for pots. The feather, which he found in the bush in Bushmanland, was, according to Kashe, from a vulture. Kashe made the quiver from the black leather of a car seat cover and sewed it to the carrying strap from a dumped bag with a thread from a maize meal bag and fixed it in a few places with wire. The seat cover and the belt were found by Kashe in Grootfontein as well. In addition to the bow and arrows, many !Xun in Swart Tak also owned a spear, which they called an assegai, which they used in the past to hunt warthogs and bushpigs.

bow	1		local material
bowstring	1	from a string	found in Grootfontein
arrows	4	wooden body, the tip was from wire; the feather was according to Kashe from a vulture	the wire found in Grootfontein , otherwise local material
quiver	1	black leather car seat cover, carrying strap from a bag, threads from a maize meal bag, wires	materials found in Grootfontein

Even though Kashe knew he could hardly generate any income by selling traditional Bushmen tools to tourists, he did not give up on the idea of earning some ad hoc money in this way as well. In 2007 I saw in Kashe's hut in Swart Tak the shells of two turtles he had eaten. One day he wanted to make a souvenir for the tourists from them, a "traditional" container, which he had seen produced by the the Ju/'hoan San at Grashoek. In Grootfontein in 2008 I witnessed Kashe finding a construction bar, which he intended to cut in half to make two spears he would also sell to tourists in Bushmanland. In 2011 I saw in his dwelling two

warthog teeth. Kashe had found them dumped in the township and claimed that after polishing them he would sell them to the tourists he would meet in the town. At that time Kashe was working at a farm near the town and did not plan to go to Swart Tak in the near future.



Picture 52. Different types of bows from western Bushmanland (from left to right): Kashe's bow, his neighbour's bow (Ovambo style) and small bow made for tourists.

As regards the listing of various tools Kashe and other !Xun were using, we should not omit one of the most important: their hands with very hardened surface as a result of their constant work with various objects. They ditched with them a hollow in the ground if they wanted to fix poles for a new house or when looking for veldkos in the bush. They broke with their hands dry thorny twigs to put them in fire. Or they could manipulate with hands with hot pots or even with embers.

Utensils: coming from Grootfontein

Among the most important utensils Kashe had and used in Grootfontein (see the Table 45 for the utensils he had in 2007) were vessels for storing water, pots for cooking food and brewing tea (usually a tin can with attached bent wire as a handle), mugs for drinking tea and coffee, various cans, knives and home-made whisks for preparing mealie meal. Except for the whisks, which Kashe made from wire, he had found all the objects. In 2010 I counted at his dwelling 10 pots, all of which had been dumped. In the case of the knives, he mostly found only the blades and made the handles from heated hard plastic or by wrapping a piece of cloth around its lower half. The cans were mostly plastic and originally contained some food, but one used to hold acrylic paint. Kashe used the cans as bowls and plates and served food for his children in them.

Table 45: Kashe's utensils and cans in Grootfontein in 2007

vessel for storing water	10	canister (5); demijohn (1); bucket (1 from metal, 1 from plastic), plastic bottle (2);	found
can	32	- plastic cans and boxes (26) - metal cans (3) – mostly for making tea - glass cans (3), originally from preserves	found
pot	2	metal; plus two pot lids	found
mug	3	1 from metal, 2 from plastic; Kashe told me in 2008 some of the mugs, which were still by him, belonged to Lucia.	found
bowl	3	one small was from metal and used for serving food, the other bigger two for washing dishes	found
saucepan	1	metal; Kashe said it was suitable for example for roasting the peanuts; he did not use it since having been left by Lucia which is according to him the owner of the pan: "Maybe she'll be angry."	found by Lucia
whisk	4	Kashe made it from wires.	He found the wires.
piece of plastic netting	1 r1	According to Kashe he can use it as coffee strainer.	found
tray	1r1	Originally <u>part of ironing board</u> ; Kashe: „I can put it on the carpet, when I put on it a hot pot, it won't get burnt.”	found
knife	2	Kashe found one of them without a handle and he made it by wrapping the lower part of the body of the blade with <u>a piece of cloth</u> .	found
(tea)spoon	2	one was a usual metal spoon, the other small plastic partly damaged teaspoon, when eating the !Xun ate mostly with hands.	found
ashtray	1r1	<u>small bowl in which he put sandy soil</u>	found
suckling bottle	1r1	for his son Willem	bought

Due to the fact that many of these objects were from durable materials, once many of them were found, they could be used for a long time. The only conspicuous case when Kashe innovatively used an object that originally had a totally different purpose was to employ a piece of ironing board as a tray on which he could place a hot pot without burning the table cloth or the carpet in his “bedroom”. In Grootfontein there was always a chance of finding a modern utensil, which Kashe could, however, hardly use. Thus, in 2009 I also saw a potato peeler and a can opener among Kashe's new possessions. Kashe took them even though I have never seen him buy either potatoes, which were expensive for him, or prohibitively dear canned food. On very rare occasions he could also find in the township valuable objects that other people must have lost. This was the case with a big hunting knife or army thermos bottle, inside which he wanted to put tea or maize porridge for his children when travelling. The only item Kashe bought was a suckling bottle he acquired after his son Willem's birth.

There was no significant difference between the utensils Kashe had in Grootfontein and Swart Tak. In both places Kashe needed vessels to store water, pots, tea cans, cans in which he could serve food, which was almost always mealie meal, and knives. There was no object in this category that Kashe used in the rural area and not in Grootfontein. It was striking that Kashe found many of these objects in Grootfontein and brought them to Bushmanland. This was possible due to the small size of these objects, which could easily be placed in his rucksack. None of these objects were found in Swart Tak. The !Xun settled in Bushmanland could acquire these mention items at the farms or by finding them when visiting Grootfontein. As we can see Kashe also had objects belonging to his parents in Swart Tak. These objects had been with them when they were in Bushmanland, but at some point moved to another place and could not take these things with them.

Item	Quantity	Description	Origin/Notes
bowls and plates	7	metal bowl (4), plates (3, two plastic, one metal) ; in 2009 Kashe claimed the bowls were still there, but he did not find the plates	bowls: belonged to his mother (3), got by a /Turu friend in /Káandu (1); plates: got from his Herero employer Eben in Swart Tak (2 plastic), found in Grootfontein (1 metal)
cans	6	plastic, one was for washing	found in Grootfontein (3), cans with food or vaseline he bought in Grootfontein (3)
mugs	15	plastic (7), metal (8)	found in Grootfontein , some belonged to his parents
pots and tea cans	4	in 2009 brought Kashe to Swart Tak another tea can from Grootfontein	found in Grootfontein (2); belongs to Petrus from neighbouring plot in Swart Tak, who gave it to Kashe's uncle Anton and after his death it became Kashe's (1); bought in Omatako (1)
vessel for storing water	6	canister (6), in 2009 I saw at Kashe's house also a bucket	belongs to Petrus (3), belongs to Kashe's father, who took them from Grootfontein (2), belongs to Kashe's mother (1), the bucket bought for Kashe his sister Kristine
paraffin stove	1	Kashe never used it	found in Grootfontein
canister for washing		in the half cut off canister	?
knife	1	in 2009 Kashe had 5 knives in Swart Tak, by one Kashe found in Grootfontein only the blade and made the handle from <u>fire-melted black pipe water canister</u>	found in Grootfontein
whisk			made Kashe
fork	1	there were 2 in 2009	found in Grootfontein
spoon	1	In 2009 Kashe claimed to have more of them in the past, but „the people“ took them away	belongs to Ou Petrus
metal sieve	1		found in Grootfontein

Electronics - gathering of spare parts

There were only two electronic devices that most !Xun dwelling in Grootfontein could financially afford and these seemed to be of huge importance for them: a radio and a cell phone with the latter being a more recent phenomenon. In 2010 I asked 13 adult !Xun men if they had a cell phone, 11 did, but in one case the phone was broken. One of those without a phone at that time was Willem, whose cell phone was being used by Kashe; the other one was Petrus from plot 5, who, however, could use his wife's cell phone. The figure was the same

for functioning radios, 10 out of the 13 !Xun had one. Thus, in both cases the ownership figure was high at 77 %.

Both the cell phone and radio were important for allowing access to information and in the case of a cell phone for maintaining family ties. Kashe's history of acquiring a cell phone is illustrative of the way important things move among relatives. Kashe bought his first ever cell phone in July 2008, when he got his salary on the plot Lemoentjie near the town. That day his father bought a cell phone as well. Since Kashe's phone was stolen in Grootfontein in 2010, his father allowed him to use his phone. In 2011 the father's phone's battery stopped working. Thus, Kashe borrowed a battery from Mathias's son, who also lived at plot 1. When Small Willem, the son of Kashe's brother Andris, was leaving the farm Herenhausen, where both were working, Kashe asked him to sell him his cell phone. Small Willem agreed, and Kashe gave him 150 NS with the promise that later he would give him another 170 NS. Small Willem was able to sell his cell phone, since he had another. But since it also had a camera, Kashe's sister Kristine asked Small Willem to swap his cell phone for hers, to which he agreed.

If Kashe found a discarded cell phone charger in the township, he took it home to find out if it still worked and whether he could use it for his cell phone. In Grootfontein in 2010 I saw Kashe with an adapter for various sizes of plugs. He had received it from his “!Xun-Damara” friend from Swart Tak. It was broken, but Kashe bought a stick-band in Grootfontein and fixed it.

Between 2007 and 2009 Kashe possessed a radio, which he bought for 75 NS after his return from the Brandberg farm at the beginning of 2007. The fact that Kashe had a radio could be recognised by people passing the plot by road as there was a several-meters long antenna sticking out of the roof, which Kashe made from several sticks, a broom handle, an iron bar and a piece of pipe, all wired together. Kashe had a kind of “obsession” with this electronic device and in 2007 this was demonstrated by the fact that he had dozens of spare radio parts, mostly desks with electrodes and parts of sound boxes he had found subsequently in various places in Grootfontein and that he stored in bags and plastic bags. Kashe said he would use the components when he needed to repair his own radio or to construct a new one. He also claimed to have taken some spare parts to Swart Tak to repair other people's radios there, and he seemed to have acquired a reputation as a technically skilled man. In 2008 Kashe had another radio, which he had been given by an “Ovambo” friend from a farm who wanted him to repair it. In 2010 Kashe was using his father's radio, whose plastic sides, except for the front, were missing. Kashe had replaced them with small planks. At that time there were two other radios in his “bedroom”, but neither were working. In 2011, while working at the farm, Kashe bought two radios. The first one in May, but which was already broken by the time of my coming to Grootfontein in December. The second he had bought in August. However, he did not have it any more, since a !Xun/Damara farm worker had “taken” it from him promising to pay for it, but had not yet done so.

In 2007 Kashe powered his radio with a long-life battery, which his father bought for him for allegedly 40 NS. Kashe had at that time, however, a bold plan to construct his own power generator. He planned to build it from things he had already found in the town: an engine and wires and he wanted to make a propeller from a common metal barrel. According to Kashe, the wind would spin the propeller which would make the engine work and then it would produce a stream of electricity which would be transmitted to the radio. In 2008 I also saw Kashe with a small bottle with engine oil that he found in Grootfontein and that he wanted to use to maintain the engine.



Picture 53. Kashe collected radio spare parts.

Nonetheless, despite Kashe's skills and his will to overcome the lack of money to acquire the electronic and technical devices he desired, there was a significant gap between his desires and his achievements. It was, of course, difficult to build a new radio or power generator from various randomly found components. Thus, when I returned in 2008 to Namibia for my second field research trip, Kashe had already given up on his idea of constructing a generator. He claimed to have thrown the engine away because it did not work. The found spare parts from different devices and products often did not fit each other. For this reason he never managed to construct a bicycle. Kashe also claimed he lacked the time to dedicate to these "fine" works. This was also the reason he gave me for not repairing the radio given to him by the mentioned "Ovambo".

In 2008 he found a car battery in the township, which was probably almost empty, but he "recharged" it regularly by putting it on the roof and exposing it to the sun ("Then the battery gets a bit of power") and connected it to the radio with wires. He also used to power his radio with dumped batteries, which were apparently not entirely empty. Kashe's desire, which he mentioned several times during my initial field research trips to Namibia, was to one day acquire a small solar panel to produce electricity. Kashe claimed he had one !Xun friend in the township who owned a solar panel and that he could charge the battery using his friend's help. Paul, the "owner" of plot 3, also had a solar panel, which was given to him by his white employer, for whom he did yardwork. Paul told me a story that when he once wanted to lend the solar panel to his in-laws at a plot near Grootfontein, but when his wife's brother's son was carrying it to the plot through the town he was stopped by police officers who took the panel from him because they thought the young poor-looking Bushman must have stolen it. Kashe was eventually able to buy a small solar panel (250 NS) and the necessary electricity voltage transformer (150 NS) from the Chinese shop in 2012, when he started to work after several years again at a farm and was receiving a wage. He used the solar panel to power his radio and charge the cell phone.

There was no cell phone network in the western part of Bushmanland and the radio signal in Swart Tak was rather weak. However, Kashe brought radio spare parts from Grootfontein to Swart Tak from time to time because he thought he might use them or they might be of use to somebody else. As in Grootfontein even here he seemed to be known to other people as a technically skilful man who knew how to repair broken radios. Thus, in 2007 there was a radio in his hut belonging to a „Herero-!Xun“ man named Jordan from Kameelwoud who asked Kashe to repair it. In 2009 Kashe told me he had not done so, saying he had not had any time.

Kashe’s need of other electronic devices did not seem to be strong. I saw three wrist-watches at Kashe’s house in Grootfontein between 2007 and 2009. One was a digital watch and Kashe had been given this by the wife of the Brandberg farmer and the other two he had found in Grootfontein. Of the latter two one did not work and the other one was damaged - without buttons, but, according to Kashe, it worked. Kashe found the latter in an “Afrikaner’s” trash and he claimed that it had cost 700 NS in the “old time”. However, Kashe found another use for this watch. It had fluorescent fingers and he sometimes hanged it from the roof on a wire and liked to look at it from his bed. Kashe claimed he powered digital watch’s battery by attaching wires connected to a car battery to it. In 2008 Kashe also claimed to have had an alarm-clock (which he had found), but it was stolen from him and by that time he had also thrown away the alarm-clock spare part I saw him with in 2007, because it was of no use any more. In 2008 I saw a broken wall-clock at his house. According to Kashe, it was already broken when he found it. “I want to repair it,” claimed Kashe in 2008. In 2009 he said he had indeed managed to make it function again, but later on it stopped working and he threw it away. The torch, which Kashe bought in 2007, also seemed to be not of much use to him as he did not have batteries and, thus, he used a candle as a source of light at night.

In 2010 I saw in Kashe’s shack two new objects he had found: a DVD player and video recorder. Both were broken, but Kashe thought there might be a chance to repair them. He had found the DVD in the township and the video recorder on a dump site next to the house of an Afrikaner. “The white people throw out nice things,” claimed Kashe. According to him, they have a lot of money so they can afford to buy new consumer items instead of repairing the old things. Kashe’s striving to repair electronic devices and eventually to construct them from their components seemed to be common for some !Xun men in the township. Paul, the “owner” at plot 3, had a huge pile of various radio, DVD, video recorder components at his yard. He had obtained them from whites in the town who had wanted to throw them out.

A TV was a prestigious object only a few !Xun could acquire. In order to buy a TV it was necessary to have regular monthly income of several hundred NS, which was quite difficult in the town, though it could be a bit easier when working at the farm. If the possibility arose, an option was to buy an old TV from one’s white employers. When I asked Kashe in 2010 about the !Xun who owned a TV, he listed three: from his relatives there was only his brother Andris (he powered it with a small solar panel), one !Xun living in the township and another one in Berg Aukas settlement. I found out that this was also Kashe’s relative Piet, the “owner” of plot 10. Piet had bought the TV in Grootfontein for 1500 NS, he acquired it on credit and had to repay 200 NS monthly. The problem he had was electricity. In 2010 Piet told me that he occasionally bought electricity for 10 NS, which was allegedly sufficient to watch TV in the evenings for few days.

I also recorded an interesting case of some !Xun getting the opportunity to watch TV in Grootfontein utilising their social relations with the non-!Xun. Angula (plots 6-7) did not have a TV but he watched it occasionally at a house in the township where his wife’s mother

stayed. It was not her house. It belonged to a white man, who bought it, but since he did not stay there, he allowed !Xun he knew to do so in return for looking after the property. The !Xun had only to buy electricity. The mother of Angula's wife did not own the TV either, since its owners were Hereros, who, however, did not have access to electricity at their dwelling in the township. They asked the !Xun to allow them to watch the TV in the house and helped them pay for the electricity. However, in 2010 the Hereros took their TV back.

Pictures: the desire to improve Kashe's situation

The magazines and pictures people have in their homes can be a telling indicator of what they think, what they relate to and what they long for. Kashe did not buy any magazines, because they were too expensive, but he occasionally found some in Grootfontein and if he found the pictures in them interesting, since being illiterate person he could not read them, he took them home. He did not collect them systematically and did not keep them for years. In 2007 I found Kashe with four magazines, in 2008 one and in both years some leaflets. The pictures in the magazines and on the leaflets appeared to reveal his desire to improve his living standards. In line with other information I gathered about him, Kashe connected his ideal prospective future with agriculture activities such as planting crops and raising animals, which he could do at his plot in Bushmanland and also with his own work as a technician. Two of the five magazines were about agriculture („I like to look at pictures with animals and machines.”, “I think of what I'll plant in the rainy season in Swart Tak.”) and one about various tools. Kashe knew well the function of the various, often specialist, tools I randomly pointed to in the magazine and knew their names in Afrikaans since he had worked with most of them at the farms: “When I've the welding machine, I'll need these things”. One of the things Kashe pointed to and which he longed for was a pipe, which could lead water to his homes in Blikkiesdorp and Swart Tak. Generally, when Kashe was browsing through the magazines he was also interested in the prices of the goods. This confronted him with the fact that for him it would be very difficult to acquire the goods.

Other print materials and leaflets hinted at Kashe's desire to have a cell phone (leaflets advertising cell phone cards), which he did not yet have in 2007; his preoccupation with his children (show-card advertising children clothes), other leaflet (show-card of PEP clothes shop) showed his desire to be well dressed and his interest in football, which he used to play at farm Strydfontein in the 1990s. A magazine for motorists revealed his virtually unrealizable wish to own a car, which was probably the most prestigious object the !Xun could imagine owning. When I asked him in 2010 about the !Xun he knew who owned a car, he mentioned only two. One was his father's “brother's” son, a very distant relative of Kashe's, and the other was Ágrob, the husband of Kashe's first wife Martha. The second had acquired an old car after many years working at a farm, but later on it stopped working.

In 2010 Kashe showed me 11 magazines and leaflets he had at home. The pictures in them had similar motifs to those in earlier years. In addition, there were pictures of luxuriously furnished flats, lifestyle magazines showing high-class food and clothes for adults. In other magazines he would look at the pictures of road construction work and factories. He also found interesting a picture showing a modern train and a solar panel, which he longed to acquire. Interestingly, he had also found one book about the history of the United States, though he thought it was a Bible.



Picture 54. This picture was cut out of a magazine by the !Xun children at plot No. 1.

It was evident that the objects in the magazines and other print material (cars, motorbikes, modern houses, luxurious furniture, various modern gear, domestic and wild animals, nice clothes, good food) were associated with people who were at the very opposite side of the socio-economic hierarchy from the !Xun and were consumer items that could be acquired virtually only by the rich or better-off whites, Coloureds, Ovambos, Kavangos, Hereros and Damaras in the social environment of the Grootfontein area. At the same time, Kashe did not harbour any unrealistic notions about his chances of acquiring some of the prestige objects. “I don’t think I’ll sometime buy something like this, but I like to look at the pictures,” evaluated Kashe in 2008 of his prospects of buying a car. However, Kashe’s feelings as regards his chances of acquiring some of these things depended on the situations he was in, what his income at that time was and his mood at a given moment. Thus, on some days he complained that he could not buy anything beyond some basic food, but, as we saw, on another day he would be thinking of ways of generating money for a power generator costing around 3000 NS.

If it was possible in Grootfontein to get an insight into Kashe’s mind by browsing through the magazines he found when on *zula* in the township, this was not the case in the rural Swart Tak settlement, where one could hardly find any magazines or newspapers. Hence, in Kashe’s hut in 2007 I found only four pictures, which he had found in Grootfontein and had evidently caught his eye. In two of them were Walvis Bay with its high-rise buildings, much larger than anything he could see in Grootfontein. In another was a large bull, showing Kashe’s interest in domestic animals, and the last was an unusual picture of a child playing with a snake.

Children: bicycle components and broken toy cars

One of Kashe's main preoccupations was the well-being of his two sons. However, a quantitative measure of the objects acquired by the father for his children that I could find at his plot in Grootfontein would give us an incomplete picture of Kashe's concerns. Owing to his lack of means, acquiring toys and clothes for his sons was very difficult. However, Kashe claimed that always after he returned home after collecting and selling bottles or scrap metal his sons expected him to bring them something. It was usually some food, which is not of durable value, a candy for each son bought in the Hakahana shop for 20 cents or so or sweet ice bought by one "Damara" woman in the township for 50 cents a time. In this respect it is worth mentioning that I never saw Kashe buy sweets for himself.

As touched upon above, Kashe wanted to construct a bicycle for himself from components found in Grootfontein, but he planned to do the same for each of his sons as well. In the case of the younger son, Willem, he wanted to construct a tricycle, too. He said in 2009 he had been occasionally looking at a small black plastic motorbike on offer in the SPAR supermarket, but it was too expensive to buy. Up to my last field research in 2010 Kashe had never accomplished his aim of constructing a bicycle for Willem and for the same reasons as he was not able to construct one for himself. In the case of the older son, Anton, Kashe associated a bicycle with his son's education, since he wanted Anton to use a bicycle to ride to school in Bushmanland, from Swart Tak to neighbouring Rooidag. Similarly, he also thought that when they were staying at the Lemoentjie plot near Grootfontein Anton could ride (or be ridden by somebody else) by bicycle to a nearby school. Kashe had also already in 2007 some crayons and pencils, which he had found in Grootfontein and which he intended to give to the then four-year-old Anton, once he started attending school. The following year I saw at Kashe's house a metal case with such school stationery as a ruler, two pencil sharpeners and a pair of compasses, which he had also found in the town and which had probably been lost by a school pupil "(Now) I don't have to buy it (for Anton)." In 2010, when his younger son Willem was already four years old, Kashe started to think about constructing a bicycle for him with the prospect that he could use it to ride to school in Bushmanland.

I always saw at Kashe's house in Grootfontein parts from broken toy-cars, which Kashe sometimes found in Grootfontein during his searching for bottles. At the beginning of 2008 Kashe's father bought a toy cell phone powered with pen batteries for Anton for 10 NS. But it was already broken during my research. The cheap Chinese plastic toys, which the !Xun could afford to buy, were very easily damaged by the children. In the particular case of the toy cell phone and any other electronic toys, there was also the problem that it stopped working when the batteries ran out and Kashe did not have the money to buy new ones. Once I saw that Kashe had found a small toy torch for the children. But to find out if it was working, he had first to buy a battery and small bulb, for which he did not have money either. In 2009 I saw at Kashe's house in Blikkiesdorp a conspicuous new object for the children: a small plastic swimming pool of about one meter in diameter, which Kashe had found dumped in the town, but because it had a puncture and it could not be well inflated.

The children had very few toys in Swart Tak. In 2007 I saw only one at his hut, a small plastic monkey which he had found in Grootfontein. The pressure on Kashe to buy toys for them may have been stronger in Grootfontein, since they could see other children, especially from non-!Xun from better off families, playing with them.

Stealing things: nowhere is safe

Be it the shacks in Grootfontein or the hut in Swart Tak people would lock their houses in both places even if leaving only for a short time because they were afraid something might be stolen. The use of padlocks shows that a village in Bushmanland and the township did not represent totally different environments. When in Grootfontein, Kashe often placed life there in sharp contrast to Bushmanland where people allegedly did not steal and he mentioned to me several instances of things being stolen from him in Grootfontein.

As already described, at the end of 2009 an armed burglar stole his radio from a house owned by the Herero Eben that he was guarding. When I came to Grootfontein in 2010, he told me his cell phone had been stolen in the town.

In 2010 he was also dealing with an instance of theft of things belonging to him and his parents from their shacks in Grootfontein. Despite my frequent inquiries, what had really happened remained somehow clouded in uncertainty. According to Kashe, his father had in October 2009 given a key to his shack to a relative who had moved there with his wife and several children and stayed there till February 2010. Probably during that time, items were stolen from there and also from Kashe's room, since somebody had broken into it by removing the metal sheets from the inner ceilings between the two shacks. Among the things stolen were Kashe's car battery, a bucket, a paraffin stove and a ball for the children. Among the things lost from his parents were the clothes they wore for the church and an axe. Kashe's parents' losses were for them far more serious. Even though Kashe never found out with absolute certainty who the culprits were, it turned out that it was high probably their own relatives: Kashe's brother's son, Willem, Piet, the son of the "owner" of plot 2 Max, and maybe also another son of Max's, Jakob. According to Kashe, they sold some of the things. However, obviously not all of them, since later on the bucket was found in the bush near Blikkiesdorp and somebody threw his paraffin stove back into the kitchen through a hole in the ceiling. Apparently only his relatives could have done this as they knew the place well. There were other instances of thefts among his own relatives. Kashe told me, for example, that Piet stole a cell phone from his father Max. He took it from him under the pretext that he would charge it, but allegedly sold it for 100 NS and bought alcohol with the money.

Thus, we can see that Kashe faced two threats of theft in Grootfontein - one from non-!Xun, people he did not know and whom Kashe would describe as "chochis", and the other from his his own relatives. Kashe never talked about thefts in Bushmanland by Bantu people, who comprised in Swart Tak only a minority and who were often better-off than the Bushmen. Even though Kashe often idealised Bushmanland as a secure place and contrasted it favourably to Grootfontein, many !Xun in that area, including Kashe, complained about other !Xun stealing their things. The fact that even in Bushmanland his property was not secure became apparent immediately after our arrival to Swart Tak in 2009, when we wanted to prepare the dinner and needed to use his three-legged pot stands. Kashe claimed to have had three of these stands, but his !Xun neighbours had allegedly taken two of them.

This was a minor incident in comparison with what was to come. When we came to Swart Tak a year later, Kashe faced an even more dramatic situation. He found out that the rain had washed away the mud walls of the hut and also the only door to the hut was open. According to Kashe, somebody must have hammered off its padlock. Kashe complained that many of his things had disappeared. Kashe was told the door had been opened by his !Xun relatives from the neighbouring plot so that they could kill a snake hiding inside. Kashe estimated that about half of the things he had in Swart Tak were taken by other people, including some blankets.

He told me that Popi, his niece from the neighbouring plot, had taken some of the things, notably his utensils, to her house so that they would not be stolen. He saw his axe (and also the padlock with the chain, which only made him more suspicious of his relatives) at her house. He saw at Petrus's house his hoe and he planned to ask them to return the tool to him. Although he knew he would get some of his property back, at the same time he was convinced that his !Xun neighbours had removed some of his things to their huts and, since he could not get inside their huts, he could not find out where his property was. There were also no shoes in Kashe's hut anymore. In this instance he thought they could conceivably have been eaten by cows that may have got inside the hut. Kashe also found some of his clothes in a small pile at his plot some distance from his hut. The pile contained the trousers he had found in Grootfontein. According to Kashe, somebody had cut them into pieces, perhaps to make blankets. Kashe claimed he expected that later on he would see some of his things at the plots of other people in the village, but, he predicted, they would not give them back to him and he would rather not raise the issue with them. Kashe seemed to be extremely angry that his neighbours had not protected his things: "They are the only people I know who don't help you!."



Picture 55. Kashe's !Xun neighbours in Swart Tak.

It was apparent that Kashe wanted to avoid conflict. This was for a combination of mutual closeness, dependency and tensions. The fact that some of his things may have been taken by his closest neighbours and that he often needed their help (to lend him food, a donkey cart, tools and so on) played an important role in his decision not to pursue the matter in order not to find himself quarrelling with them.

Most of the Bantu people in Swart Tak were better off than the !Xun and did not have a reason for stealing from the !Xun. However, Kashe recalled an example of a black man taking

his property. In 2010 he said that once after coming to Swart Tak he found out that on one side of his plot somebody had taken away the wire from his fence. It turned out it was his “Ovambo” neighbour. When Kashe approached the latter, he told him he had needed the wire, gave it back to him and reimbursed him with 10 NS. Kashe took the money, but even as he was narrating the story to me he felt bitter that the “Ovambo” had taken his property without asking his permission and had then reimbursed him with a small sum of money. Kashe had a very difficult relationship with this “Ovambo” and he also suspected the man’s children of stealing his things. It should be noted, however, that the “Ovambo” was very poor, having no cattle and his socio-economic status was similar to many of the !Xun. Moreover, his wife was a !Xun woman and his children were regarded as !Xun as well.

There were differences in crime between Grootfontein and Swart Tak. In the latter the threat of being robbed by somebody, by a “chochi”, was, as is the case in other rural communities throughout sub-Saharan Africa, very small, if non-existent. Swart Tak was a small settlement and its dwellers knew each other. In Grootfontein, whose population in 2013 was approaching 20 000, most of the inhabitants did not know each other and this anonymity enabled a culture of crime. According to Kashe, the time before Christmas was a period when he had to be especially vigilant, because people would steal to get money to buy presents. “There is only one family,” Kashe sometimes claimed of Swart Tak. In Bushmanland people know each other. But here it’s town.” Stealing in Swart Tak was more difficult since the stolen thing would have to be hidden inside a hut but in such a small community with people frequently visiting each other it could easily be discovered. Thus, Kashe claimed that once he had constructed a bicycle for one of his sons, he would bring it to Bushmanland, because in Grootfontein other non-!Xun children would take it from them and he did not want to have to argue with their parents.

However, as we saw, even though Kashe idealised the life in Bushmanland when he felt dissatisfied in Grootfontein, the problem of stealing among his relatives existed in both the urban and rural environments. According to Kashe, people stole things from each other to sell them and have some income with which they could buy food or alcohol. In 2011, a year later, Kashe was convinced that the !Xun in Swart Tak had sold some of his things, such as the harness for horses or donkeys, to the black people living in neighbouring Roodidag.

What explains the pattern of theft among relatives but not from the non-!Xun? I observed that the !Xun in the town were careful to avoid any conflict situation with the non-!Xun. For several reasons: 1) they felt physically weaker; 2) they felt that if the police were to get involved, they would side with the black people, since there were no !Xun working for the police and 3) theft among the !Xun relatives makes it morally more difficult for the victims to report the crime to the police. In the urban environment the !Xun avoided confrontation with the non-!Xun also since they were in a minority. Even though I do not have any evidence for it, I surmise that it might happen that the !Xun were „encouraged“ to steal from each other when drinking alcohol.

Property and mobility: farms and communal area, township

When Kashe acquired his hut in Swart Tak and his shack in Grootfontein, he moved to each place in order to check his property there. Property made Kashe like any other !Xun who would look after it and „follow“ it. The prerequisite for acquiring any by !Xun standards more valuable property was having a permanent cash income or a close relationship to one's employers be it at the farm, in the communal area or in the urban area. Then the workers could acquire under advantageous conditions the animals, old bicycles or, exceptionally, even cars, old TVs, old beds. This relationship could, however, develop mostly only when the !Xun worked for the same employer for a lengthy period. Most of the !Xun I interviewed frequently moved from one farm to another, which hindered their attempts at accumulating property. Another problem lay in having no permanent place to stay at the farms.

Looking at the movements in Kashe's life and the reasons behind them helps to some extent to explain why he struggled to accumulate property when staying in the farm and communal area.

In the past some !Xun managed to acquire some livestock at the farms. This would only happen if the !Xun stayed at one farm for a long period, which led to the deepening of bonds and feelings of mutual trust between the worker and the *eienaar*, who then gave his workers some animals, which would start to reproduce, and so the process would begin.

Kashe's family got some livestock at farm Jumkaub, where Kashe was born. According to his father, each of his children was given some goats by the farmer. His family owned there at some point approximately 15 goats, 10 cows and 4 donkeys. Nevertheless, when they were leaving the *plaas*, father Willem had to sell all the animals, because at another farm he would have to pay fees for grazing and watering them.⁴¹¹ Taking animals from one farm to another has generally remained an obstacle hindering the farmworkers (not only the !Xun) from accumulating some property since some farmers might also disagree with their owning animals. Transport might also be problematic. However, it seems that the practise of giving workers some livestock has nowadays largely been abandoned.

Since Kashe became an adult capable of work at a farm, he has stayed at the farms for only short periods, which hindered the accumulation of property. The only exemption was the farm Klippan, where he worked between 1990 - 1994, for a period even as a foreman. By 1994 he owned a donkey cart, two donkeys and a bicycle there. He got the donkey car after repairing it. The donkeys belonged initially to his father, but since he could not take them with him to another farm, Kashe took them, but he had to pay 50 NS monthly in grazing and watering fees for each animal. Kashe bought the bicycle in 1990 from a Damara man called Sam who was working at the Maroelaboom police station. However, Kashe lost all of his property after he was severely beaten by the farmer for damaging his car in December 1994 and subsequently left the farm.

„I took only my health passport and had to get away,“ recalled Kashe in 2010. The only property he managed to keep were the shoes, trousers, shirt and hut he was wearing as he fled. He then did not venture back to Klippan to recover take anything. In 2010, when I talked with him about the fortunes of the property lost at Klippan, he did know what had happened with his cart, but thought the farmer had sold it as scrap metal. Kashe's father took the donkeys to

⁴¹¹ For the money bought Willem materials needed for constructing a donkey cart (he kept the donkeys) such as wheels, the axe and brets and also blankets and clothes for the children.

a farm near Berg Aukas and lent them to a !Xun man (his relative) working there before going to another place. But when he later asked for the animals, the man told him they had strayed and some Hereros had taken them. The bicycle was initially used by the husband of Kashe's sister Katrine who carried on working at Klippan after Kashe's hasty departure. Later on, it was, however, taken by a !Xun called Ágrob, who took at Klippan Kashe's wife Martha. According to Kashe, Ágrob later sold the bicycle.

Kashe allegedly told Martha, who stayed at the farm, to take some of his belongings, including the clothes, to Grootfontein, but in vain: „People say yes, but do nothing.” According to Kashe, the !Xun workers at Klippan were afraid of taking his things away, since the *eienaar* would find out they had given them to Kashe. He also suspected some of them wanted to take his property. Kashe has never learned what happened to the clothes: „I really don't know.” Kashe told me in 2010 that had there not been the violent incident with the farmer and he had stayed there, he was doing so well that he would even have acquired a car at Klippan.

Many !Xun wished to have their own herd of cows. Kashe owned a cow only once in his life. It was at the time when he was in Ozongune in former Hereroland working for a Herero called Djandero between 1998 - 1999. He neither bought it nor did the Herero give it to him. It was a stray male calf that he came across in the bush. Kashe claimed not to have been sure if he should keep it, but was „persuaded“ to do so by the Herero. However, Kashe claimed he could not take the bull to Kameelwoud in Bushmanland, where he had his hut at that time, because of the veterinary border line separating the former Hereroland from the communal area of erstwhile Bushmanland. In his version, he did not have his ID card, the submission of which was a requirement for obtaining a permit to move the animal in his name to Bushmanland. So he agreed with Djandero to sell the animal and with part of the money to buy a horse, which he bought from Djandero. According to him there was no restriction on moving horses between the two areas. Kashe came back to Kameelwoud with the horse in 1999 and in 2002 it gave birth to a foal. Kashe now had two horses to use while looking after the Hereros' cattle or visiting his kin in Bushmanland and on adjoining farms.

As described in chapter dealing with Kashe's movement history, when he was outside Bushmanland, whether at a farm, in Hereroland or in Grootfontein, he asked his relatives to take care of the animals and their state of health was a constant source of preoccupation for him. In fact, his horses moved freely in the area along the Omatako Omuramba in whose pans there was often some water. When Kashe was at the farm Eldoret in March - April 2003, he asked the farmer to lend him a horse and to give him a short period of leave so that he could check the horses in Bushmanland. But when he was working at Katomama in Hereroland later that year he was told by some !Xun moving between this area and a farm near Roidag that the younger horse died. When Kashe came to Kameelwoud, some people confirmed to him that it had died, but he suspected it had been stolen since he did not find any bones at the place where it allegedly died. He then found the older horse near the Kanovlei settlement. Kashe suspected /Turus had been riding it since there were marks on its back from a saddle and so he took the horse to /Káandu where was his brother living.

In the beginning of 2007 when Kashe was at farm Brandberg news reached him (from his relative also working at the farm, who had heard it from the !Xun from plot 2 in Blikkiesdorp), that his second horse had also allegedly died. Kashe wanted to go to Swart Tak to find out what had happened, but the farmer told him he would allow him to go there only at the end of the month. Later in Grootfontein, nevertheless, he met his niece from Swart Tak who confirmed that the animal was indeed dead. In 2008, when we talked about these

events, he blamed the owner of the farm who had not allowed him to go to Bushmanland immediately. However, in 2010 he claimed that he could not look after the horse because his wife Lucia had personal feuds with other people in Swart Tak and was refusing to go there. He also believed the horse had died due to the bad treatment it received from the !Xun who were riding it. It must be added that Kashe was not keen to acquire these animals at the farms, since he, and, according to him, other !Xun, could easily move around there with bicycles because the roads had hardened surfaces. In Bushmanland, with its sandy ground, a horse was, however, a more appropriate means of transport.

It was also in Ozongune that Kashe, as an adult, acquired a goat and dogs. He was given the goat by his employer Djandero. In this case, he wanted to take the goat to Bushmanland and acquire a herd, but had the same problem with crossing the veterinary cordon line. Thus, he agreed with Djandero that he would sell the animal, Djandero would keep the money and give him a saddle instead. With a certain bitterness, Kashe also recalled that he almost managed to enlarge his herd when his goat gave birth to two kids, but they died soon after. Kashe laid the blame on Djandero, who purportedly vaccinated only his own goats and not Kashe's. The dogs, two puppies, were also obtained at Ozongune and Kashe planned to take the animals to Kameelwoud. However, both dogs fell sick at Ozongune and died.

Kashe has three times owned some chickens. The first time he was given some by his father, who bred them at farm Wackies. The second time he reared his own flock of chickens at farm Klippan. He started with only one hen, given to him by his father's brother, and subsequently the flock grew to 25 - 30 birds. When leaving the farm, Kashe's relatives ate most of them and he transported the rest to farm Jagterslust, where his mother's „sister“ Emma and her man Anton lived. The flock rose to 50 animals there. Anton also sold some of them occasionally. When in 2003, however, Anton and Emma decided to go from the farm to the village of Grashoek in Bushmanland, Anton decided to take the animals by donkey cart to Kashe, who was at that time in Kameelwoud. Nevertheless, all the animals died during the arduous trip with the exception of one bird, which Kashe sold for 10 NS.

Conclusions

Observing the !Xun material culture as an outsider, it is often not easy to see significant differences: most of the !Xun in the Grootfontein township lived in shacks, wore ragged old clothes and did not own many valuable objects. A closer look at the material objects belonging to Kashe's relatives, however, revealed that their socio-economic statuses, economic strategies, and the nature of their support networks and aspirations could in some aspects differ.

The fact that Kashe had so many dumped items at home demonstrated that he did not have other means to acquire these objects and mirrored his characteristic of being convinced that each thing might somehow prove to be useful. He liked to try to repair things and tried to use them or their parts in an innovative way. However, the difference between Kashe and other !Xun was a question of extent. Most of other !Xun men took home dumped things they hoped to repair and use, although not as often as Kashe did. Kashe was in this way rather an extreme. Max, the "owner" of plot 2, was living on *zula* like Kashe, but in contrast to Kashe he confined his search to dumped food and did not use to bring home many non-food objects.

The fact that many !Xun were bringing home discarded items did not seem to be a way of obtaining European objects associated with prestige, in a way as was observed in different Bushmen groups in older studies (e.g. Guenther 1976: 128). It was often the only way to acquire things needed in daily life (clothes, utensils, building materials) or access difficult-to-get objects (radio/ bicycle spare parts).⁴¹²

Collecting discarded objects was also a matter of opportunity. When I came to Grootfontein at the end of 2011 there were only a few new things in Kashe's dwellings since my last visit there more than a year before (Kashe had found in the meantime three umbrellas, an axe and sheep shears which he intended to use for cutting grass and bush) because Kashe had spent much of the time working at a farm, where he could not collect such objects.

Kashe's brother Andris spent most of the the period between 2007 and 2010 at the farms. I gathered the most detailed data on the objects he owned in 2007 after he returned to Grootfontein from a farm, allegedly near Windhoek, where he had stayed for several months. As with Kashe, many of the things Andris possessed in 2007 he had found in Grootfontein: a jacket, a paraffin stove (but without the lid for the tank), strings, two water boiling pots (they did not work but Andris planned to repair them), some radio and tape recorder components, a cassette, a few bags, a chisel, a hinge, a broom, a fragment of a mirror, plastic flowers and a plastic flower pot, two metal bars which he planned to use to construct a table, three hangers, some mugs and cans and a plethora of various components. Andris thought they might be of use one day. In this way he acted similarly to Kashe and although it was not as conspicuous he also tried to access some more prestigious objects such as a radio by attempting to repair the broken ones he had found and by collecting spare parts. In 2007 he brought some pieces of tin from an empty car battery from the farm and wanted to use the melted tin to connect radio cables.

However, a substantial number of Andris' possessions were already from the farm from which he had just returned. Andris had obtained some clothes, a blanket, three small pillows, a ceramic mug, a few plastic bowls and two plates and he was allowed take from the farm

⁴¹² The strategy to collect dumped useful things is evidently common to all Bushmen groups, because it is often the only way how to acquire them. Thus, the Bushmen in Botswana are also regarded as „rubbish people“ (Hayes 2006: 38, quoting Xhwaa Qubi of the Bokamoso preschool project).

strings, a broken wood rasp, some cables and two Sony chargers (he wanted to use the cables to make a radio antenna) and a shoe brush. The farmer also gave him a tooth brush, tooth paste and a mosquito killing spray. The farmer's wife gave Andris's wife a piece of a cloth and piece of a curtain, with which she adorned the wall behind the bed in the hut in Blikkiesdorp and also used it as a tablecloth, and a damaged ceramic flower pot. She also brought a cheap perfume from the farm.

Andris earned more money at the farm than Kashe acquired by gathering bottles, and he also received food rations there. However, in 2007, after he had spent several months at the farm, I could not observe yet any major difference in the number of prestigious objects they owned. But at the end of 2010, after he had spent about three years at another farm called Kamatete with a wage around 600 NS monthly, the difference in the number prestigious objects owned by Kashe and Andris was obvious. While Kashe kept on gathering broken things, Andris owned a TV (which had cost 989 NS), a small solar panel and the necessary voltage inventor (he bought them each for around 350 each at a Chinese shop) and an antenna (also from the Chinese shop for 50 NS), he already had his third cell phone and, according to Kashe, he wore much better clothes than his brother. Andris could also afford to buy a blanket or some utensils such as metal bowls. Andris claimed that he had used saved money and had not had to take out credit to buy the expensive electronics. The fact that Andris had managed to acquire some valuable things appeared to be a result of several factors: he had a regular income and in his spending habits he seemed to be quite disciplined. He did not visit the township often and so avoided sharing his money. Andris had only two children, one of whom was already a young adult man providing for himself while the other was often looked after by some of his relatives.

Looking at their whole life both Kashe and his three years older brother Andris had similar migration histories behind them. They spent much of their lives at farms and in Bushmanland, Grootfontein became an important place for them only after 2003 or 2004. Like Kashe, Andris also had plans to settle again in Bushmanland and in 2007 he talked about acquiring a plot in Omatako, but during the period of my research he seemed to prefer the farms, where he managed to find work and could provide for his family. This was also evident from the stated purpose of the objects he owned. Conspicuously, Kashe often gathered things he might use in Bushmanland. By contrast, in 2007 the only objects Andris possessed with the intention of taking to Bushmanland were a few papaya and flower seeds. He kept the papaya seeds after eating the fruit and he gathered flower seeds from plants in the township with the aim of planting them one day in Omatako.

Kashe's peers and relatives Mathias and Veronika lived at plot 1 from 2009 and the time of my third research trip. In contrast to Kashe and Andris, Mathias, the breadwinner, refused to *zula* and he preferred yardwork in the town to farmwork. Mathias earned a few hundred NS in the town and from looking at their possessions it was clear they could afford to buy only rather small objects occasionally. The most expensive object in their dwelling was an electronic piano Mathias played in the church and that he had bought for 390 NS in a Chinese shop. In 2010 it was, however, broken. They also owned some blankets, a pot, a plate, a bowl, some cups and some clothes. Mathias, a regular church-goer, was also given some things at the church by men of various ethnic backgrounds: he had obtained for example a big soundbox from a Hai/om, a jacket from a Damara, a shirt and overall jacket from an Ovambo. For Veronika an important person seemed to be her sister, who worked as a cleaner in the prison in the Tsumkwe settlement. She gave her, for example, a skirt, a sweater and a blanket. In addition they had been presented with some smaller things by their eldest son, who was starting to work at the farm. Interestingly, the largest material objects in their two-room

dwelling - two beds and a table - were not theirs. One of the beds and the table were borrowed from Veronika's sister and she was expecting them to pay for them one day, and the second bed had been borrowed by Mathias from his brother at the farm. Mathias also had some things given to him by the whites for whom he had previously done yardwork in the town: a metal chair, two buckets, a pair of shoes and the water tank from a ceramic toilet which he, of course could not use in his shack. The employer he was working for in 2010 did not give him anything, but during the time of my research that year he lent him a spade. Though to a far lesser extent than Kashe, Mathias also took home dumped items. For instance, in Grootfontein he found, and repaired, a table and a small soundbox. He had at home a radio, which he received from a "Damara" friend. There were two other radios and a TV in his house, but none of these was his: his relatives brought them to him hoping that he would repair them.

Another example for comparison is Kashe's brother's brother-in-law Lukas, who occasionally did some yardwork in the town and who was living at plot 1 as well. He built his small shack there after being released from prison. Almost all the furniture he had was from Kashe's brother Andris: an iron bed, two buckets, a blanket, a pot, two tables, and a plastic water canister among other things. He had been given some of the other items at church, bought some and his employers handed some on to him. Lukas almost never went on *zula* and he did not go to the town's commercial centre often. Kashe claimed Lukas was "lazy" and just took from others. Neither Lukas nor Mathias thought of going to Bushmanland and did not have any objects to be used there.

I did not count all the objects, including the plethora of small components, possessed by Kashe in Grootfontein, but they may well have gone into the hundreds.⁴¹³ Some lay in the shack next to the walls so that they did not hamper people's movement, other were on bent wires used to fix the construction, but Kashe placed most of them into various bags and boxes he had found in the town. I counted 21 bags of various sizes in his dwelling in Grootfontein in 2009. Kashe hanged them on the walls of his "bedroom". The number of objects Kashe had in Swart Tak was significantly smaller, since there was virtually nothing to find there. The objects Kashe possessed moved de facto only in one direction - from Grootfontein to Swart Tak. Kashe, however, never said that he preferred to stay in Grootfontein because there were so many things to find. Except for the building material (metal sheets, wires, poles) and objects he could sell (bottles, scrapped metals), he never deliberately went out to look for things such as clothes or utensils, but found them by chance when looking for the main objects of his searches.

The material culture objects unambiguously revealed that Kashe connected his future with both Grootfontein and Swart Tak, although later on he was more inclined to stay in the township. He thought of improving his dwellings in both places. In Grootfontein he gathered many objects with the prospect that he would take them to use in Bushmanland: plant seeds he could plant there to make his plot in Swart Tak pleasant; clothes and shoes he could give to his relatives there, straps from bags and ropes he could use as harness for the donkey and/or horse he wished to acquire one day and which he would also use when he became a horse buster; components for building a donkey cart and spare parts to construct a bicycle his son could use for going to school. Kashe hoped to acquire a power generator and, thus, he would have light at his hut in Swart Tak and for this purpose he took a broken car light to Swart Tak. With a power generator, he thought he could operate a welding machine, another longed for object, or a fridge, which would enable him to set up a small shop in which he could offer

⁴¹³ The Nharo Bushmen living in the bush were reported to use around 80 items and those living at the farm around 100 items (Guenther 1986: 111-112).

cool drinks. The advertisement stand for mascaras he found in Grootfontein would serve as a cash box there.



Picture 56. An advertisement stand for mascaras that Kashe wanted to use as a cash box in his prospective shop in Swart Tak.

On the other hand, this look at the material culture objects similarly clearly revealed that Kashe also associated his future with Blikkiesdorp. He tried to maintain his dwelling there. He thought of transforming his “bedroom” into a small shop, where he would display the goods to be sold in a bicycle basket he found in the town. He built a table in his “bedroom” and placed on it a table cloth he found in the town; he was repairing the broken chairs he found in the township; he thought of having a washbasin in the kitchen; put a translucent strip of plastic above the door to the kitchen so that it looked like a window; put, according to him, a nice piece of flattened car cabin with the tanking hole in the front wall of his shack so that it could be seen from the street; brought home a found flower pot with plastic plants and discarded wooden frames, in which he intended to put pictures and hang them on the wall inside his dwelling. He also kept on repairing and adorning his cart.

Kashe also often thought of starting a small business, which would enable him to abandon his *zula* life. Most of Kashe’s plans, however, ran aground on the rocks of his lack of financial means to acquire the objects he longed for: the price of a welding machine of about 3000 NS was several times higher than the average wage of a !Xun farm worker. Moreover, the very nature of some of the businesses he envisaged would require further initial investments: the welding machine would be of no use without a power generator, which was also very expensive, and to use this Kashe would have to buy diesel. He also would have to buy welding sticks and have cash reserves which could be called on in case the welding machine or the diesel generator needed to be repaired. This made Kashe’s plans (entirely) unrealisable. As we saw, due to his precarious financial situation, he could barely use a torch, since he was hardly able to save the few NS needed to buy batteries and for similar reasons he struggled to use a radio. It was only due to his inventiveness that before acquiring the solar panel he was able to power the radio using a dumped car battery, which he charged in the sun. Despite his inventiveness in managing to repair a radio or alarm clock or build a cart, he was unable to construct more sophisticated things such as a bicycle or a power generator from found materials. Importantly, even though his plans were far from being materialised, they gave direction and meaning to his life.

As we saw, despite Kashe's idealising of Bushmanland, his property was not safe in Swart Tak either. Importantly, I observed that Kashe's negative statements about Grootfontein in this respect were often situational; he put it in contrast to the idealised Swart Tak whenever he was for some reason dissatisfied with his life in the town.

Conclusions

Complex processes

The issue of the urbanisation of the !Xun in Grootfontein, or other Bushmen groups within the present-day commercial farming area of Namibia, is likely to become an important subject of study for researchers and a topic to be dealt with for Namibian state authorities.

Statements about the !Xun living in the town as being the most desperate ones, who were virtually forced to live there as a last resort - to live in an hostile urban environment - seem to be too simplistic and hinder us from grasping the issue in all its complexity. At the same time, such statements implicitly support the notion that the Bushmen by their nature do not „belong“ to the urban environment and that their lives there must be less satisfactory than at the farms or communal areas. Such perceptions tend to view the Bushmen one-sidedly as passive victims of the socio-economic system and deny their autonomy to act.

The aim of this study was to highlight a range of complexities that accompany the urbanisation process of the Bushmen, while avoiding approaching the phenomenon in a simplistic way, to which non-specialists and even some academics might not be entirely immune, avoiding giving the impression that the urbanisation of the Bushmen in the studied area, and evidently elsewhere as well, is a move of “pure” hunter-gatherers, used only to their “traditional” natural environment, into an alienating “big city” city space - as some might imagine, for example, a Bushman with a loincloth and bow on his shoulder lost in an overcrowded modern shopping centre.

As highlighted in the study, the !Xun in the area of concern were not living in splendid “untainted” isolation in precolonial days before the establishment of the first urban spaces. The urban spaces in Namibia developed, often gradually, from settlements of a small number of white settlers, and therefore called during the German period *Orte* or *Plätze* and which could host, if they were not mines, only limited numbers of the native population, for whom they presented employment opportunities. These places often resembled small rural settlements, as was the case of Grootfontein.

While the influx of the natives during the first phase of German colonisation was to some degree spontaneous, it became gradually more strictly regulated and remained like this throughout the South African period until the second half of the 1970s. During this period in order to stay in the town breadwinners were legally bound to have work and a place to stay in the town, for which rent had to be paid; only then could they be joined by a spouse and children. To fulfil these conditions on a long-term basis might be difficult and in the case of Grootfontein a large part of the urban population stayed there only for a limited time. The aim of the German and South African administration was to keep the urban population at its lowest possible level to satisfy the town’s economic needs. This enabled them to distribute the labour force to other areas short of labour and to make towns controllable spaces.

As pointed out in this study, in the 1920s in the Grootfontein district there might have been a significant population of Bushmen urban dwellers which soon decreased and it was only in the first years of the 21st century that this number was exceeded, when Blikkiesdorp developed.

If the statistical data are correct, I suggest we can explain the initially higher numbers of Bushmen in the urban areas in the following ways: the urban spaces drew the local Bushmen populations into them in the beginnings, but they gradually lost out to non-Bushmen, who fulfilled better the administration's criteria for employment in the town. Ovambo/Kavango contract workers for the urban areas were provided also by SWANLA, headquartered in Grootfontein. Wages in the town were higher and, thus, it was more advantageous to work in the town than on the farms. However, the Bushmen often lost out with other natives in the competition for employment in the urban areas.

The way they were classified and stereotyped by the whites must also have played a role in the Bushmen not being employed in the urban environment. They were regarded as the most backward natives and worst workers, preferably to be employed only where was no other option, such as on the farms in the scarcely-populated former Bushmen territories. At the same time the fact that the Bushmen were regarded as the most uncivilised led to their being paid less than non-Bushmen, in the beginning only with food, old clothes and tobacco, and made their employment at the farms to some extent advantageous.

If the whites regarded the blacks as people with less needs than themselves, they recognised only minimal needs for the Bushmen. „The needs of a Bushmen are few, and provided he can get food and tobacco he is satisfied. He has no desire for money, clothing or civilized luxuries,“ was Doke's perception of the !Xun at farm Neitsas and in the area east of it (Doke 1925: 41 - 43). These stereotypes about the Bushmen became deeply internalised by the whites and hindered the attempts of the former to change their status. The Bushmen in this area are judged similarly even today, be it by white farmers or non-whites. „They don't want to come into the civilisation,“ the principal of Omulunga school in Grootfontein commented in 2008 on the high drop-out rate of San children. The fact that the !Xun were to some extent stigmatised and despised by the non-Bushmen co-shaped their self-identity as marginalised people, hindered their development and limited their ability to assert themselves economically, except for doing the least well-paid manual work. In the area of my study it was generally hold by the non-Bushmen that the needs of the !Xun and San generally are satisfied „if their stomach is full“ and they were treated correspondingly.

The less time Bushmen spent in the urban environment, which meant mostly the location, the more difficult it was for them to penetrate its regulated space and the more it became a social domain of the non-Bushmen. Generally, in the towns there were also (government-aided) mission schools, which provided the children of the town dwellers with the opportunity to obtain some elementary education, which gave them an advantage over the Bushmen living in school-void farm areas. The non-Bushmen town dwellers learnt its social environment and how to exploit its employment opportunities. Importantly, those who stayed in the town could be followed there by their kinfolk. Thus, in the course of time it became more difficult for the !Xun to penetrate the urban space. Once the urban environment became too non-Bushmen, it must have dissuaded some Bushmen from entering it since it was a socially alien environment. Thus, before independence, according to my information, there were no !Xun „townspeople“, no families that lived permanently in the location.

The marginality of the !Xun in the area of concern has galvanised their intra-group social ties and dependency. Georg Simmels' rule that the intensity of a group's cohesion increases with the level of strained relationships towards the *Others* applies to the !Xun in the Grootfontein area. There developed strained relationships between the Bushmen and Upingtonia settlers. This was followed by the harsh approach of the Germans, which later during the German rule

reached genocidal levels. The Bushmen were then „pacified“ during the South African rule for two decades in the farm border areas, especially in the Nurugas area.

Even though, there may have been individual differences among the farmers, the Bushmen were harshly treated also by some farm owners up to independence. Beatings by the farmers were a frequent occurrence. After independence these became less frequent, but did not disappear. The conflict-laden relationship between the farmers and the !Xun mutated into new forms, such as constant quarrelling about wages and rations.

The intra-group bonds have been further constantly activated due to the economic vulnerability of the !Xun in all the socio-economic environments in which they appear, be it urban, farm or communal area. The observation of the Grootfontein administrators, certainly not the best observers of Bushmen life, that the tribal system of the natives within the Police Zone was virtually broken, but the Bushmen followed the „family system“, mirrors these developments. Strong dependency on the kin have also co-hindered the movement of the !Xun out of their „traditional“ areas, where their kin networks are at their densest and provide them with social security. This also helped keep them at the farms.

As we saw, the !Xun often used to and still do move from one farm to another in kin-related groups. Even today in Grootfontein's urban environment the !Xun live in kin clusters and even the non-!Xun township dwellers observe that the !Xun are people who always move in the town in groups. Similarly, Sylvain (1999: 374) observed that young Ju/'hoan men move in the Epako township in „gangs“.

The circular migration patterns of Bantu or Damara people from the communal areas, their „home base“, to the towns in the commercial farming area, mostly the capital Windhoek, have been extensively reported. They often go to the towns, following their kin, in search of work or a generally better life and can always return „home“ to the communal farms, when unemployed or ill. The latter is an area to which they often relate their hopes and aspirations and they plan to go back there at the latest when they grow old (Greiner 2008: 160). These migrants can now build on historically created kin networks that are spread over large areas, often far away the home areas of their ethnic group.

In the case of the !Xun and other Bushmen groups, these networks stretching out of the traditionally inhabited areas hardly exist. The !Xun, mostly categorised as the worst workers among all the native groups were (and often are) used mostly as farm labourers in areas where they live. This applies also to the farm areas close to Omuramba Omatako dry rived bed east of Grootfontein.

The !Xun could move further out of their original territories following their kin and the white farmers. However, the farmers did not have a reason to take the !Xun in large numbers to other areas, if they could use the local inhabitants there as workers. Thus, the !Xun did not „jump“ from one region to another as was the case of the Bantu contract workers, some of whom then permanently settled in the new spaces and built „bases“ in a foreign environment, on which could capitalise in their movements their kin. There is virtually nothing close to what could be described as a !Xun „migrant“ or even a „Bushman migrant“. Pendleton and Frayne (1998) documented that migrating Namibians mostly stay with their relatives, but quite a significant number of urban dwellers move to a different urban site without having to rely on the kin. This, however, does not apply to the !Xun in the studied area.

The !Xun could only penetrate into neighbouring areas. However, when they came across areas inhabited by other peoples, their movement seems to be significantly halted. Thus, they

did not move far west of Grootfontein, where the Hai//om traditionally lived. Grootfontein seems not to lie too far from their westernmost pre-colonial geographical spread.⁴¹⁴

Sylvain states that the concept of urban and rural sites, whether the latter would represent the periphery, does not reflect the Ju/'hoan Bushmen perception: "... from the Ju/'hoansi's point of view, the 'periphery' would be any site - rural or urban - where jobs are scarce or insecure and where making a living is most difficult" (Sylvain 1999: 376 - 7). In fact for the !Xun I observed that periphery is comprehended strongly in the sense of *social periphery* in a threefold sense: 1) the presence or lack of presence of the kin, mirroring a situation in which the !Xun often struggle to acquire work and have to rely on mutual support; 2) contacts to potential employers, for instance whites, for whom the !Xun used to work in the past and 3) contacts with !Xun and non-!Xun friends.

Many !Xun, who decided to settle in Grootfontein did so after working throughout their lives at the farms close to the town or for some periods even in the town itself. Without contacts in the urban space, which were more developed the longer a person stayed in this area, it would be more difficult to find employment opportunities there. The !Xun who had lived at the farms or in the communal area lacked this social capital to move to the town. For many Grootfontein urban dwellers Bushmanland was periphery because they had only a few kinspeople there and vice versa and both imagined their lives in the other environment as one which would see them eking out a living.

Similar patterns of staying within the spaces occupied by the kin were also observed in other Bushmen groups. Between 1980 and 1982 127 people in total „migrated“ from Tsumkwe settlement, the biggest settlement of the Ju/'hoansi in former eastern Bushmanland. However, a majority stayed in its broader region, between Dobe and Central Bushmanland, and few went up to western Bushmanland, and then apparently only to follow their kin. Only one went to Grootfontein /to jail/ and two to Rundu /prison/ (Marshall and Ritchie 1984: 46).⁴¹⁵

Similarly, only a very few Kxoe from Western Caprivi found jobs in urban places outside this area such as in Windhoek, Grootfontein, Rundu and Tsumkwe, where they worked for the army, the police, for hunting safaris or obtained work at supermarkets (Brenzinger 1996: 26).

The Bushmen Diri, in the biographical novel *Diri, Ein Buschmannleben* (1943) by the German farmer and writer Bernhard Voigt, can be regarded as a prototype of the unchangeable Bushman wanderer in the Western imagination,. Diri lived during the dry season with the Hereros at Omuramba Omatako and after the onset of the rains moved into the *Sandfeld*. As a „Landstreicher“ he went alone on foot from Karakuwisa to the south through the regions of Okahandja and Windhoek and wandered through Namaland and Hereroland. Later, he decided to go to the area north of Tsumeb to attack Ovambo workers on their way home from the diamond fields at Lüderitzbucht and steal their goods. He also went

⁴¹⁴ I am aware of the fact that the evidence about the distribution of the !Xun in the Grootfontein farm area in the past may play a role in their prospective future attempts to establish their Traditional Authority Office and its location. This study should not be regarded as flawlessly determining the former !Xun-Hai//om border in the area on which it focuses. Nonetheless, it is doubtful if the interests of the !Xun, who were for generations living in large numbers in the Grootfontein farm area and some of them for periods also in its urban settlements, can be effectively represented by the Omatako !Kung traditional authority, being located in a totally different socio-economic domain of the communal area of former Bushmanland. At the same time given the increasing numbers of the !Xun in Grootfontein, and how intensively are their kin networks interwoven with the farm area, the reasons for calling for establishing a kind of their representing authority in Grootfontein seem to be justifiable.

⁴¹⁵ That time the Ju/'hoansi were motivated to stay in this area also by the presence of South African army.

to Grootfontein, was sent to Gaub mission, which he twice left and to which he twice returned. Once he left after the onset of the rains when he started to feel as the „Zugvögeln beim Wechsel der Jahreszeiten“ und decided to go closer to the sea! For his „Landstreicherei“ he was several times apprehended and transported to other places, for example to Maltahöhe, Gibeon and Otjiwarongo. In the end he decided to return to his original band.

Probably to present Diri's life realistically, his story unfolds with a background of many historical events, such as the arrival of German colonists, the rinderpest epidemic of 1897, Herero uprising, the period of "Bushmen plague" and World War I. and he encounters such historical figures as Bezirkshauptmann von Zastrow or missionary Vedder. In the light of what was said above it is needless to highlight that he would have hardly ever left his home area and ventured alone into far away spaces without any kin, which in fact must have represented for him socially totally unknown and entirely insecure environment.

Given what was said above about the regulated colonial urban space and the factors hindering the movement of the Bushmen into it, we may change the way the researchers have approached Bushmen urbanisation so far: the right organizing question may not be why were so few Bushmen, given their total numbers, in the urban areas in the past, but how is it possible that, given the mentioned factors, so many of them, relatively, still penetrated it? There were several factors:

- ✓ Following the white owners of the farms (and their kin) who had houses in the location. These !Xun could stay in the white employers' *buitekamer* (staff room as part of the house or separated from it).
- ✓ The !Xun women came to Grootfontein with their non-!Xun, mostly Ovambo and Kavango, partners, who came to Grootfontein area as contract workers. Their stay in the location depended on the man's employment.
- ✓ The !Xun could follow their !Xun kin or, to a much smaller degree, their non-!Xun affines' (of the !Xun women staying with non-!Xun men) network in the location.
- ✓ Generally, the longer a !Xun stayed in the urban environment or at farms and plots in its vicinity, the better this person knew the employment opportunities in the town and could look for and find work there.

Many of the !Xun in Grootfontein at the time of my research had non-Bushmen fathers. We may ask to what extent the affiliation with the non-Bushmen from the father's side, with their higher social status, influenced their children's psychological mind set regarding their confidence to enter and assert themselves in a multiethnic urban environment. This mind set could apparently develop if the father stayed with the family for a lengthy period. As we know, some of the contract workers settled in the town with the family they built there. This was also the case for the extraterritorial workers, who tended to keep to their families in the Police Zone, since they were cut-off from their distant ethnic kin networks. The appearance of the !Xun from inter-ethnic unions, who did not look „typically“ Bushmen, may have contributed to their somewhat easier existence in the urban environment as well. The non-Bushmen fathers generally had better jobs and earned higher wages than the !Xun, which enabled their families to have, to some degree, better lives and enjoy higher status.

Generally, even though there were always some Bushmen in Grootfontein under German and South African rule, they did not appear in the records of the town's authorities outside the

statistics for native dwellers. It is apparent that the administrators focused only on the larger ethnic groups that were relevant numerically and economically and, after the beginning of the native liberation effort, could pose a security threat for the colonial administration. The location's Bushmen minority, scattered across its whole, was not an element worthy of much attention. Therefore, in terms of primary written sources, these Bushmen urban dwellers are virtually invisible. The study of archival records also indicates that the smaller an ethnic minority was in the Grootfontein urban environment, the more its members resorted to conformity with the *Others* and the less they were visible.

Concepts

The relaxation of mobility controls in the second half of the 1970s and even independence did not have an immediate significant influence on the mobility of the !Xun to Grootfontein. A crucial prerequisite for staying in the town remained having a place to live. Since the !Xun, mostly former farm workers with limited skills marketable in the town, did not secure employment that would enable them to rent houses there and the town's authorities prohibited the establishment of illegal settlements, there were for a long time no places for the !Xun to stay. The fact that in Blikkiesdorp and later on in the extension next to it some !Xun were allocated by the municipality their „own“ plot created a historically new situation. Up to that time, the !Xun had never had places in Grootfontein to dwell without the condition of being employed.

The terms used by the !Xun reveal that urbanisation as a conspicuous move to the towns and the development of the differences in social status and cultural styles between the urban and non-urban dwellers has not been developed by the !Xun yet. The Damara>Nama speakers call townspeople „gai !a-//in“ and they enjoy higher social status than the „farm//in“, the farm dwellers. This term differentiation reflects the long exposure of these peoples to the urban environment within the former Police Zone, which made them different to those on the farms. Similarly, the Hereros do have a term for town dwellers „tate ngo owozondwa“ (look at the person who is living in town like a 'civilised person') in contrast to „ovozofarama“ (farm people). Among Oshivambo-speaking people we find the expression „Ombwiti“, whose meaning is close to the term „Siconi“ applied by the Lozi people and is used for migrants from the rural area to the town who forget their cultural roots (Pendleton and Frayne 1998: 5 - 6).

The !Xun do not seem to have any similar terms and they do not have a term for their own „townspeople“, they do not even use the Afrikaans term *dorpenaar*. Most of the !Xun I found dwelling in the township of Grootfontein during my research have only been living there for a few years and regarded themselves as former farmworkers. “The people of the town are not the people of the farm” (Die mense van die dorp hulle is nie mense van die pleuse), claimed Kashe. “I'm the farm man, I stay here (in Grootfontein) only because of *zula*.” Gertrud, the wife of Andris from plot 8, once said: „We are not the town's people“ (On is nie die dorp se mense). Both of them have, however, lived in Grootfontein without interruption already since 2003. The economic vulnerability of the !Xun in the urban, farm and communal environment is so high, and their income differences relatively so small, that no striking specific differences in the „culture style“ of the Bushmen in these spaces has developed.

The Grootfontein !Xun dwellers did not seem to conceptualize their urbanisation process. In fact, there seemed to be no significant “urbanisation discourse” which would deal with the tendency of moving to the towns among the Grootfontein-area !Xun. This might reflect the

fact that the !Xun did not regard going to the towns as a one-way movement and many of them did not consider a permanent stay in Grootfontein as economically viable. Town is for the !Xun, even for those who prefer staying there to living in other areas, not a space that offers an individual many chances for development or to make a career. There is no such prospect for an illiterate former farm worker or communal area dweller.

As pointed out elsewhere (Nedved 2014: forth.) among the !Xun in the Grootfontein area there did not seem to be any significant “urbanisation discourse”. Town is for the !Xun, even for those who prefer to live there than in other areas, not a space of many chances for individual development and socio-economic upliftment as we know it in a Western context. There is not such a prospect for an illiterate former farm worker or a communal area dweller. The lack of “urbanisation discourse” might also be caused by the nature of the social geography. Grootfontein is the only major urban settlement in the commercial farm area reached by the !Xun networks. Thus, the !Xun do not seem to perceive Grootfontein as a representative of urban spaces, but one concrete area with its own specific characteristics. The !Xun then viewed their mobility “rather as a process of moving among concrete places (Grootfontein, particular small settlements in the commercial or communal area and particular farms) and areas (farms generally, former Bushmanland and Hereroland) in a space whose borders were, to a significant extent, demarcated by the existence of their kin network” (Ibid).

Instead of generally discussing the “urbanisation process”, the !Xun discussed the concrete nature of living in Grootfontein. The !Xun also have not developed concepts for grounding the phenomenon of urbanization in their mother tongue. According to my informants, there is no !Xun equivalent to the word “town”. The !Xun use two terms *n!ore n//áa* and *n!ore ma*, “big place” and “small place”, but my informants could not agree on their application. There was only agreement that the small units - villages and settlements in Bushmanland were *n!ore ma*; the use of *n!ore n//áa* was unclear, some of the !Xun claiming it could be applied to Grootfontein, others saying *n!ore n//áa* must be as large as Windhoek or Walvis Bay. However, the English equivalent of *n!ore* seems rather to be “area”, in Afrikaans “gebied”. Another term the !Xun use is *!ae* with a meaning similar to “village”.⁴¹⁶ My informants claimed it could be applied to small settlements such as Omatako or Swart Tak in former Bushmanland, and also to small farms in the commercial farm area. For Grootfontein, the !Xun used either its !Xun (/Xau n//áa) or Damara name (Kái /àú.b) or the Afrikaans word *dorp*, which is used by the !Xun (and by Afrikaans-speakers) for both the town and village.

The !Xun, and probably other Namibian Bushmen groups as well, are further examples of peoples not conforming to the already obsolete concept of urbanization processes in Southern Africa as one-way movements between the artificially dualistically divided rural and urban spaces.

Prospects

What are the prospects regarding the urbanization of the !Xun in Grootfontein? The fact that they are gradually acquiring their own plots in the township, where they can erect their shacks and where they can stay in practice unconditionally may lead to a development that means that probably for the first time in history there may be numerous !Xun living in Grootfontein who will tend to stay in Grootfontein and will be exposed to an urban environment on a long-

⁴¹⁶ The term “!àē” is also used in this meaning by the !Xun of the northwestern branch (König and Heine 2008: 180).

term basis. The „owners“ of the plots tend to stay there and so will some of their kin as well. Given the landlessness of the !Xun farm workers, their desire to have their own place to stay, and that most of them refuse to live in for them alien environment of the communal area of former Bushmanland, Grootfontein may for many of them become the only place to live and scratch out a meagre living outside the farms.

Those settled in the urban area might be under certain assimilation pressures by the non-!Xun. However, “every long-term encounter with different cultures does not result in assimilation. In fact, boundary maintenance may be amplified by encounters with the ‘others’” (Kent 2002: 14). Kent reminds us that common means of maintaining cultural boundaries is perpetuating “negative and stereotypical perspectives of ‘others’” (Ibid: 15). The !Xun, who strongly feel that they are exploited, marginalised and looked down upon by non-Bushmen, receive confirmation of this daily in their interactions with the latter and this perpetuates their negative perspectives of *Others* and the stereotypes provide them with convenient explanations for their plight.

In each urban locality in Namibia the assimilation pressures depend on the particular socio-economic and ethnic environment. In Grootfontein, the pressure on the !Xun seems to come from the lower stratum of the Khoekhoegowab-speaking population, consisting apparently to some degree of Hai//om Bushmen. This stratum is socio-economically just above the !Xun, these poor Khoekhoegowab-speakers occupy the township the same spaces (shack areas) and the !Xun maintain with them the most intensive social contacts from all the non-!Xun groups.

Another factor which may be counterbalancing the assimilation pressures is the high mobility of the !Xun. It is very evident that the kind of culture of mobility which the !Xun had in precolonial times was significantly nourished by the colonial system as well: despite the complexity of the mobility patterns, the mobility of the !Xun in the Grootfontein area was also a reaction to their economic vulnerability, exploitation and landlessness. In the urban environment the enormous economic vulnerability, as a consequence of the influx of people in the town resulting in more competition for scarce work opportunities, might even increase in the future, and mobility out of the urban area will highly probably remain an important coping mechanism. If economically vulnerable, the !Xun will continue to follow their kin networks and keep to their own ethnic environment.

At the same time, the !Xun and other Bushmen staying in the town may appear in a complex and tricky situation: how can it be explained to some of the non-!Xun (both white and black), who are deeply stuck into the stereotypes about them, who the !Xun are and why they (want to) live in an urban environment and not at the farms or in the “bush”? Will the non-!Xun be ready to move beyond stereotypes and understand their situation?

The old images and the primordial and essentialist notions of Bushmen persist in both the popular press and development discourse and do not seem to be totally absent from scientific circles (Gordon 1997: 117 - 119). „While the basic image (of the Bushmen in the Western imagination) has changed, essentially from negative to positive, the centuries-old stereotypes of Bushmen as „primitive“ and „natural“ have remained” (Barnard 2007: 2). It is apparent that these images are going to be applied by the *Others*, in one way or another, also to the urban Bushmen even though most of them are the offspring of farm workers and are alienated from the traditionally Bushmen-associated hunting and gathering economic mode. Their lives are going to be read through these images.

Ninkova observed that at the Gqaina school in the Omaheke, attended predominantly by Ju/'hoan children, the non-San learners associated the Bushmen with 1) physical markers such as the shape of their hair and the colour of their skin and 2) life in the bush and the wearing of animal skins, although they knew the latter was no longer true.

This description reveals that the image of the San person today is still to a large extent influenced by static old taxonomies and despite the fact that the San people no longer exhibit certain features, the attitude towards them is largely influenced by that. (Ninkova 2009: 40)

This is also why the !Xun who squatted in the streets of Grootfontein in 2001 and 2002 were, probably in good faith, in the first instance not settled in the township, but sent to former Bushmanland, where they were expected to live in a bush environment, that is, according to their „nature“. The situation in Grootfontein is, of course, more complex; some of its non-San dwellers, including many whites, do not know that there are any Bushmen living in the town at all. Some, for example, the Hereros or Bantu peoples from the north, have certain experience with the Bushmen living in the communal areas and, in some aspects, more realistic notions about them. However, the old images of the Bushmen as primitive people with minimal needs, with whom it is not necessary to negotiate the conditions of their service, also often determine the interaction with them. If the Bushmen in the urban space continue to be treated in such a manner, they might remain prisoners of this imaginary even in the urban space.

The situation might become more complex as the !Xun from inter-ethnic marriages may not look like „Bushmen“, being tallish and dark skinned. This is a phenomenon that may occur in any multi-ethnic setting. In an urban environment, it may, however, become even more common.

No doubt the Bushmen in the urban environment, as anywhere else, will try to some extent to manipulate their “Bushmeness”. Claiming !Xun or Bushman identity in Grootfontein in front of non-!Xun is often still disadvantageous, it reveals a social inferiority and gives a possible cause for contemptuous treatment. Once I asked Ludwig, the son of one of the three women Kashe's relative Andris could remember in the Old location, whose mother was !Xun-Kavango and father Hai//om-Damara, about his ethnic identity. The first time I did so he said that he was Damara. When I asked him again a while later, he claimed to be Kavango. I did not believe him and asked him again, this time in the presence of his relatives. After telling them about Ludwig's claim he was Damara and Kavango, they burst out laughing. Ludwig, evidently embarrassed and avoiding eye contact with the others, then said: „Well, how should I say, I am like a Bushman.”

However, to claim or emphasise !Xun identity can occasionally also be somewhat advantageous and useful in the township when encountering the non-!Xun: government workers as prospective providers of assistance; people who can provide with some help in kind such as food or old clothes out of sympathy; and, even social scientists dealing with the San. I could observe that claiming !Xun (Bushman) identity can also evoke a kind of respect towards the !Xun from some black people in the town, because they associate with them what are thought to be their “traditional” features such as their, for many non-!Xun (and ironically also most of the !Xun I met in Grootfontein) now inconceivable, ability to live in the bush. One Herero-Tswana pastor from Blikkiesdorp told me once, with anxiety, that Bushmen possess the ability to change into various wild animals. He claimed to have personally witnessed the change of the Bushmen into animals in the area of Tsumkwe where the Ju/'hoan San live. The pastor had not heard similar stories about the Grootfontein !Xun, but

nonetheless it created in him a certain esteem for the impoverished Bushmen scavenging at the dumpsites in the town as well.

In the township there is also a congregation of the Namibian Pentecostal Assemblies of God, where !Xun is spoken. It is led by a pastor who claims !Xun identity himself, even though when “calculated” from the ethnic identity of his grandparents, he is just one „quarter“ Bushman. His maternal grandmother was !Xun, and his maternal grandfather Kavango. His father’s mother was Kavango as well and his father’s father Chokwe from Angola. The pastor does not much correspond to the common notion of a “typical” !Xun. He is a very tall man, and were it not for his pale complexion, he could be regarded as a “typical” Bantu. Nevertheless, his occasional stress on his Bushmanness and stories about his trips to remote Bushmanland, where he often preaches in front of his audience of believers who are mostly Damara-speaking non-!Xun, seem to support his authority. The pastor can be very skilful during his services at emphasising various features and abilities of Bushmen which deserve respect, and which, according to him, other ethnic groups lack: especially their intimate knowledge of nature. I heard him interpreting this knowledge during the service as an ability to comprehend the work and intentions of God.

However, he told me that he did not want to speak too often about Bushmen, nor to use his mother tongue much in the church, as he did not want to discourage people from other ethnic groups from attending his services. The competition between the flourishing churches in the township is considerable. „This is a place of all nations, all languages,“ I heard the pastor saying during the service. But in my eyes he apparently wanted to be seen more one-sidedly. While talking one day about his identity between two eyes he told me: “I’m a real Bushman and that’s it!”

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Map 1. Map of Bushmen distribution as drawn by Seiner (1913: 282). The broken line marks the frontier of the !Xun („Grenze der ²Kung“).

Map 2. Map of Bushmen distribution drawn by von Zastrow (1914: 2). Area I: Hai//om, IIa: the Kung'au, IIb: Nog'au (of Seiner's Karakuwisa group), IIc: the Nog'au (along Omuramba Omatako of Seiner's Otjituo group).

Map 3. This map from 1912 provides a good picture of development of farms next to the almost unfarmed land of the South West Africa Company. The farms encroached on to !Xun territory. (NAN map No. 60)

Map 4. In green is the land owned by the South West Africa Company. On its northeast side it roughly corresponds with the Hai//om - !Xun spatial distribution. The area to the east the company land soon became one of the most farmed areas in South West Africa. (NAN BGR L4a (Landgesellschaften Allgemeines))

Map 5. Map of Grootfontein from 1920. In the upper part of the settlement several native locations can be seen. NAN map No. 1944.

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Map 8. Grootfontein in 2010. The arrow indicates the area in the township where I did most of my research. Map drawn by Stubenrauch Planning Consultants.

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Picture 1. "Buschmannswerft. Grootfontein" in a South West Africa Company photo album in the National Archives of Namibia (Accession A.791, Album 1). This picture (and the next one) is from the German period and gives us a notion about the beginning of Bushman "urbanisation" in South West Africa. Notice the brick houses in the background.

Picture 2. Notice the combination of traditional leather and modern clothes, the three-legged pot, the table with two cans and the wooden chest.

Picture 3. Aerial view of Grootfontein in the 1930s (NAN, picture No. 13872).

Picture 4. Aerial view of Grootfontein in the 1930s (NAN, picture No. 1450).

Picture 5. The list of dwellers of the Ovambo section of the Grootfontein location in 1960. Notice two Bushmen numbered 65 and 72. (NAN MGR 2/1/8, file 35, location 1954 - 1965)

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Picture 7. Some !Xun got a lift from Grootfontein to Bushmanland at the Total petrol station.

Picture 8. Plot No. 2 in Blikkiesdorp. The !Xun were allocated this plot after they started to squat at the town's main street. The Grootfontein Lions Club built two new corrugated iron shacks for them. (Pictures provided by J. Snyman)

Picture 9 - 10. Plot No. 2 in Blikkiesdorp after the !Xun squatters moved there. (Pictures provided by J. Snyman)

Picture 11. In the Living Museum in Grashoek the Ju/'hoansi show the tourist their „traditional“ culture. Kashe was not allowed to take part in the performances.

Picture 12. The Swart Tak settlement.

Picture 13. Car canopy inside which Kashe slept with his wife and older son in Grootfontein in 2006.

Picture 14. Plot No. 1 where Kashe lived in 2007.

Picture 15. Kashe had always a calender at his shack in Blikkiesdorp so he could check how long he had been working for a particular employer and calculate his wage. He believed that thanks to the calender he would not be easily deceived.

Picture 16. Lemoentjie plot, where Kashe looked after the goats.

Picture 17. Plot No. 1 in December 2011. Most of the !Xun have left the plot. Only Kashe's shack and that of his parents were still there. Some !Xun moved that year to the farms, others got their own plot in the township.

Picture 18. Building a new shack in Blikkiesdorp from flattened drums.

Picture 19. The !Xun I number as living at plot No. 12 lived for a period in a shack next to a car repair company in the industrial area near the town and township.

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Picture 21. Loading firewood cut by the !Xun along the road to Omatako in 2008. The wood was sold to South Africa.

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Picture 23. Resting near Omatako Valley Rest Camp.

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Picture 25. Kashe searches the roadside for bottles.

Picture 26. Kashe sells bottles in the township.

Picture 27. In 2008 township dwellers, including the !Xun, were digging in the bush next to the township for scrap metals.

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Picture 29. Kashe was objecting to his father buying expensive boerewors instead of mealie meal. The picture is from a leaflet I found at plot No. 1.

Picture 30. The shop where Kashe's parents bought groceries on credit. Notice the board on which is written: Geen skuld - No credit.

Picture 31. Life in Blikkiesdorp was in some ways easier for the pensioners than it was on the farms and in the communal area, especially when it came to withdrawing their pension.

Picture 32. Paul at plot 3 was the only !Xun In Blikkiesdorp to breed permanently a few chicken, ducks and pigeons, which he occasionally sold.

Picture 33. Ploughing in Swart Tak. Large plot of Kamakende.

Picture 34. Some of Kashe's relatives in Bushmanland had donkeys and a cart. This picture was taken near Omatako Valley Rest Camp.

Picture 35. Most of the the !Xun in Bushmanland did not produce any agricultural surplus they could sell. The woman in the picture lived near Omatako Valley Rest Camp and during a trip to Grootfontein sold wild berries gathered in Bushmanland.

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Picture 47. Living in Blikkiedorp: Kashe's shack is on the left and its entrance is on the side of the structure. The door in the picture leads to his parents' room. Notice the yellow part of bodywork with the coverage for a tank pit. Kashe intentionally put it at the front of the dwelling so that it could be seen by passers-by.

Picture 48. The wheel of Kashe's cart.

Picture 49. Kashe found many discarded tools in Grootfontein with the aim of starting his own small construction business one day.

Picture 50. In Swart Tak Kashe carved a roadside sign. He wanted to nail it to a tree on the road from Rooddag to Tsumkwe to advertise his services as a horse buster.

Picture 51. Different types of quivers from western Bushmanland: at the top is a traditional type nowadays made only for tourists; in the middle arrows and a quiver made by Kashe, the quiver is from car seat cover found in Grootfontein; the bottom quiver is made from a hard black tube and was used by one of Kashe's neighbours.

Picture 52. Different types of bows from western Bushmanland (from left to right): Kashe's bow, his neighbours bow (Ovambo style) and small bow made for tourists.

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