

COLONIAL RELOCATIONS IN NORTHERN NAMIBIA: FROM THE RIVER SIDE VILLAGE TO NKARAPAMWE BLACK TOWNSHIP IN RUNDU

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Abstract

Using oral interviews, archival documents and a review of literature, this paper explores the 1960s colonial relocation of black people in Namibia from the Kavango River villages to Nkarapamwe Black Township in Rundu. The paper considers the relevance of the political situation in Namibia at that time, specifically the political insecurity situation along the Kavango River as part of the factors that led to the relocation. The aim is to analyze why people refused to move to the township and what strategies the colonial state used to achieve its objectives of relocation and how the relocation impacted on the economic and social aspects of the community.

In the case of the riverside villages in Rundu, the motives for relocation were political in nature to monitor the ongoing frontal war by SWAPO along the Kavango River and although the authorities gave other benign reasons for relocation people hardly found them convincing and discerned their own reasons for being relocated. People initially refused to be relocated because they believed and feared rightly so that the houses in the new township were too small for their family and cultural practices and that they would have no ownership of the house and they would be compelled to pay for all costs of developments in the new black township. While some people moved voluntarily to Nkarapamwe Township in 1968 there are indications that the relocation was a force to many who had initially refused to move but were eventually forced to do so by the threat of having their homesteads burned and losing their jobs.

The naming of their community by a proverbial name Nkarapamwe asserted the residents' desire to work closely together to avoid bringing each other into trouble or disrepute with the township administration officials. The paper asserts that relocation impacted negatively on people's economic aspects as it meant finding ways to recover costs of their loss of properties. Equally, it impacted on the people's social aspects as old interpersonal relations and social structure were irretrievably destroyed. This case study is significant as it provides an example of colonial relocation which can be a lesson to the post-colonial township authorities in Namibia on how relocation impacts on people and why authorities should become more considerate of community plights before, during and after relocation process.

Keywords: Colonial relocations, northern Namibia

INTRODUCTION

In post-colonial Namibia, the relocation of people from their occupied land to other areas occurs in both rural and urban areas. Such relocations seem based on the need to make way for developmental projects in the respective areas. Since land is a very important asset to communities subsequently they may oppose attempts to dislodge them from their land to prevent a destruction of their source of livelihood, existing social structures and interpersonal relations. And although there is an understanding of why people must move, little is said

about what this moving means for the affected people in terms of its social and economic impacts on their livelihood.

This paper therefore provide a past case of colonial relocation of communities in Namibia with the aim to provide lessons to the post-colonial township authorities in Namibia on how relocation impacts on people so that they become more considerate of communities before, during and after relocation process. Using oral interviews, written archival documents and a review of literature, this paper explores the colonial forced relocation of black people from the Kavango River villages to a new black township in the 1960s. The paper considers the relevance of the political situation in Namibia at that time, specifically the political insecurity situation along the Kavango River due to SWAPO's liberation war, as part of the factors that led to the relocation of blacks along the Kavango River in the late 1960s. Furthermore, it analyses various reasons why people refused to move to the township and what strategies the colonial state used to achieve its objectives and how the relocation impacted on the economic and social aspects of the community.

The relocation purpose and process

The factors behind the relocation from the Kavango River villages must be understood in the following contexts. First, the tense political situation in Namibia in the 1960s led to greater international pressure on South Africa's colonial rule over Namibia and compelled South Africa for an internal political solution. Liberia and Ethiopia were by then waiting for the ruling of the International Court of Justice (hereafter, ICJ) on a case where they argued that South Africa had failed to improve the economic, social, political and moral well-being of the Namibians and should therefore cease its control over them. On the other hand, People's Liberation Army of Namibia (hereafter P.L.A.N) of South West Africa People's Organization (S.W.A.P.O) began taking root as a military group with its bases in Zambia, Botswana and Tanzania, preparing to wage an armed struggle against the illegal occupation of South Africa over Namibia. The P.L.A.N fighters had been using the Kavango River as its early entry point into Namibia since 1966. South Africa was therefore left in a difficult position to prove that Liberia and Ethiopia's accusations at the International Court of Justice of neglecting the people of South West Africa/Namibia were not true. She also had to find her own way to provide self-determination to the Namibian people so as to create an impression among ethnic groups in Namibia and the international community that the beginning of the military struggle by S.W.A.P.O in the 1960s was therefore unnecessary.

The pressure of S.W.A.P.O guerrilla warfare that was taking root along the Kavango River in the 1960s became a great concern for the colonial authorities. People along the Kavango Riverside, near Rundu were therefore compelled to move away from their homesteads to the black township as soon as possible. This was necessary so as to provide security forces with a clear view near Rundu of potential infiltration of S.W.A.P.O fighters along the Kavango River. The infiltration of the guerilla fighters into the Kavango from as early as March 1966 coincided with the implementation process of the Odendaal plan in the Kavango area. Helao Shityuwete, one of the first groups of S.W.A.P.O freedom fighters explains how they penetrated Namibia across the Kavango River in March 1966 with the purpose to kill or to be killed by the enemy but were in the end ambushed and taken prisoners to Robben Island in Cape Town, South Africa.

It was 23 March 1966, a date I remember as the day when, as a returning guerrilla, I was prepared to play the game according to its rule of kill or get killed.... We arrived at Rundu at about 0200h and because we could not find our way through to town, we decided to rest and have a little snooze. We moved away at first light and located the house of our contact in Rundu. Rundu was teeming with security police. Uniformed police in four-wheel

drive vans were patrolling everywhere in the dusty town. Police in civilian clothes and unmarked cars were in evidence everywhere. It was clear that they knew we were in the area, but did not know who we were or what we looked like.....

Diescho also wrote that in 1967, a group of S.W.A.P.O Cadres who came via the Caprivi Strip were all shot by the South African soldiers in Mbukushu area in Kavango. The idea of scheduled residential areas from the riverside to a township was, therefore, a matter of great urgency for the authorities as the colonial representative Mr. Mare was confronted with the then increasing danger of frontier terrorists and the fast spreading anti- South Africa attitude and pro-SWAPO ideas.

The office of the Commissioner, the South African police and the army all worked together to the same purpose of making sure that S.W.A.P.O did not get any hold of Namibia. Co-operation between these branches was necessary as the Bantu Affairs Commissioner of Kavango explained:

With the intensification of the political war, it shall sometimes be necessary to take calculated risks. The risk can however be reduced if the institution that runs the risk knows in advance what to expect so that the necessary preparations to reduce the possible disadvantages that may follow can be put up in time. Our department, the S.A police, and the army have each their specific branch but our work is pointed on the same purpose, we are dependent on each other and if each one walks their own way, we would run the deadly danger of undermining each other with the best of meanings..

Colonial strategies for relocation

One of the important colonial strategies was to link the relocation as part of the grant colonial plan to resettle black people in a favorable space where they would be developed based on the Odendaal commission's recommendations. The Odendaal Commission was appointed in 1962 by South Africa, apparently, to investigate the economic, social, political and moral wellbeing of Namibians and make recommendations for implementations. The Odendaal Commission made recommendations for various ethnic groups of Namibia. In reference to Kavango, the Commission had the following recommendations which are summarized from : it proposed a Legislative Council to be constituted by traditional chiefs and headmen and some elected members who would take over the functions that were vested in the Department of Bantu Administration of the government of South Africa. It also recommended an Executive Council, which was to consist of the chiefs in Kavango and members elected by the Legislative Council. It also recommended increase of educational facilities in the form of schools and improved health facilities for the communities. On agriculture, investigation into crops that could be grown economically was to be encouraged and that there should be irrigation schemes along the Kavango River. It also recommended that fifty hectares should enlarge the already existing irrigation scheme of Uvhungu-vhungu along the Kavango River. The recommendations were to have been implemented as soon as possible but by 1963, the Bantu Commissioner of Kavango admitted that little had been done so far to implement because of the lack of personnel with technical skills.. A five-year development plan for Kavango for 1964 to 1969 was drawn up. This Plan had various facets. In relation to animal husbandry, an increased cattle population along the river and the need for the marketing of cattle were great concerns for the authorities. It was planned that cattle grazing be removed from the river as it resulted in infectious diseases of cattle, and that stock farming be encouraged inland, provided that boreholes were drilled in that waterless and sandy inland area .

It was clear to the colonial authorities when they planned to implement the Odendaal Commission's recommendations as early as 1964 that the people of Kavango would not accept such recommendations or changes so easily and would need to be approached with caution as the Commissioner Mare noted:

We would need to cautiously begin to put the recommendations of the Odendaal Commission to work and on these recommendations we stand in the same position as a man who takes a horse to the water to drink. The co-operation of the locals depends namely on their trust in the good intentions of the government. The most important recommendation of the Commission for it to be accepted by the blacks is the establishment of the Legislative Council and this recommendation can remove the suspicion that the government wants blacks, as they say it, "to be thrown away", something of which the Kavango people are very much afraid.

The creation of the Legislative Council was therefore seen as a pertinent pretext through which to implement all the Odendaal Commission plans. This does not mean that they could not have implemented them without it; in fact the forced relocation of people occurred before the establishment of the Kavango Legislative Council. This was however just a safer way for South Africa to carry out the implementation process without standing the risk of being seen by the Kavango people with suspicion and doubt for the future plan of life under Bantustan rule.

A township for blacks was therefore constructed at Rundu in the 1960s to later by the 1970s become the seat of the envisioned Kavango homeland government although people were relocated earlier in 1968. Construction of the township began in 1964. The work was done by a local group of builders under the supervision of the white supervisor whom the local people named "Kandoroha", meaning "a small tin." The plot on which the township was built was leased from the communal land of the vaShambyu tribal authority during the reign of Queen Maria Mwingere. Although the real motives for the construction of the township and factors for relocation of people to the township were politically motivated, the colonial authorities however provided other reasons to convince blacks to move. The purpose of the construction of the township, as local people were informed by the colonial authorities, was so that the black people could settle peacefully together. As Paulus Munango explain: "the previous Bantu Commissioner told us that the government was building a town for us where we may live together". They were also told that it was constructed so as to house all the black government workers who resided in the nearby areas of Sarusungu in the east up to Sauyemwa settlement in the west so that they were nearer to their place of work at Rundu. The township was meant to become a centre for urban lifestyle among the local people, a centre for modernity and progress towards an improved social, economic and political independence which the colonial authority aspired for black Namibians in the 1970s. The apartheid colonial authorities did not complete the houses for the new township before their occupation. The main concern was to have some township structures, whether complete or incomplete, in place for black people as centers for their Bantustan governments as soon as possible so as to whisk off all international and SWAPO criticism which was rife in the 1960s and 1970s rather than to build proper houses for black people.

The new black township was named as 'Nkarapamwe' by the residents which in the Kavango languages means "Sitting together at one place." Nkarapamwe is derived from a local proverb which says that "in an act of sitting together at one place, one should not expose a view of the nakedness of another" {Nkarapamwe kapi ava zilimonene mpenywina}. It implied that residents should promote good neighborliness, support each other in times of problems or crisis and not to bring one another into trouble with the authorities.

The apartheid South African government that initiated various strategies to force black communities in South Africa to move applied some of the same strategies in the case of Rundu in the 1960s to 1970s. In South Africa, the strategies of forced removals were applied in the context of set laws such as section five of the Black Administration Act and many others. See for example . Since the 1950s, relocation within the Bantustans in South Africa occurred for the implementation of betterment planning where tribal areas has been divided into residential and agricultural land and similarly removals of black spots also occurred at the same time. In the 1960s, mass removals of Coloureds and Indians began as a result of the Group Area Act of 1950 and equally, the 1960s and 1970s were years of convulsive upheavals for hundreds of thousands of rural people who were forced to move to try and make nations out of reserves. The state followed some patterns in dealing with communities under threat of removals that mostly resulted in an escalating use of force. The state in South Africa worked to divide the communities under threat of removals by creating leadership crisis in the communities, used threats of parked bulldozers, no pensions, no passes, smashed schools or cut off their water. If after all these attempts, the communities still refused to move, they were given due dates and told that on that day they will be moved.

In Rundu, Namibia, the South African government organized community meetings in January 1967 to inform the communities about the fate of their relocation where the working black force had to relocate to the new township while rest of the unemployed people were to move to the villages of Ncwa up to Sarusungu in the east in a bid to remove them from the banks of the river. He worked to divide the people by choosing to make the traditional leaders to decide for the whole community rather than allowing a community public debate about the issue of relocation to scheduled residential areas. It chose the sole decision of the traditional leaders to represent the decision of the whole community even when the views of the traditional leaders were contrary to the views of the majority of the members of their communities. Mr. Mare tried other arguments to encourage the move to the township as Paulus Munango, a resident of Nkarapamwe, explains:

Mister Mare also indicated to us that the water of the river is infected with various diseases and that we would receive clean water in the black township which is free from germs. .

One of the Commissioner's strategies to influence the people to go to the newly built township of Nkarapamwe was to use the service of influential people among the Kavango community to assist him. His most important tool was indeed the service of Dr. Romanus Kampungu. The Rev. Dr. Kampungu was born and raised in the Kavango. By 1953 he was ordained as a catholic priest in Namibia and by 1966; he was the first black Roman Catholic priest in Namibia to obtain a Doctor of philosophy. Dr. Kampungu was the most learned and the most respected individual in all walks of life in Kavango. In 1967 commissioner Mare had requested Dr Kampungu to help him convince people to accept the ideas of scheduled residential areas and Bantustan government. Kampungu himself explains:

During 1967, Mr. Mare was busy preparing the people of Kavango for various development levels according to the Odendaal Commission proposals (Bantustans), and was confronted with the then increasing danger of frontier terrorists and the fast spreading anti- South Africa attitude and pro-SWAPO ideas. He thought my presence in Kavango would be a help to the administration and church alike. Hence his desire that the Bishop sends me to Rundu for his immediate work of having the people accept the proposed self-rule offered by the government of the Republic of South Africa to various non-whites' ethnic groups, and the scheduled residential areas. He urgently requested the Bishop to send me immediately to assist him at various meetings held all over Kavango in January 1967.... Towards the end of 1967, the Bishop

visited Kavango. When he returned to Windhoek, he told me that he would transfer me to Rundu because the Commissioner blamed him for retaining me in the police zone; where as my own country needed me urgently. The Commissioner had told him also that unless he sent me to Rundu, he would not give permission for the Catholic Church to come into Nkarapamwe. So, at the beginning of March 1968, I was transferred from Windhoek district where I was teaching Latin, Religion, did pastoral work and directed the students of Dobra High school in various ways. I would still be at Dobra where I was very much needed also. It was in compliance with the insistent request of the Bantu Commissioner.

So, in January 1967 before his official transfer to Kavango by 1968, Dr. Kampungu travelled the whole Kavango with the Commissioner Mare to do some motivational work among the local people at the meetings and many people believed in Kampungu's explanations. This was very clear at one such meeting when one of the locals stood up and said:

I am glad to see my friend Dr. Romanus here today and also the other visitors...I accept that the plans hold great advantages for us especially since I heard them explained by Dr. Romanus. As a son of the land he would not welcome the proposals if they were bad. What the Bantu Affairs Commissioner has promised, I see them fulfilled. I hear my friend's explanation and I do not doubt....

In the end people were influenced to accept the plans as Kampungu Romanus himself explains:

I used whatever influence I had to convince my fellow Kavango about the proposal at different levels and influenced them to accept the offer from the Republic of South Africa. It was not an easy job. When we finished the meetings, Mr. Mare, overjoyed and pleased with the results declared by way of thanking me: "I do not think that without you we could have got the people to accept the proposals of residential areas and self-rule.

It is interesting to note that Dr. Kampungu arrived in Rundu, Nkarapamwe at the beginning of March 1968 and, by 31 March 1968, "88 houses were occupied while only 3 houses remained open". So, with the help of Kampungu, Mare was able to win the support of the people to move away from the riverside villages into the township of Nkarapamwe and other scheduled residential areas. It is not altogether clear why Kampungu was a willing tool to the colonial authorities at that time. It may be to do with his character and beliefs. What can be learnt from his letter, however, is that he was ordered to help the Commissioner in Rundu by the bishop of the Catholic Church Mr. Koppman.

Community responses to the relocation

The Commissioner's files indicates that the question of new residential areas became a thorny issue for Mr. Mare in 1967 when he organized meetings to convince the Kavango people about the recommendations of the Odendaal Commission about a township because, as he put it, "Blacks do not want to live in 'towns'. The Commissioner Mr. Mare initiated strategies to influence the people to move away from the riverside homesteads to the new township and this was met with opposition. There were various reasons that the people gave why they were unwilling to move and live into the new black township. To start with, people feared that their large families will not fit in the two bedroom houses of Nkarapamwe. People felt that the new houses were too small for their families because some had three wives and there was no space for keeping guest. Furthermore many had children of opposite sex and the houses of Nkarapamwe did not meet that need of having separate rooms for the boys and

girls. The houses in Nkarapamwe lacked most of the characteristics of the homesteads at the riverside villages. The people informed Commissioner Mare of their fears and therefore, Mr. Mare worked to reduce people's fear by promising that those who had large families would be given two houses depending on the size of their families.

People also feared that water in the township would be less than what was the case alongside the river. The people were afraid that they would be compelled to pay for all developments in the town and that they would have to pay for the renting of the houses and would have no right of ownership as they did of their homesteads. In his letter to the Bantu Commissioner of Kavango in 1970, the Chief Bantu Commissioner in Windhoek for example too explained clearly why it should not be a good idea to allow residents of Nkarapamwe to be given private ownership to the plots and houses of Nkarapamwe and why they must therefore only rent it.

All the residents of Nkarapamwe have residential rights elsewhere in Kavango and they are only living in Nkarapamwe while they work at Rundu. To give them approval in any instance would be unnecessary work and would also be time wasting..

Blacks were not to be allowed ownership of houses or plots in Nkarapamwe and this was the same in Katutura, the Black Township in Windhoek. This was mainly an implementation in line with apartheid South African government policy, which stated that "Africans are in urban areas such as Windhoek only to work. When Africans are no longer able to work because of health, old age or some reason, they may be asked or required to leave the urban area and return to their previous home".

Despite the meetings that were held in 1967 by the Commissioner in the presence of Dr. Romanus Kampungu, some people initially refused to move. While some people felt they were forced to relocate to the township in 1968 others said they went at their own will to the attraction of the "nice" houses. In the oral interviews carried out, Simon Kandere who also moved to the township in 1968 rejected the view that he or some other people were forced to move to the township. Instead, he argues that they moved in at their own will because they were attracted to the "nice" houses.. As for the Lucian family, they said they moved into Nkarapamwe because it was near to their place of work.

The relocation to Nkarapamwe Black Township did not trigger any physical confrontation with the colonial authority. While there were people who did not like to move to the township, there were others who favoured it. Initially, women were reluctant to move to Nkarapamwe because they were not used to township life like their men who had become used to it during their contract labour system periods in the central part of Namibia.. This is an interesting observation of the position of women towards the relocation. In many cases, women always have a second or subordinate role in many male dominated community histories. The reluctance of women to move to the black township in the 1960s is a sign that women were opposed to the colonial act of forced relocation in Rundu. The role of women in colonial resistance histories of Kavango calls for further research. It is argued, that there was no well-organized and united community resistance.

Some government workers initially refused to move and remained in their homestead alongside the river. The Commissioner therefore used a more aggressive strategy. He sent a local government employee Jonas Hilemo to threaten the remaining people. Hilemo gives a fascinating account of his instruction and activities at the riverside villages:

Jonas Hilemo, Blackman, postal address, airport basis, Rundu, declares. 'I am an adult Blackman and work as mentioned above. I live in the black township Nkarapamwe near Rundu. During the year 1968 I was working at the Department of Black Affairs. During 1968, people began to move to the new township Nkarapamwe. There were some of the people who refused to

move. During the above mentioned year, I was told by the former Bantu Affairs Commissioner Mister Mare to tell the people who lived from the east to the west of Rundu, who had refused, to move. I had to go and tell them to move. In case they refused to move I had to burn down their homesteads.

The assistant Bantu Commissioner Mister Veldsman also said further that in case people still did not want to move I had to tell them that they would no longer find any jobs in Rundu and that those who were already in employment would lose their jobs. I also had to destroy all homesteads that had already been vacated but have not been destroyed by the previous occupants so that no other people would be able to live there again. I therefore went out to deliver the message of the Bantu Affairs and the assistant Bantu Affairs Commissioner. The people had no other choice if not to move. They left their homesteads and went to live in Nkarapamwe. Some of the people destroyed the homesteads themselves. I also destroyed homesteads that were not destroyed by their occupants. It was so lucky that I did not have any need to burn down the peoples' homesteads. After I told them that in case they refused to move, I would burn down their houses, they all moved..

Paulus Munango also argues that the strategy to burn down homesteads worked:

The people moved afterwards to the new Bantu township. The occupants also destroyed the other homesteads that were left behind so that no other persons could come and live there. The people whose homesteads were burned were unhappy but they reasoned that they were now getting good houses and that they would now live better than in their homesteads.

The quotation is important for the following purpose: It helps to bring forth the question of evidence in the writing of history. Jonas Hilemo's statement, while agreeing to some extent with the testimony of Paulus Munango, contradicts it on an important point. While Paulus Munango claims that houses were burnt, the man who was supposedly charged with this task himself denies this. Hilemo suggests that he only destroyed homes after people left but he didn't have to actually burn homes to force them to leave. The question therefore stands out; did Jonas Hilemo burn down the homesteads or not? Does it mean therefore that, the fact that their evidence contradicts each other, therefore one of them must have lied in front of the police just to get their point heard? This question indeed may not have a clear cut answer, but what is important for this research is that both sources agree that people had been forced to move against their will.

The following explanation by Aninka Claassen of why the fear to resist may have existed in the case of South African communities can also be argued as true for the community in Rundu: "In many cases people are terrified of challenging the state precisely because they know that this will bring force into play".

The impacts of relocation on communities

The relocation of people from the riverside villages to the Bantu township of Nkarapamwe in 1968 affected the people in various ways. The effects can be classified as social and economic. The relocations placed economic pressure on the people who had to find money to pay for the renting of the houses and water consumptions. The houses did not have ceilings and were not electrified. There was no sewerage system in place and the toilets were those pothole toilets where you did not need to flush. People moved into the houses while the houses were not yet completed. Since houses were in-completed upon occupation, the people had to always buy candles or lamps to use in their new houses as Nkarapamwe location had no lights, and this was too costly. Those who could afford it used paraffin stoves to cook; otherwise they all cooked on an open fire outside as they did along the riverside

villages. The rooms were too small to accommodate all members of the extended families, some family members had to find space in the nearby villages and this disrupted previous strong extended families that lived in one big traditional homestead at the riverside villages. As Shikerete explained:

Those houses again were only built consisting of two parts and I had my elder sister, there was nowhere to leave her since her husband had died, so there was nowhere to keep her. Even when my father used to come and visit me, there was nowhere for him to sleep. When visitors came from Ukwangali area there was no place to keep them. There was nowhere to keep my in-laws, even when my own family came to visit; there was no way we could survive. So then it was life, only life inside there which made me to say, this cannot be, better I go and settle myself that side so that when visitors come I can settle them here to stay here while I myself must just stay there..

It is clear from the quotation that there was no space for keeping visitors. Personal freedoms were reduced because people were not free to do everything as a result of reduced space and township regulations. There were rules and certain required behavior from administration that township residence had to adhere to. Noise was not allowed in town, which meant there was to be no traditional dances where drums are usually beaten the whole night, as was a normal practice at the riverside villages. There were breakdowns of traditions, especially where children had to share the same toilet with their parents, sisters and brothers as Anna Lisa Mate za Ihemba explains,

“Some of the parents who were not used to it still use to leave the toilets rooms behind and run away into the nearby bushes”.

The traditional activity of “Shinyanga” which was a gathering at night around the fire of the parents and their children for transmission of traditional education from parents to children disappeared from the township life as there was no time for it in town from both the children and parents. Traditional brewed beer was allowed in the township, provided it was not sold inside the house. People were allowed to buy the Portuguese beer, Cerveja, across the river at Calai Portuguese camp on the Angolan side of Kavango River, which they brought and drank in Nkarapamwe. The increasing rate of consumption of alcohol in Nkarapamwe Township was totally different from the River side villages where only the elderly drank alcohol occasionally.

The environmental setting of Nkarapamwe Township did not allow the residents to bring along all their traditions and customs, which they followed at the riverside villages; there was simply no space for them. Instead the residents were forced by the environment to adapt to township life. They had to adapt to staying quietly indoors without disturbing their neighbors with noise. They were expected to be indoors in the evening at night until the next day for the administration’s security purposes of controlling intruders and terrorists who in this case included the SWAPO freedom fighters. The children had to learn to love school and attend it every Monday to Friday and time for playing was less; in fact, the space in Nkarapamwe was just too small to play such a game. However, it was the identity of the people that was affected the most. To be a Kavango is to be a riverside people. Kavango is the name, which means “small place” which was given by the local people to the place in which the river was found and from which the river came to acquire its name. The people in turn came to identify themselves not with the land within which the river was found but with the river itself. They became known as vaKavango, meaning those who belong to Kavango, the river. It is that process of living along the riverside and identifying yourself with it by taking part in all river activities which identified you as a Kavango. The issue of identity also became a reason for some Kavango law makers of the 1970s to propose for the discontinuing of the planning of and the removals of people to new residential areas. Bonifacious Haushiku

was one of those law makers of the Kavango Legislative Council (KLC) who argued strongly against relocation of the people. Haushiku was a black Roman Catholic priest born in Kavango. He was co-opted in the Kavango Bantustan parliament in the 1970s. He became the first black arch Bishop of the Roman Catholic Church in Namibia, a position he held until his death. Haushiku argued as follow:

I have heard further that they are erecting a fence from east to west alongside the river, which means that the people will now move inland and this river subsequently become a wilderness and people born inland will know nothing about the river and of hunting along the riverside. Hence when I sit on my easy chair I want to be able to see the Kavango flowing. I don't want them to take me to a wild environment because than they won't call me a muKavango anymore. I will be something else.

Conclusion

This paper has indicated that colonial authorities presented friendly reasons for relocating people and hid the true reasons for relocation but that the people discerned their own reasons why the colonial authorities relocated them as being political in nature and as a means to monitor the then ongoing frontal war by SWAPO along the Kavango River. Indications are that people refused to be relocated because they believed and feared rightly so that the houses in the new township were too small for their family and cultural practices and that they would have no ownership of the house and would be compelled to pay for all costs of developments in the new black township.

While some people moved voluntarily to Nkarapamwe Township in 1968 there are indications that the relocation was a force to many who had initially refused to move but were eventually forced to do so by the threat of having their homesteads burned and losing their jobs. The paper has shown how the self-naming of their community with a proverbial name Nkarapamwe indicated the residents' desire to work closely together to avoid bringing each other into trouble or disrepute with the township administration officials. The paper shows that the relocation of communities impact negatively on their economic aspects as it usually mean finding ways to recover costs of their loss of properties. Equally, it impacts on the social aspects as usually old interpersonal relations and social structure are irretrievably destroyed and new ones are created which may prove to become unworkable towards promoting good relationship among residents of a community in a new setting.

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