

THE INDIGENOUS RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN AFRICA: PERSPECTIVES FROM BOTSWANA AND CAMEROON

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ABSTRACT This article outlines the different trajectories of the indigenous rights movement in Africa, and discusses the factors that have contributed to its success or decline. Two case studies are compared; namely, the case of the San people of Botswana in Southern Africa, and the case of the Mbororo people of Cameroon in West Africa. On a general level, this article argues that the indigenous rights movement in different parts of Africa has gone through various phases, from expectation and success to disillusionment and pragmatism. Moreover, it demonstrates that the San and Mbororo communities and other groups not only rely on the global indigenous rights movement, but have also adopted alternative and complementary strategies to deal with the unforeseen consequences of this movement. Finally, we argue that our case studies attest to the enduring relevance of the nation-state and the ideal of ethnic coexistence in Africa.

Key Words: Indigeneity; Coping strategies; United Nations; Government policy; Central Kalahari; Northwest Cameroon.

INTRODUCTION

‘Indigeneity’ has been a highly controversial concept, particularly in the African context. Within the past 20 years, many ethnic and minority groups in Africa have claimed ‘indigeneity’ based on their political marginalization in their country or region of residence and their cultural difference from the majority population. They have drawn inspiration from the definition of ‘indigenous peoples’ adopted by the United Nations (UN) as a legal category with collective entitlements, and have connected with the global indigenous rights movement. Concurrently, there has been extensive debate within the field of Africanist anthropology regarding the analytic usefulness of the ‘indigeneity’ concept. Moreover, several African governments have questioned the applicability of this notion to the African continent, arguing that all population groups may be considered ‘indigenous’. However, with the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007, the criticism of this concept has abated, and many African governments have attempted to incorporate a discourse on indigenous rights in their policies and development programs; however, the outcomes of such efforts have varied.

This article outlines different trajectories of the indigenous rights movement in Africa, and discusses potential contributors to its success or decline. In particular, we compare two case studies: the San of Botswana, a hunter-gatherer group whose involvement in the indigenous rights movement dates to the late 1980s, and whose socioeconomic strategies in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR) have been

documented by Junko Maruyama (2003; 2009; 2010; 2012) and the Mbororo of Cameroon, a pastoralist group that gained international recognition as an indigenous people in 2005, and whose political trajectory, especially in northwest Cameroon, has been closely followed by Michaela Pelican (2008; 2009; 2010; 2011; 2013; in press).

ACADEMIC AND POLITICAL CONTROVERSIES REGARDING INDIGENITY

In his comprehensive study of the history of the global indigenous rights movement, Ronald Niezen (2003; 2010) clarified the constructed nature of 'indigeneity', which he referred to as 'indigenism', to highlight its character of a political movement. He argued that, "Indigenous Peoples were first the citizens of an idea before they became members of an international community with distinct rights" (Niezen, 2010: 135). Thus, the term indigenous peoples was initially introduced as a legal category, and only later was bestowed meaning. Understood primarily as a political notion, this term may refer to different subjects in different contexts.

The application of the discourse on indigenous rights to the African continent has generated considerable debate among both academics and policy makers (cf. Hodgson, 2009; Pelican, 2009). Although indigenous activism has had a long history, and the status of 'first peoples' is generally uncontested in the Americas and the Pacific, the situation in Africa is different; it is much more problematic and controversial to define which groups count as indigenous given the long and ongoing histories of migration, assimilation, and conquest. Furthermore, as Kopytoff (1987) demonstrated in his classic essay, African societies tend to reproduce themselves at their internal frontiers, thus continuously creating and recreating a dichotomy between 'original inhabitants' and 'late-comers' regarding which political prerogatives are negotiated. This recurrent process does not allow for the permanent and clear-cut distinction between 'first nations' and 'dominant societies' that is implied by the universal notion of indigenous peoples. Accordingly, some anthropologists have criticized the concept of indigenous peoples as inapplicable to the African context, and as promoting an essentialist ideology of culture and identity (e.g., Kuper, 2003; 2005). Conversely, others have claimed that these complexities have effectively been reflected in the working definitions of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the UN, which emphasize cultural distinctiveness, political marginalization, and self-identification as fundamental criteria. In their view, the above criticism is not only unjustified, but is counterproductive to both the anthropological endeavor and 'indigenous realities' (e.g., Kenrick & Lewis; 2004: 8). A reconciliatory approach was suggested by Barnard (2004; 2006), who questioned the validity of 'indigenous peoples' as an anthropological concept, while recognizing its utility as a political and legal tool in the struggle for collective rights.

Concurrent with the academic debate, many African governments have opposed the concept of indigenous peoples and their entitlement to land, arguing that all Africans are indigenous and should have equal access to natural resources (Lutz,

2007). In this context, it is important to consider that, unlike the case in the Americas or the Pacific, the indigenous rights movement in Africa has not developed as a critique of European colonialism and imperialism; instead, it developed in response to the policies adopted by independent, post-colonial African states. Thus, according to these states, the indigenous rights movement, with its claim that certain ethnic groups deserve preferential treatment, goes against the grain of nation-building, a process that is still relevant to many African governments.

Although UN deliberations regarding this issue began in 1971, it was only in 2007 that the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted. A critical moment occurred in 2006, when a group of African states (in particular Namibia, Botswana, and Nigeria) objected to several provisions of the declaration (Oldham & Frank, 2008; Pelican, 2009). Subsequently, African UN member states agreed to maintain a united position, and issued a 'draft aide memoire' specifying their concerns regarding the definition of 'indigenous peoples', and issues regarding self-determination, ownership of land and resources, establishment of distinct political and economic institutions, and national and territorial integrity. Moreover, they stated that the declaration might pose fundamental constitutional and political problems for some member states, rendering its implementation impossible. Faced with these objections, the African Union and the Global Indigenous Peoples' Caucus engaged in serious negotiations. Eventually, the African Group agreed on nine amendments to the declaration, two of which addressed the issue of definition and the possible misinterpretation of the right to self-determination. Finally, in September 2007, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted by the General Assembly with the support of the African Group and negative votes by Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States.

As correctly noted by Oldham and Frank (2008), the objections of the African Group are at the center of the anthropological controversy regarding the concept of indigenous peoples. As argued by Suzman (2002), the adoption of the Declaration on Indigenous Peoples' Rights has been particularly problematic for southern African states, such as Botswana and Namibia, which excluded the provision for any differential treatment of their citizens based on race or ethnicity to distance themselves from apartheid politics. In this context, indigenous rights are sometimes understood as a form of segregation that designates certain territories for certain ethnic groups. Conversely, in countries such as Cameroon, where ethnic and regional favoritism have long been vital features of national politics (Bayart, 1984; Kofele-Kale, 1986; Mehler, 1993), the concept of indigenous peoples is much less problematic. However, as shown below, the Declaration's implementation has not been without problems in both southern and western Africa. Moreover, in recent years, the discourse on international development has taken a different turn, promoting governmental and non-governmental initiatives, and thus shaping efforts to build civil societies. This was illustrated by Hodgson in her book "Being Maasai, Becoming Indigenous" (2011) with regard to Maasai pastoralists in Tanzania, and their self-positioning in relation to discourses about indigenous rights and pastoral livelihoods.

The Maasai and Hadza of Tanzania were one of the first African groups to join the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations in 1989 (Hodgson,

2011: 25). In response to the economic and political changes in the early 1990s, a few ethnic-based Maasai non-governmental organizations (NGOs) emerged. They adopted the discourse on indigenous rights to secure cultural and political rights, as well as access to land. This was followed by the establishment of an umbrella organization in the mid-1990s to represent the interests of all indigenous peoples in Tanzania, including pastoralist and hunter-gatherer groups. Finally, in the 2000s, Maasai activists changed their lobbying strategies, gradually refraining from the discourse about indigenous rights, and rephrasing their claims in terms of pastoral livelihoods in response to the development framework currently favored by the Tanzanian government.

Hodgson's study clearly shows that local African responses to the global indigenous rights movement have significantly shifted during the past three decades in response to the variable national and international situations. Moreover, it suggests the importance of taking a case-sensitive approach to and examining the different experiences of African peoples in different national and historical contexts when studying the indigenous rights movement in Africa. The Maasai case will be discussed and related to the findings of our case studies in the conclusion of this article to offer insights that are more generally applicable to the indigenous rights movement in Africa.

In subsequent sections, we clarify the trajectories of the indigenous rights movement in Botswana and Cameroon, and develop a comparative perspective that is generally applicable to the African context. In particular, we analyze the engagement of San hunter-gatherers in the CKGR, where Junko Maruyama has conducted fieldwork since 2000, and the political lobbying of Mbororo pastoralists, with whom Michaela Pelican has been working since the 1990s in the Cameroon Grassfields.

The San and Mbororo communities were referred to by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR, 2006) as typical examples of African indigenous peoples, and both have participated in UN-based indigenous peoples' activities. Moreover, rather than comparing the political strategies of pastoralist groups in different parts of Africa (e.g., the Mbororo in Cameroon, the Maasai in Tanzania) or of different hunter-gatherer groups (e.g., the San in Botswana, the Hadza in Tanzania), we thought it would be more enlightening, albeit challenging, to compare the case studies of two economically and culturally different groups that have been placed in the same category by the indigenous rights framework of the UN. As our analysis will show, the indigenous rights movement in Africa is not homogenous, but rather, is characterized by great diversity. This diversity is reflected in, among other things, the different purposes and extents of San and Mbororo involvement in indigenous rights activism, as well as the divergent policy approaches of the two nation-states. Furthermore, whereas both cases attest to the controversial nature of the concept of indigenous peoples in Africa, they also reflect the considerable variety of local reactions and coping strategies that have emerged in response to the effects of international advocacy.

It should be noted that our original fieldwork was conducted independently, and with different research interests and different methods. That is, only retrospectively was a comparative framework applied to the original data. As a result, the pre-

sentations of the two cases will slightly differ in terms of focus and research methodology. Although we are aware that our divergent approaches may underscore differences rather than commonalities, our comparative analysis is based on long-term familiarity with the two settings, and a shared perspective on the indigenous rights movement in Africa. To structure the comparison, our explorations will be guided by the following questions: What does indigenous identity mean for different groups in Africa? How and for what purposes has the concept been employed? Which historical trajectories can be identified, and how effective has the indigenous rights movement been in different parts of the continent? What are alternative, complementary strategies? Both case studies will address the following themes: the historical background of the people and their social position in their states, their ways of connecting with the global indigenous rights movement, the complexities of discourses on indigeneity in their respective countries, local reactions to the global indigenous rights movement, and alternative and complementary strategies.

CASE 1: THE SAN OF BOTSWANA: INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY AND DAILY COPING STRATEGIES

The San, or the ‘Bushmen’, who are known as nomadic hunter-gatherers living in southern Africa, have been displaced and impoverished for many years as a result of the intrusion of Bantu-speaking agro-pastoralists, European colonialism, large-scale infrastructure projects, and land concessions to companies. Indeed, they have become the most marginalized ethnic group in southern Africa, and only account for a small percentage of the populations of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, and Angola. With a total current population of approximately 100,000 (Cassidy et al., 2001), the San are subdivided into three large language groups, each consisting of many small language groups, such as |Gui, ||Gana, !Xun, Khwe, and Hai||kom (Barnard, 1992). Half of these groups live in Botswana, with a small number of |Gui- and ||Gana-speaking San living in the Central Kalahari region. Their case is rather particular (Saugestad, 2011), and will be the focus of this article.

Since the colonial era, different actors with different agendas have attempted to improve the social situation of the San. In Botswana, the first official measure to benefit the San was instituted by the British protectorate government. Under the British colonial policy of indirect rule, the Tswana people, a majority ethnic group in this area, received privileged treatment, and their chieftainships were formally institutionalized. Concurrently, the presence of ethnic minority groups, such as the Kalanga, the Yeyi, the Subiya, and the San, who in the past were integrated into Tswana chiefdoms as people of secondary or servitude status, were almost ignored by colonial officials. However, the |Gui, and ||Gana San in the Central Kalahari area were given special treatment, because they were viewed as a unique hunter-gatherer community with minimal contact with the outside world. In 1961, per the recommendation of the Bushman Research Officer, the colonial government decided to establish the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR), situated at the

center of the country and covering 52,000 km². The main purpose of the reserve was to provide protection for the wildlife and the traditional hunting-gathering lifestyle of the local San people (Silberbauer, 1965).

After Botswana gained independence in 1966, the new government started the Bushman Development Programme in 1974 in recognition that the San were the most marginalized group in the country and needed special assistance. In 1978, this program was renamed the Remote Area Development Programme (RADP), and no longer only targeted the San, but also included all people living outside organized village settlements in their mandate. The new definition of the program's target group emphasized geographic remoteness and socioeconomic marginalization rather than ethnicity (Government of Botswana, n.d.). The RADP encouraged the remote area dwellers, known as RADs, the majority of whom were San, to relocate to government-planned settlements with a water supply, schools, clinics, and income-generating projects. As a result of this expensive project, more than 70% of the San in Botswana were living in the 64 RADs settlements by 2003 (Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis, 2003). The government program for the San living in the CKGR was one among many. The RADP started at the CKGR in 1979, and the |Gui and ||Gana San began to adopt a sedentary lifestyle at a government-planned settlement called Xade. The RADP encouraged the residents to raise goats, farm, work for wages, and sell handicrafts; at the same time, they managed to continue hunting and gathering (Tanaka, 1987). Furthermore, in 1986, the government decided that the residents of the CKGR should be relocated outside the reserve to provide them with access to better services, and to ensure the protection of the fauna and flora within the reserve.

The Indigenous Rights Movement in Central Kalahari

In addition to government initiatives, newly emerged NGOs were involved in the indigenous rights movement in Botswana. The political campaign accompanying the CKGR relocation has been well documented (e.g., Sapignoli, 2009; Maruyama, 2010; Saugestad, 2011; Hitchcock et al., 2011); given the comparative purposes of this article, only an outline of these events will be presented.

The relocation program was announced in the 1980s, which was also the period in which several ethnic minority groups in Botswana started to organize themselves to protest government pressure to assimilate. According to Solway (2011: 220), Botswana experienced exponential economic growth in the 1980s, and many minority individuals found valuable positions in the expanding urban bourgeoisie. Unlike other minority groups, such as the Kalanga and the Yeyi, the |Gui and ||Gana San lacked grassroots organizations and political activists, as well as an educated and urban-based elite at this time. This created a vacuum that was soon filled by individuals from outside the San community, including members of national and international NGOs who pursued varying agendas.

The announcement of the CKGR relocation program coincided with the point in time in which international organizations and NGOs began to pay attention to the issue of indigenous peoples in Africa. Immediately after the relocation was officially announced, international NGOs outside Africa initiated protest move-

ments, and started to apply the term 'indigenous people' to the San. In addition, they provided financial and technical support to establish regionally based NGOs. In 1993, the local San NGO, the First People of the Kalahari (FPK), was established with the goal of stopping the relocation program. The FPK was supported by the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), a Denmark-based international NGO and a major player in the global indigenous rights movement. The FPK subsequently allied with Survival International, a popular, London-based international advocacy organization. They worked together to attract international attention to the CKGR issue, and to claim indigenous identity and rights for the San in Botswana. On the local level, the FPK established connections with a local pioneer NGO, the Kuru Family of Organizations, which works for the sociocultural development of marginalized minorities, especially the San. Furthermore, a regional NGO, the Working Group for Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (WIMSA), was established in 1994 to represent the interests of all San in Namibia, Botswana, Angola, and South Africa. It committed itself to the protest against the CKGR relocation and cooperated with the FPK.

Despite the attempts of many local, regional, and international NGOs, the relocation program actually began in 1997. In 2002, the government stopped providing services, such as water and medical care, to the CKGR and prevented its former residents from returning to their homeland. Between 1997 and 2002, approximately 3,000 people were relocated to the Kx'oensakene, Kaudwane, and Xere resettlement sites.

After this relocation exercise, the various NGOs supporting the San rallied to form a negotiation team to press their claims with the Botswanan government. Finally, they decided to take their case to the Botswana High Court on behalf of the 186 displaced San individuals, which raised public attention. Both sides tried to generate public support using the Internet and mass media, which created an even more heated debate over the CKGR issue.

After a long process, the High Court of Botswana ruled on December 13, 2006 that the government had illegally evicted the San from their ancestral lands in what is now the CKGR. The ruling quoted the Australian *Mabo* decision of 1992, which recognized the entitlement of Australia's aboriginal peoples to their ancestral lands and to compensation for their losses, as well as other international law cases related to indigenous peoples (Judgment of the High Court of Botswana 2006). The 2006 court ruling was expected to create a precedent for the legal strategies of indigenous peoples in other African countries, where most of the governments have been reluctant to recognize the concept of indigenous peoples.

Indigeneity in Botswana

In Botswana, two parallel definitions of 'indigenous peoples' have been used; one refers to all of the African people in Botswana, including the Tswana majority population and other minorities; the other definition refers to the non-dominant group of original inhabitants, the San, and regards other non-Tswana groups as minorities, but not as indigenous. The disagreements over the CKGR relocation program exemplify the conflictual relationship between the two understandings of

indigeneity (Maruyama, 2009). Whereas the government argued that all of the people in Botswana are equal and indigenous and that the San should be integrated into mainstream society, the NGO negotiation team claimed that the San should be granted the rights of an 'indigenous people' and be allowed to continue their traditional way of life on their ancestral lands.

From the perspective of the Botswanan government, the CKGR relocation was aimed towards improving the lives of the San, whom they saw as an impoverished, weak, and needy minority that ought to be integrated into the Botswana nation through the RADP. The process of nation-building and of creating national unity after independence has been one of the key challenges for the Botswanan government as well as for many post-colonial African states. Furthermore, as a 'frontline state' in the fight against apartheid South Africa, the Botswanan government consciously adopted a 'non-racial democracy' and denied separate development based on differential treatment along racial or ethnic lines (Government of Botswana, n.d.). Therefore, an important part of Botswana's nation-building strategy has been the identification of all citizens as ethnic Tswana (Hays, 2004). However, this 'one-nation consensus' (Werbner, 2004: 38) tends to result in the non-recognition of ethnic minorities, and sometimes leads to their assimilation into the Tswana majority.

Conversely, the NGOs use the term 'indigenous' to highlight the cultural distinctiveness of the San, who came to serve as an example of the genuine and unique culture of hunter-gatherers, which they considered in danger of disappearing. Moreover, they emphasized the San's experience of repression and marginalization by both the majority population and the Botswanan government. It is also important to consider the deliberations of the 2006 African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), which resulted in a definition of indigenous peoples that underscored a group's self-identification, its special attachment to and use of traditional lands, as well as its historical or contemporary experiences of marginalization, exclusion, or discrimination as a result of cultural differences in lifestyle and/or modes of production (ACHPR, 2006). Based on these criteria, the NGO negotiation team treated the San as an indigenous people, and applied the legal and political strategies that had been established among indigenous peoples in the Americas and the Pacific to their case.

Although the approach of the negotiation team was endorsed internationally, the government stance primarily gained domestic support. As the CKGR issue became a popular national and international issue, the debate became increasingly simplified, confronting the San with a binary choice: development or tradition. Moreover, public attention concentrated primarily on the debate itself and the projected imaginings of the government and the NGOs, whereas the reality of the relocated San was left behind. Yet, to understand the impact of the indigenous rights movement and of the 2006 ruling on San society, it is important to examine their actual daily lives and the coping strategies developed in response to the relocation, which is the topic of the following section.

Daily Life of the Relocated San

Maruyama's field research, conducted between 2000 and 2006, suggests that the San adopted coping strategies that differed from those predicted by both the government and NGOs. The resettlement and development program had drastically changed the living environment of the |Gui and ||Gana. The Kx'oensakene resettlement site contained facilities typically found in government RAD settlements in Botswana, including a hospital, elementary school, and village office. The residents were given either 15 goats or 5 cattle. Moreover, the government employed some residents as construction workers and initiated income-generating projects. Pensions for elderly individuals and food aid were also provided.

Although some residents accepted the changes, others moved from the resettlement site to the surrounding bush, forming small residential groups within a 20 km radius. Those who remained in the resettlement site lived by wage labor and occupied residential plots planned by the government. In contrast, those who left primarily engaged in hunting and gathering, and lived in small residential groups consisting of several families. Although two distinct types of habitation emerged after the relocation, a reciprocal flow of people was maintained for economic and social reasons. Most individuals moved back and forth between the resettlement site and bush dwellings in response to changing employment opportunities, seasonal shifts in the availability of wild vegetables, or difficulties with neighbors. Daily visits, often involving exchanges of goods and services, occurred between those inside and outside the resettlement site. Residents of both resettlement and bush dwellings attempted to utilize the government services provided by the development program, as well as the natural resources found in the bush (Mauryama, 2003).

Furthermore, the economic gap between wealthy and poor San individuals became more visible during subsequent years. For example, most of the earliest bush dwellers built simple huts, and their lives were based on hunting and gathering and small-scale farming and herding. However, a few bush dwellers attempted to keep more livestock, and to cultivate larger agricultural fields than required for consumption with the aim of converting the surplus into cash. They also owned vehicles or donkey carts for use in hunting and gathering and for traveling to and from the resettlement. As Maruyama's research regarding the presence or absence of cars or donkey carts, cattle, goats, and fields illustrates, economic disparities widened in 2006 compared with the situation in 2000.

The features of the daily life of the San after the relocation can be summarized as follows. First, they sought to reorganize their traditional way of life by combining hunting and gathering with the new lifestyle introduced by the resettlement and development program (Maruyama, 2003; 2009). Second, economic disparities among the San living in Kx'oensakene widened (Maruyama, 2010). The next section addresses the impact of the 2006 court ruling, which entitled some San to return to the CKGR, on the |Gui and ||Gana San society.

Aftermath of the 2006 Court Ruling

The 2006 ruling was not a simple victory for the relocated San. From their perspective, one of the most serious problems was that the ruling did not obligate the government to provide social services for people living inside the CKGR (Judgment of the High Court of Botswana, 2006). That is, the CKGR was redefined as a place where the San engage in their 'genuine traditional way of life' without government interference or support. Consequently, the members of this community faced a difficult choice. Individuals who wanted or needed to live within a developed setting, had to remain in the resettlement site, and those who preferred to live in their homeland had to relinquish access to development and social services. The other problem with the government's ruling was that it only entitled the 189 people who filed the lawsuit, and their children, to return to the CKGR. This part of the ruling created a significant divide within the Kx'oensakene San community.

A research conducted by Maruyama from 2008 to 2013 revealed that about 200–300 of the 1,500 Kx'oensakene residents returned to the CKGR. Most of these individuals were from the eastern part of the reserve, had ties with international NGOs, and were named in the lawsuit. Moreover, only wealthy individuals were able to return, as they had to arrange for their own transportation, water, and other necessities to live in the reserve. Thus, the majority of people did not consider returning to the CKGR, but reluctantly remained in the Kx'oenshakene resettlement site. Some were afraid to go to the CKGR because they were not among the 189 applicants entitled to return, whereas others could not make a living in the reserve without government services. It was clear that the court ruling posed a difficult choice between development or tradition, and that the new wealth disparities shaped the outcome of this choice.

After the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the San case again attracted the attention of the ILO and UN bodies. As a result of the government's refusal to provide a constant water supply to the San in the CKGR, their situation deteriorated rapidly. This issue was taken up by James Anaya, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples, who urged the government to at least provide basic social services, such as a water supply, in his report about Botswana (Anaya, 2010). Subsequently, with the support of Survival International, the water-rights issue in the CKGR was taken to the High Court of Botswana and was decided in the San's favor (Zips-Mairitsch, 2013: 365–376). However, their legal entitlement to water did not resolve the problem of practical access, as the water from the drilled boreholes was not drinkable (Morula, 2011).

Compared with the vibrant advocacy before the 2006 court case, NGOs activities have since slowed, and the local NGO, the FPK, has disintegrated. Moreover, rather than engaging in legal fights and connecting with the wider international indigenous rights movement, most San are now concentrating on coping strategies at the grassroots level (Maruyama, 2012). Importantly, many San are struggling to convert both the CKGR and the resettlement site into livable and multifaceted spaces. The returnees have not severed ties with the RADP, and have attempted

to bring equipment, food, and water from the resettlement site to the CKGR. On the other hand, an increasing number of people remaining at the Kx'oensakene decided to create new dwellings in the surrounding bush after the court judgment was delivered. For those disappointed with the court judgment, the bush dwellings became an important alternative, and complemented their residences in the resettlement site. There is frequent movement and exchange as well as mutual support among those who live in the CKGR, those who live in the resettlement site, and those who live in the bush dwellings.

The San in the CKGR and those in the resettlement site have attempted to maintain their mobility, and to strengthen exchange relationships and family ties. Many San who were not formally allowed to return have gradually started to visit their relatives in the CKGR on 'short visits' and vice versa. On such occasions, CKGR residents provide wild meat and leather, whereas Kx'oensakene residents share pension money or food aid from the government with their visitors. Many poorer San have asked to live with wealthier relatives to share and enable them to return to the CKGR. This is another way of facilitating physical and social mobility between the resettlement site and the CKGR, as well as between the rich and poor. Moreover, this mobility has gradually changed the characteristics of each space, and has contributed to easing the tensions within the community between those who could return and those who could not.

CASE 2: THE MBORORO OF CAMEROON: FROM 'LATE-COMERS' TO AN 'INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'

This section deals with West Africa and the political trajectories of Mbororo cattle pastoralists in Cameroon. The Mbororo belong to the Fulbe ethnic group, whose members are dispersed throughout the Sahel and Savannah belt from West to East Africa. The term Mbororo refers specifically to (agro-)pastoral Fulbe. Groups who identify themselves as Mbororo are found primarily in Niger, Nigeria, and Cameroon (Bocquené, 2002; Burnham, 1996; Dupire, 1970).

Mbororo individuals can be found in many parts of Cameroon, but they primarily congregate in regions favorable for cattle grazing. Although a minority in most regions, they have been particularly influential and politically active in Cameroon's northwest, where they number approximately 130,000 individuals or 5–10% of the total population (Tchoumba, 2006: 20). The northwest is also the region from which most Mbororo activists originated, and where one of the author's fieldwork was conducted. The majority of the region's inhabitants are Grassfielders, who belong to linguistically distinct communities but share common features of economic and sociopolitical organization. While the settlement history of most Grassfields societies dates back several centuries, the Mbororo entered the area in the 1910s. Originating from the Kano region in present-day Nigeria, they slowly migrated southward during the nineteenth century in search of favorable ecological and political conditions (Boutrais, 1995/96: 15–210; Dognin, 1981; Pelican, in press). Attracted by the fertile pastures of the Bamenda Highlands, many families settled there and gradually adopted a more sedentary lifestyle.

In the first half of the 20th century, the population density was still low, and the Mbororo were welcomed both by local Grassfields chiefs and the British colonial administration. The Grassfielders treated them as guests on their land and subjects of their rulers. The British colonial administration, applying the policy of indirect rule, endorsed this system of accommodation and classified the Mbororo as 'strangers' who were subordinate to 'native' Grassfields authorities. Subsequently, under the regime of Cameroon's first President, Ahmadou Ahidjo, the Mbororo qualified as Cameroonian citizens (Njeuma & Awasom, 1990). However, due to their Muslim identity and Fulbe ethnicity, they were subsumed under the cultural category of 'northerners'. Consequently, the Mbororo who were born and grew up in northwest Cameroon were considered 'strangers' to the area with limited rights to the region's natural and state resources.

This situation changed in the 1990s, with Cameroon's economic and political liberalization, which presented the possibility of claiming regional membership and facilitated vital changes in Mbororo self-understanding and political strategies.

The Rise of Ethnic Elite Associations

With Cameroon's democratization in the 1990s, a new era, characterized by party politics as well as ethnic and minority politics (Nyamnjoh & Rowlands, 1998; Takougang & Krieger, 1998), dawned. Encouraged by newly gained freedoms and government policies, many groups began to establish ethnic or regional associations that acted as their representatives to the state. This novel political approach was also explored by young, mostly educated Mbororo, who founded the Mbororo Social and Cultural Development Association (MBOSCUDA) in 1992 (Davis, 1995; Hickey, 2007; Pelican, 2008). Whereas other organizations promoting Mbororo and pastoralist interests were created, MBOSCUDA soon emerged as the most vocal and effective organ of Mbororo self-representation to the Cameroonian government, and to international development organizations. It designed a number of regional programs aimed at the revitalization of Mbororo cultural practices, the improvement of Mbororo women's socioeconomic situation, the promotion of Mbororo children's education, and the improvement of pastoral conditions (Duni et al., 2009). Several of these programs have been implemented with the support of local communities as well as national and international NGOs. Moreover, as a result of the continuous lobbying by MBOSCUDA, the Mbororo eventually attained the status of a regional and national minority with claims and rights to natural resources and political representation in their home area. These developments also led to a change in the self-awareness and understanding of the Mbororo people. Although initially associated with backwardness and superficial Islamization, the ethnonym Mbororo gained new, positive meanings. As Mbororo informants explained, they no longer saw themselves as marginalized pastoralists, but as an empowered Cameroonian minority. Based on these achievements, MBOSCUDA consolidated its credibility vis-à-vis both its Mbororo constituency and the Cameroonian government.

In the subsequent decade, MBOSCUDA expanded its political lobbying to the international arena by establishing links with the global human and indigenous

rights movements. Thanks to personal connections with European researchers and development workers, contacts were made with the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA). In 2005, MBOSCUA was granted special consultative status by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. This eventually resulted in the international recognition of the Mbororo as an indigenous people of Cameroon. Whereas this step was reasonable given MBOSCUA's political engagement, the Mbororo's claim to indigeneity is ambiguous from a critical anthropological viewpoint, as it is inconsistent with local conceptions of autochthony (Pelican, 2009).

The Complexities of Indigeneity and Autochthony in Cameroon

In Cameroon, as in other parts of western Africa, notions of indigeneity, autochthony, first-comers, and natives have a long history, and frame local conceptions of political hierarchy and legal entitlement (Bayart et al., 2001; Lentz, 2006; Geschiere, 2009). In northwest Cameroon, local Grassfields societies consider themselves natives and guardians of the land, and regard the Mbororo as strangers and late-comers with limited rights to land and resources. Although this conception is rooted in pre-colonial notions of political power based on priority in time, it has also been informed by colonial and post-colonial policies. On the national level, discourses of autochthony were highlighted in the context of Cameroon's democratization. As stipulated in the country's revised constitution of 1996, priority is given to the protection of the rights of minorities and indigenous populations (in the French version *peuples autochtones*). According to this national political framework, indigenous populations refer to local groups that consider themselves first-comers, natives, or autochthones. This differs from the UN and ILO conception of indigenous peoples, which prioritizes the criteria of self-identification, historical or contemporary experiences of marginalization, and cultural differences from the majority population (Daes, 1996; ILO, 1989). As confirmed by Tchoumba in his ILO pilot study on Cameroon, the Mbororo as well as the so-called Pygmies (the Baka and Bagyeli) of southern and southeastern Cameroon fulfill the ILO and UN criteria, and thus may be considered indigenous peoples of Cameroon (Atelier de Planification, 2003; Tchoumba, 2006). Conversely, the Cameroonian government has never officially endorsed the two groups' classification as indigenous peoples, and instead applies the notion of vulnerable or 'marginal populations' (in French *populations marginales*). This complex situation in which concepts have similar meanings but divergent applications has resulted in the puzzling situation in which the Mbororo internationally qualify as an indigenous people, but are viewed as late-comers, allochthones, or a marginalized minority in the local and national context. Thus, international and local interpretations of indigeneity are irreconcilable.

Ambivalence and the Changing Strategies of the Indigenous Rights Movement

Despite the conceptual and terminological complexities, the recognition of the Mbororo as an indigenous people initiated a new era in their identity politics.

With the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007, expectations that the precarious situation of minority groups would gradually improve were high among activists and organizations. The same hopes were shared by Mbororo activists, especially MBOSCUA leaders who promoted this new, supra-ethnic identity to capitalize on its political strength. Yet, their subsequent recourse to the indigenous rights discourse produced mixed, and at times, unforeseen results. This section will outline two developments that seem representative of the learning processes of many indigenous and human rights activists in Africa and elsewhere: First, a process from enthusiasm to disillusionment and then to pragmatism, which became evident in the aftermath of the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; second, recent ventures into alternative approaches to lobbying, such as those relying on the virtual and social media.

The Sabga leadership crisis of 2007 was a crucial test case for assessing the applicability and efficacy of the indigenous rights discourse with regard to the Mbororo in Cameroon (for a detailed analysis, see Pelican, 2010). The crisis emerged over the procedure used to select a new community leader, with Mbororo activists claiming their rights as an indigenous people to political and territorial integrity. The issue emerged in the summer of 2007, when government representatives forcefully intervened in Sabga, the main Mbororo settlement in north-west Cameroon. Through the influence of a wealthy and well-connected entrepreneur, the community-elected leader was administratively deposed and replaced by a Mbororo ruler preferred by the entrepreneur. Members of the Sabga community protested this interference, and the government reacted with military intervention. The Mbororo elite in Sabga eventually decided to use international connections to pressure the government. In fear for their lives, the deposed leader and his supporters sought refuge at the United States embassy in the capital, Yaoundé. Mbororo women staged a protest at the Prime Minister's office and demanded the deposition of the imposed ruler and the reinstatement of their rightful community leader. Moreover, with the help of MBOSCUA, they reported the case to national and international human rights organizations as well as to the UN Human Rights Council. For a short while, the Cameroonian government seemed willing to reconsider the case. At the initiative of the Prime Minister, an official investigative team was sent to Sabga. Its members reported their findings to the President, but no action was taken. Mbororo human rights activists further publicized the issue and solicited national and international bodies to issue official letters of concern. Moreover, in 2007, Rodolfo Stavenhagen, who was then the Special Rapporteur on the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples, visited Cameroon, included the Sabga leadership crisis in his report, and demanded a response from the Cameroonian government as well as a resolution of the issue (Stavenhagen, 2007). Yet, although the government was obliged to deliver an opinion on the reported infringements of Mbororo human and indigenous rights, no actual consequences followed. The deposed leader remained disempowered, and the Mbororo community had to come to terms with the political dynamics and internal frictions that had been caused by the protracted issue.

To fully understand the relevance of this case, its key features will be discussed

in greater detail. On one of the few occasions to garner near unanimous community action, Mbororo women, youth, and men took to the streets in Sabga to publicly protest the intervention of the regional administration in the process to select their future community leader. This was unprecedented in that community members, including illiterate women and men rather than educated Mbororo activists, took action and traveled to the capital, Yaoundé, to seek both national and international assistance. This was the first time that MBOSCUDA's report to the Special Rapporteur on the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples and the Human Rights Council led to an intergovernmental exchange and follow-up actions. However, these interventions proved inconsequential, and the queries of the Human Rights Council remained largely unanswered. Eventually, the hopes of Mbororo activists that the UN agencies and the discourse on human and indigenous rights would work in their favor were dashed. The ensuing repercussions were twofold. They included government sanctions on Mbororo actors as well as disagreements within the Mbororo community regarding the efficacy of international interventions, and more profoundly, regarding the legitimacy of Mbororo claims to indigeneity. Critical voices emerged, particularly among members of the economically progressive and political elite. In their view, classifying the Mbororo as an indigenous people was suggestive of Mbororo backwardness and poverty. Conversely, they viewed their own trajectories as evocative of Mbororo advancement and their political integration on equal terms with other population groups.

Thus, the Sabga leadership crisis initiated a phase of general disenchantment with global advocacy and the indigenous rights discourse. At the same time, it occasioned a reorientation of Mbororo activists away from public criticism of the Cameroonian government and its representatives and towards a more conciliatory approach, including collaboration with government institutions. As outlined above, the government integrated the indigenous rights discourse in its developmental agenda under the heading of 'marginal populations'. Thus, Mbororo NGOs continue to employ and endorse this discourse, but in a less confrontational manner than in previous years. This is reflected in a number of recent events organized by Mbororo organizations that have been aimed toward generating dialogue and cooperation among representatives of indigenous groups, relevant government institutions, academics, and NGOs. These events are also remarkable in that they illustrate the repeated efforts of educated and visionary Mbororo actors to engender a self-understanding that transcends the narrow boundaries of Mbororo ethnicity and embraces the broader categories of indigenous peoples or minorities.

New Approaches to Mbororo Advocacy and Development

In recent years, the number of Mbororo individuals who have left the countryside to study or work in urban centers has increased considerably. This has been accompanied by a proliferation of Mbororo community organizations, some initiated by university students and others by professionals, in Cameroon's urban centers. Whereas the majority of these NGOs focus on community development, some participate in the indigenous rights movement and are also active at the interna-

tional level. Lelewal, a self-proclaimed indigenous peoples non-governmental organization whose founder regularly participates in UN meetings, was among the latter (Lelewal Foundation, 2012). Its founder regularly participated in UN meetings and together with MBOSCUA representatives gave weight to Mbororo complaints.⁽¹⁾ Another is the Laimaru Network, which was created in 2011 with the aim of supporting minority and indigenous organizations in Cameroon by providing information on fundraising, capacity building, advocacy, and social entrepreneurship (Laimaru Network n.d.). As this proliferation of NGOs illustrates, interest and expertise in community development and advocacy have been growing among the Mbororo in Cameroon, particularly among educated young people. This has also been reflected in their recent employment of virtual and social media as approaches to political lobbying. The next section discusses the Justice and Dignity Campaign, an advocacy initiative launched in 2011 by Mbororo individuals based inside and outside of Cameroon.

The initial spark for this campaign was a broadcast on a private television station that slandered the joint development programs of the Mbororo and so-called Pygmies, each of which enjoys the status of an indigenous people of Cameroon. Taking offense at the broadcast's racist undertones and drawing inspiration from the growing popularity of the social media, a small group of Mbororo activists decided to launch an Internet campaign using an online petition; this was followed by a Facebook page, a corresponding website, a YouTube channel, and a Twitter account. Unlike previous strategies for political lobbying and advocacy, which focused on the malfeasance of the Cameroonian state, this campaign highlighted the misdeeds of a particular individual who also played a crucial role in the Sabga leadership crisis. To the surprise of its initiators, the Justice and Dignity Campaign, especially its Facebook page, attracted considerable attention among Cameroonians both abroad and at home. Despite the rather rudimentary Internet services available, Mbororo youths, particularly in urban areas, are fully conversant with Facebook and also update their non-literate and rural relatives. The campaign's supporters viewed this response as an achievement when they learned that their opponent was astounded by his inability to control the online flow of information and, for the first time in a long history of Mbororo grievances, he publicly responded to their accusations. The campaign's focus has subsequently broadened and now addresses various issues related to human and indigenous rights violations, including the mass abduction of Nigerian schoolchildren by Boko Haram (in April 2014), the abuse of Baka hunters by wildlife officers (in October 2014), and the forcible appropriation of land inhabited by Mbororo herders by the Catholic Church in northwest Cameroon. The latter was eventually resolved in summer 2014 with the official retraction of the Catholic Church in response to media pressure and a legal follow-up.

As the Justice and Dignity Campaign illustrates, venturing into the virtual and social media has proven effective, as it has helped to publicize critical information and develop new perspectives. At the same time, the campaign's initiators have been well aware that online advocacy cannot replace more conventional forms of political lobbying, but may nonetheless increase their credibility and legitimacy. In this sense, Mbororo individuals continue to lobby on international, national,

and local levels. They participate in the annual meetings of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), submit reports to the Human Rights Council, and collaborate with government representatives on joint programs. They simultaneously run social media campaigns denouncing individual and institutional instances of malfeasance. Although the Cameroonian government has not fully subscribed to the concept of indigenous peoples or its legal implementation, the indigenous rights discourse has maintained its place in national and international political domains.

COMPARISON AND DISCUSSION

We will compare and discuss our two cases to explore the different trajectories of the indigenous rights movement in Africa. Although both cases are characterized by considerable variation and are open to interpretation, we will reduce the complexity and highlight certain trends for the purpose of comparison. Moreover, whereas our comparison draws on specific cases (i.e., the San of the Central Kalahari, the Mbororo of northwest Cameroon), we believe our insights are generally applicable to the indigenous rights movement in Africa. We will structure our discussion around three themes: the dynamics of the indigenous rights movement, the role of national governments in defining and implementing indigenous rights, and local strategies for dealing with daily life and the outcomes of indigenous rights advocacy.

The Dynamics of the Indigenous Rights Movement

We will treat 1993, the International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples, as the official initiation of the global indigenous rights movement in Africa. The Mbororo and San joined this movement at different points in time. By the late 1980s, the San had been introduced to the concept of indigenous peoples by international NGOs; during the Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples, they formed their first local organization to lobby against the relocation of the San of the Central Kalahari. However, the initiative as well as most of the financial and technical support for San activism came from outside the community; namely, from international NGOs. Thus, more than any other minority group in Botswana, the San of Central Kalahari have been represented by outsiders (see also Solway, 2011). Moreover such external imaginings, concepts, strategies, and funds have often obscured the reality of San life. Although a few |Gui and ||Gana San have participated in the negotiation processes as NGO members or even leaders, most have not been involved.

The Mbororo formed their first NGO around the same time, in 1992, in response to Cameroon's democratization and the government's promotion of ethnic and regional elite associations. At that time, a small but decisive group of educated Mbororo youths were the driving force behind Mbororo political activism and development efforts. Although they initially collaborated with national and international NGOs and were able to secure international funding for their community

development projects, it was only in 2005 that they joined the global indigenous rights movement. Thus, compared with the San of the Central Kalahari, the Mbororo were relative late-comers. Moreover, their participation in the indigenous rights movement was more self-driven and reliant on educated individuals who were already experienced in ethnic-based political activism.

For both Mbororo and San, the years shortly before and after the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007 were a decisive period that engendered much hope and high aspirations. The ILO and UN recognition of the Mbororo of Cameroon as an indigenous people in 2005 increased their national and international visibility and opened new opportunities for Mbororo activists to participate in international travel and training and to access social and economic resources (Pelican, 2011). It should be noted, however, that these opportunities have primarily been used by educated Mbororo based in the country's capital and the northwest region, whereas the Mbororo in other parts of the country have been less active in the indigenous rights movement.

For the |Gui and ||Gana San of the Central Kalahari, the court ruling of 2006 was a groundbreaking achievement, which could not have been achieved without international support and connection with the global indigenous rights movement. Although some of the San communities had previously been relocated by the Botswana government, it was not until the CKGR case that this had attracted so much public attention, culminating in the San plaintiffs' entitlement to return to their ancestral lands. Additionally, although the |Gui and ||Gana only constitute a small fraction of the 10,000 San dispersed across southern Africa, their success in court was viewed as a historical achievement for all the San and their joint political movement.

Thus, for the San and Mbororo, as well as for many other ethnic minorities in post-colonial Africa, the indigenous rights movement has provided a platform from which they could express their grievances against both the post-colonial governments and the majority populations who had colonized and marginalized them. Moreover, in the course of their participation in this movement, members of the younger generations learned to articulate their claims and achieve public recognition. This is a new situation, which differs from that in the late 1980s, the early stage of the indigenous rights movement in Africa.

Although the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was hailed as an outstanding achievement that, in addition to political and cultural recognition, promised access to development and resources, its implementation has engendered new challenges. As the subsequent years have shown, recognition of the indigenous rights of San and Mbororo is no longer a matter of international deliberation. Instead, this issue rests with the Botswanan and Cameroonian governments, which have pursued different approaches to the concept of indigenous peoples.

The Role of National Governments in Defining and Implementing Indigenous Rights

As outlined above, African governments' unease with the concept of indigenous peoples is based on the fact that in most parts of Africa, unlike in the Americas

or the Pacific, the distinction between indigenous and non-indigenous or settler populations has been problematic. Yet, even after resolving the issue by modifying the text of the declaration, many African governments have retained their skepticism vis-à-vis the concept of indigenous peoples. Furthermore, African countries differ considerably regarding their approaches to nation-building and how to deal with ethnic pluralism. This is illustrated by the comparison between the cases of Botswana and Cameroon.

The post-colonial government in Botswana has always adopted the ideology of a 'one-nation-consensus' in distinction to South Africa's former ethnic-based segregation or apartheid system. The concept of RADs was introduced to provide social services and access to development to the country's most marginalized populations and to assist them in integrating into the Botswanan nation. Concurrently, the government has been strongly opposed to the idea of the differential treatment of its citizens on any basis other than economic disparity. Accordingly, the Botswanan government still refuses to formally apply the UN concept of indigenous peoples to its citizenry, arguing that all *Batswana* (i.e., citizens of Botswana) are indigenous. This position was tested in the 2006 court ruling, but the Botswanan government never officially recognized the San as indigenous peoples. Moreover, its citizens' entitlement to social and development services is based on the criterion of living in so-called RAD settlements, and Kx'oensakene is the closest of these settlements to the CKGR. Hence, the |Gui and ||Gana San were forced to choose to identify either as indigenous peoples or as RADs and to either return to their ancestral lands or have access to development. Similarly, the 2011 judgment confirmed their legal entitlement not only to land but also to water. The Botswanan government endorsed the ruling, but argued that it was the returnees' responsibility to manage their access to water.

The complexities engendered by the indigenous rights discourse have been different, but equally challenging, in the Cameroonian case. During the early post-colonial period, the government promoted an ideology of nation-building and of unifying Cameroon's diverse population groups, but it changed its stance with the country's democratization in the 1990s, when it adopted a multiculturalism approach. As outlined earlier, in the context of these transformations, the government integrated the concept of indigenous peoples into its policies, but soon came to realize its incompatibility with pre-existing notions, such as 'autochthones', 'natives', and 'first-comers', which have similar meanings but divergent applications. As a result, the Cameroonian government has been inconsistent and ambiguous in its participation in the indigenous rights discourse, particularly with regard to the question of entitlement to land and natural resources (Pelican, 2013). This has also been the case with respect to the Sabga leadership crisis, when the state party effectively played for time and never took a decisive stance, even in response to UN pressure.

In both our cases, UN bodies, such as the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, increased their pressure on national governments after the adoption of the Declaration. In the meantime, however, the locus of negotiations has shifted from the international to the national level, thus underscoring the relevance of the nation-state. Eventually, both the |Gui and ||Gana San of the

Central Kalahari and the Mbororo of Cameroon were disappointed with their governments' varying stances and the outcomes of their lobbying strategies. Consequently, they turned to alternative and complementary ways of trying to improve their situation.

Focusing on Daily Life and Local Coping Strategies

In both case studies, we focused on the coping strategies employed by the San and Mbororo in response to the unforeseen results of their engagement in the indigenous rights movement. Although each study highlights different types of reaction, we found that both groups have recently been maintaining a distance from the global indigenous rights movement and have tried to develop alternative and complementary strategies.

As outlined above, the |Gui and ||Gana San of the Central Kalahari have developed new forms of dwelling, mobility, and sociability, which help them to mitigate the social and economic inequalities that have resulted from the 2006 court ruling. According to the San ignored by this judgment, the CKGR was their common land, and there was no comprehensible reason that only 189 people were allowed to return while others had to stay behind. They also criticized the fact that the responsibility for adjusting to Botswanan society and culture has always been placed on them and that the Botswanan government has never attempted to integrate or adapt to San ways of thinking and acting. Thus, according to a San community leader, it is not the San who are remote area dwellers (RADs), but the Gaborone government that is 'remote' from the San community (Mogwe, 1992). In the same way, San interlocutors resented being reduced to the image of traditional hunter-gatherers who can (and should) do without access to development, as proposed by several NGOs. In this sense, it is their frustration that the San identity and lifestyle is defined by 'others', be it as RADs or traditional hunter-gatherers, which has motivated them to move their focus from politics to daily life and local coping strategies.

In the Mbororo case, there has been a proliferation of NGOs and global rights discourses, including regarding indigenous, human, and minority rights, during the past few years. The most recent trend, however, is the use of social media as a new strategy for addressing the interference of individual and corporate actors in Mbororo land rights and community politics. Rather than asking the international community to hold national governments accountable for violations of indigenous rights, they have used the Internet and social media as a more direct way to engender public outrage. The latter's effectiveness, however, depends on the number of people who have access to and support the virtual media campaigns. As in most parts of Cameroon, Internet literacy has increased considerably during the past few years. Indeed, Mbororo social media activism has, at least for the moment, achieved its goal, providing an uncensored platform that is accessible to all interested in Mbororo issues.

Hence, the San and Mbororo have, in their own ways, turned to more direct and informal strategies of resolving or addressing their problems. At the same time, they continue to engage in the indigenous rights discourse where appropri-

ate. However, they often do so in a less confrontational manner than before, aiming for collaboration rather than conflict with government institutions and neighboring groups.

CONCLUSIONS

As outlined in this article, the indigenous rights movements in Botswana and Cameroon have followed a trajectory from expectation and success to disillusionment and pragmatism. Both communities under study have experienced successes as well as internal disagreements and conflicts. Like many transformational processes, the indigenous rights movement has benefited some and disadvantaged others. This applies not only to members of the San and Mbororo communities but also to neighboring groups, some of whom may have felt excluded or alienated by the indigenous rights discourse. Moreover, the widely shared understanding of indigenous peoples as characterized by cultural distinctiveness and a strong attachment to their ancestral lands poses the risk of 're-traditionalizing' people and excluding minorities who, willingly or unwillingly, have relinquished much of their distinctive culture and who, for better or worse, have adopted a different lifestyle.

To complement our explorations of the indigenous rights movement in Africa, we will briefly consider the case of the Maasai of Tanzania, as introduced in the beginning of this article. Maasai pastoralists began to participate in the global indigenous rights movement in the late 1980s, but they later turned away from the indigenous rights discourse to a more nationally based discourse regarding pastoral development (Hodgson, 2011). This shift in Maasai activism resembles similar changes in the Mbororo and San movements, which moved from employing the indigenous rights discourse to apply international pressure to adopting a more conciliatory approach and collaborating with government institutions. Unlike Hodgson's interpretation of the Maasai case, which underscores strategic shifts from one discourse to another, we view the Mbororo and San cases as involving the diversification of strategies and the simultaneous adoption of various discourses. That is, identification as an indigenous people is not the only or necessarily the most effective strategy for advancing claims; yet, depending on the context, it can still be one effective approach among others.

Hodgson used the concept of 'positioning' to frame these shifts in orientation. She related these shifts to the need of local institutions, organizations, and individuals to respond and position themselves in relation to the changing discourses shaped by the international community and development establishment. In the 1980s, the focus was on the civil society as a self-governing body; however, the role of national governments has been reconsidered in the 2000s. Consequently, government institutions have been increasingly integrated into the conception and implementation of development programs and, most importantly, in the allocation of funds. Thus, in contrast to popular assumptions that the power of nation-states would wane in the wake of neoliberalism and globalization, our case studies from different parts of the continent attest to the enduring relevance of African nation-states for negotiating legal entitlements and accessing development.

Finally, after comparing the indigenous rights movements in Africa with its senior counterparts in the Pacific and the Americas, we believe that although claims to indigeneity in Africa tend to be contentious, they also occur within a context that offers more opportunities for flexible engagement and disengagement with the indigenous rights discourse. That is, the Mbororo, San, or Maasai may eventually stop being indigenous if they no longer refer to themselves or are referred to as an indigenous people. Moreover, due to the complex and longstanding histories of mobility, interdependence, and ethnic coexistence in most parts of Africa (see also Lenssen-Erz and Yatsuka in this volume), many individuals and groups tend to be wary of offending their neighbors, whose sympathy and understanding are considered relevant to their everyday lives. Thus, they carefully weigh their options, depending on the situation or context, which, as we have seen, can change rapidly, and decide whether to press claims based on an exclusivist indigenous identity or to adopt a more conciliatory approach that emphasizes coexistence and collaboration. Whereas similar processes may operate and similar considerations may be relevant in other parts of the globe, we consider this careful balancing of strategies of inclusion and exclusion to be a crucial aspect of the indigenous rights movement in Africa.

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NOTE

- (1) Due to the untimely death of Lelewal’s founder, Ibrahim Njobdi, in September 2014, the organization’s future remains to be seen.

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