Guests in their Homeland

The situation of the Topnaar community, the traditional but not legal residents in the Namib Naukluft Park

Katrín Magnúsdóttir

Lokaverkefni til MA–gráðu í mannfræði

Félagsvísindasvið

HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

Guests in their Homeland

The situation of the Topnaar community, the traditional but not legal residents in the Namib Naukluft Park

Katrín Magnúsdóttir

Lokaverkefni til MA–gráðu í mannfræði

Leiðbeinandi: Kristín Loftsdóttir

Félags- og mannvísindadeild

Félagsvísindasvið Háskóla Íslands

Maí 2013

Reykjavík, Ísland 2013

Abstract

National parks have been established in the Third World throughout the last century without consulting local people. Usually management plans of these areas fail to include the local residents. International agreements have been made in the past decades to make local people gain rights in these areas. The parks make a clear separation between human beings and non-human nature. To explain this, the nature vs. culture dichotomy will be used.

The focus in the project is on the Topnaar people, the local residents of theh Namib Naukluft Park in the Central Namib Desert. The aim is to answer whether, and how, they feel affected by the fact that they live within a proclaimed national. Since the proclamation of the park in 1907 their presence has been ignored in all park law.

The fieldwork was carried out in Namibia in the spring 2009. Qualitative ethnographic research methods were used for data gathering. People within the Topnaar community were interviewed as well as ministry officials, NGO employees and consultants.

The research showed that the existence of the community is generally acknowledged and the government has been trying to facilitate their livelihoods within the park since the independence of Namibia in 1990. Factors that could be linked to the park did not seem to affect their livelihoods. Factors of a more general nature seemed to affect them more, such as lack of water and leadership problems.

Útdráttur

Sögu þjóðgarða má rekja til loka nítjándu aldar. Síðan þá hafa þjóðgarðar verið stofnaðir víða um heim, ekki síst í þriðja heiminum oft án samráðs við fólk sem býr á svæðinu. Undanfarna áratugi hafa alþjóðlegar samþykktir verið gerðar sem auka rétt íbúa á þessum svæðum. Tvíhyggjan menning – umhverfi verður notuð til að útskýra þjóðgarðshugtakið þar sem gerður er skýr greinarmunur á mannlegu samfélagi og umhverfinu.

Þjóðgarðar verða skoðaðir með tilliti til Topnaarsamfélagsins, íbúa Namib Naukluft þjóðgarðsins í Namibíueyðimörkinni. Frá stofnun hans, árið 1907, hafa lög ekki gert ráð fyrir íbúum þar og þeir því strangt til tekið ólöglegir innan garðsins. Skoðað verður hvort það að búa innan þjóðgarðsins hafi áhrif á daglegt líf Topnaarfólksins.

Rannsóknin var gerð í Namibíu vorið 2009. Eigindlegar vettvangsaðferðir voru notaðar við gagnaöflun. Talað var við fólk í Topnaarsamfélaginu sem og ráðuneytisstarfsmenn, starfsmenn félagasamtaka og ráðgjafa í Namibíu.

Niðurstöður rannsóknarinnar voru þær að vera fólksins í þjóðgarðinum er almennt viðurkennd og hafa stjórnvöld reynt að auðvelda þeim lífið innan garðsins frá sjálfstæði Namibíu árið 1990. Þættir sem tengjast þjóðgarðinum beint virðast almennt hafa lítil áhrif á samfélagið. Þættir almenns eðlis virtust hafa meiri áhrif, svo sem vatnsskortur og vandamál varðandi stjórn innan samfélagsins sjálfs.

Acknowledgements

I would like to use this opportunity to thank the many people that helped me during the writing of this thesis.

First of all I would like to give my special thanks to my family, who was extremely helpful during the writing process. Especially I would like to thank my boyfriend, Árni Sverrir Bjarnason, for his patience and support on the later stages of the writing. My mother, Margrét Ófeigsdóttir, also gets special thanks and appreciation for her support. Without their support and effort the completion of the project would not have been possible.

The Topnaar people themselves deserve a special mention at the beginning. They were very helpful during my time in the community and always willing to assist. In this regard I owe my special thanks to Sebedeus Swartbooi who was exceptionally helpful during my fieldwork.

The employees at Gobabeb Research and Training Centre (GRTC) were very helpful and provided me with information and material that was very important to my project. The same applies to the employees at the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) in Windhoek that provided me with documents and literature of great importance.

I owe my special thanks to the Icelandic International Development Agency (ICEIDA) in Windhoek, first of all for the experience I gained during my internship and for introducing me to the Topnaar community. Davíð Bjarnason, gets special mention in this regard for guidance on the early stages of the field work. Jenny van Bosch, Maria Witbooi and Hlín Rafnsdóttir get special thanks for moral support during the fieldwork.

I would also like thank the Nordic Africa Institute for their financial support without which this project would have been impossible.

Karin Wittman gets her special thanks for supportive comments at the last stages of the writing. I also want to thank Elín María Halldórsdóttir and Sigurmundur Páll Jónsson for graphic design and technical assistance.

Last but not least, my supervisor during the later stages of the research, Kristín Loftsdóttir, deserves a special mention for her guidance and support during the phase of writing my theses. I also owe my gratitude to my supervisors during the early stages of my research, Gísli Pálsson and Karl Benediktsson.

Preface

In this thesis the results of a MA project in anthropology, with emphasis on environmental and developmental anthropology, are outlined. The project was supervised by Dr. Kristín Loftsdóttir, professor at the Department of Anthropology at the University of Iceland. The thesis accounts for 60 ECTS out of 120 ECTS required to attain a MA degree in anthropology at the University of Iceland.

Table of contents

Illustrations

Abbreviations

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resource Management
DRFN	Desert Research Foundation of Namibia
ELAK	Environmental Learning and Action in the Kuiseb
GRTC	Gobabeb Research and Training Centre
ICEIDA	Icelandic International Development Agency
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
MET	Ministry of Environment and Tourism
MGECW	Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare
MRLGH	Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development
NASCO	Namibian Association of Community Based Natural Resource Management
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WCC	World Conservation Congress
WPC	World Parks Congress
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

Introduction

> "I heard it, because it was a case when […] the old chief, was involved. It was when they tried to move us from this area to the area further south, which I really didn't like in fact, because the people they were born and they were raised in this area and they have their own culture and their own traditions whose heritage was because of the !nara plant and I think they couldn't have lived without this plant. But they tried to move the people to the South, there is no !naras and I think the chief at that time and the people who were there they denied the fact to move into that place."

Matt is a farmer, living with his wife and daughter in a house by the Kuiseb River in the Central Namib Desert, the area of the Topnaar community. Moreover, he is living in the Namib Naukluft Park, a national park that is over 100 years old. The laws of the park do not allow any human residents within the borders of the park. Still, Matt has been living in the area since he was born. The family has 21 goats, 6 sheep, 2 cows, a few donkeys and chicken. Along with farming he harvests the !nara, a highly nutritious melon that is endemic in the desert. The life of Matt and his family is no different from the life of the other 3-400 Topnaar people living in the Namib Naukluft Park.

In my project I look at the contradiction of national parks in regard to the Topnaar community, the local residents[1] of the Namib Naukluft Park in Namibia. Since the proclamation of the national park in 1907 their presence has been ignored in all law and legislation about the park. Under current legislation virtually everything they do is illegal (MET 2007: 1). However, since the independence of Namibia in 1990, the government has been trying to facilitate their existence within the park.

Although in recent years more consideration has been given to residents of protected areas, the Topnaar community is not the only example where the rights of the local population are violated when the area they inhabit is proclaimed a protected area. The fact is that the majority of protected areas in the world do have, or at least used to have, people living within

[1] I use the terms 'resident people', 'park residents', 'local people' and 'local population' interchangeably for the inhabitants of the protected areas.

them at the time of proclamation. In most cases management plans of these areas fail to include the local residents (West, Igoe & Brockington 2006: 257).

The phenomenon of national parks first came into being in the United States with the establishment of Yosemite National Park in 1864 and Yellowstone eight years later. Since then, areas of land have been protected all over the world, for the enjoyment of people as well as to protect ecosystems and sustain biological diversity (Stevens et al. 1999: 13; Macleod 2001: 223). With the proclamation of an area as protected people have either been forcefully removed from their land or they are held to discursive standards that are impossible to live up to in practice (West, Igoe & Brockington 2006: 257).

The concept of national parks is a highly Western phenomenon where the 'real nature' is put on display, away from people and their actions that are seen as unnatural and as such not a part of nature. In many cases people are only allowed to enter the parks temporarily to enjoy the 'nature'. The phenomenon can be traced to colonial times when the countries in the West[2] explored their colonies and exploited their resources. After centuries of exploitation the Western countries have in the past 130 years or so proclaimed areas protected in the Third World. As pointed out by Manfred Hinz (2004: 2) "after exploration and exploitation, preservation was the principle" of the governing elite.

The nature vs. culture dichotomy, a central dogma in Western thought since the middle of the last century, can be applied to the phenomenon of national parks. The grounds of this dichotomy can be traced to the Cartesian separation between mind and body: Humans are perceived superior to animals just like mind is superior to body (Smith 2006: 58; Howell 1996: 127). This dichotomy has received a lot of criticism in recent years. In postmodernism the distinction between nature and culture does not exist. Human beings are seen as a part of nature and their actions just as natural as the actions of other parts of the world (see e.g. Bookchin 1993, Milton 1995, Descola and Pálsson 1996 & Ingold 2000). Furthermore, the little attention paid to non-Western cultures and their perception of the environment has been criticized, as most indigenous cultures view culture and nature as continuous. This Western attitude of protection has been referred to as neo-colonialism which can be explained as when resources, in this case 'nature', from the Third World are used for the benefits of the countries

[2] Here I use the terms "the Third World" and "the West" when referring to the poorer countries in the "developing" world and the richer countries in the "developed" world respectively. However, these terms have been highly criticized. They have for example been criticized for implying a dominative relationship to power where "the West" is centered and "the Third World" is marginalized. This way they have been criticized for racist and colonist connotation (Loftsdóttir 2002: 308). Later in the thesis different terms will be used for these concepts.

in the west. Still today conservation and protected area management can be seen as a form of colonialism or neo-colonialism (Merchant 1992: 33).

According to anthropologists working in the field of people living within national parks, cooperation with local communities makes conservation success more likely (West, Igoe & Brockington 2006: 260). Based on this, international organizations have made several agreements, resolutions and recommendations where cooperation with the local community is a key element. Furthermore a recommendation has been made that calls on governments to reform national legislation policies and practices about protected area so that they contribute to the rights of indigenous people (Dudley 2008: 46-47).

The Topnaar people are the only indigenous group of people living in the Namib Desert in the Namib Naukluft Park (Widlok 2003: 357). Despite scarce natural resources and a long history of exploitation by Europeans, other ethnic groups and the government, they still live in their traditional area. The community owns herds of goats, sheep and cattle but is also dependent on wild natural resources. The most important of these is the !nara melon (*Acanthosicyos horrida*) an indigenous plant, endemic in the Namib Desert, that they harvest for their own consumption and commercial purposes. In former times the area of the Topnaar extended to the coast where they could collect marine products. With increased industrialization and commercialism along the coast their territory has been restricted to approximately 120 km long stretch along the Lower Kuiseb River. Wild meat used to be one of their subsistence food sources until 1907, when their territory was proclaimed a national park, which prohibited them from hunting and made, virtually, all their actions and livelihood activities illegal (Henshel & Wenning 2008).

However, since the independence of Namibia the government has been working in co-operation with the community to help them gain rights within the park regarding natural resources, developmental opportunities and income related issues. However, this, as Hinz (2004: 2) points out, contradicts the law of the national park and makes the government a co-player in illegality.

My focus is in the project is on the Topnaar people and whether, and then how, they feel affected in their everyday life by the fact that they live within, or near, the park boundaries. The idea came about in October 2008, following a field visit into the Topnaar Community with ministry officials from the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGECW) and two independent consultants. I went there as a representative of the Icelandic International Development Agency (ICEIDA) where I was employed as an intern. The field visit was a part of a bigger early childhood development project that was being planned at

ICEIDA. During the visit we had several meetings with people from the community as well as the Topnaar traditional authority about how ICEIDA and MGECW could, in co-operation with the Topnaar community, assist in the field of early childhood development in the area.

As a B.Sc. biologist and an M.A. student in anthropology with a special focus on environment and development, a professional interest in the environment and the livelihoods of the Topnaar community was provoked during the visit. I found this small community that for centuries had survived in these harsh surroundings ideal for my project. When I later found out that they were living within a proclaimed national park I decided to form my project around this fact. Subsequently I started formulating the research question and research objectives.

Initially, the aim was to assess how the government is working in co-operation with the Topnaar community in resource management in the area they inhabit. Another goal was to assess how the rules and regulations of the park affect the livelihoods and resource use of the Topnaar community. The research question I started out with was as follows:

> How are the Topnaar's traditional practices of natural resource use affected by rules and regulations set by the government of Namibia?

Under the course of the fieldwork and especially during the analysis of the data the scope of the project changed as I got a better understanding of the subject. I found it more relevant to focus more on the people themselves and whether (and then how) they felt affected in their everyday life by the fact that they were living within, or near, the park boundaries. Based on this I rephrased the research question in later stages to the following:

> Are the Topnaar people affected in their everyday life by the fact that they live within (or near) a proclaimed national park? If so, then how?

During the research process I was concerned about my academic background as a biologist and whether it would benefit or in some way hamper the research. In many cases multidisciplinary approaches are more effective. Many scholars, within environmental anthropology especially, have argued that the social and natural sciences need to work together in order to get a better understanding of human actions and human relations to the environment (see e.g. West & Brockington 2006; Pálsson 2006; Schmit 2005 & Ingold 2000). As Pálsson (2006: 91) puts it: "I have argued for a fundamentally revised division of academic labor – in particular the removal of the disciplinary boundaries between the natural and social sciences". These two disciplines have different approaches which in many cases substitute each other, which can be helpful in multidisciplinary research. As Ingold (2000: 14)

explains, "[w]hereas the biologist claims to study organic nature 'as it really is', the anthropologist studies the diverse ways in which the constituents of the natural world figure in the imagined, or so-called 'cognized' worlds of cultural subjects". It can thus be said that as a field, environmental (or ecological) anthropology moves "beyond the dualism of nature-culture to a holistic view on ecological and cultural realism" (Schmidt 2005: 13). This merging of nature and culture has been applied to the conservation of biological and cultural diversity and has in this context been termed biocultural diversity which must span disciplines from both the natural and the social sciences. As Pálsson (2006: 91) continues his argument "[a]nthropological practice [...] should be broadened, emphasizing intensive collaboration with variety of other disciplines touching on environmental issues". My main academic interest within the field of biology is ecology and, related to that, environmental sciences. My aim with the anthropology studies was thus to combine this interest with my interest in human beings and human societies. This project relates these two disciplines as it looks at the natural environment and resource use of the community from an anthropological perspective.

For data gathering I used qualitative ethnographic research methods with semi structured interviews and observation methods. Individuals within the community were asked a variety of questions regarding their livelihoods within the park. The main aim was to find out their feelings regarding the fact that they live within a proclaimed park and if they felt in some way restricted in terms of living conditions, livelihood activities and resource use. Also, if their quality of life was somehow reduced by factors following living within, or near, the park boundaries. I also interviewed a few Topnaar people living outside the community as well as ministry officials from the MET, employees of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in the area and consultants that provided important information about the project.

I spent about four months doing the fieldwork. In total I spent about a month with the Topnaar community in six field visits, ranging from a couple of days to about a week. Between the field visits I stayed in the capital, Windhoek, and the coastal town of Swakopmund that is near the borders of the Namib Naukluft Park. There I collected secondary data, such as reports and policy documents from the government, as well as relevant literature.

The legal framework indicates that there are many inconveniences for the community following living within the park. However, my research showed that their existence is generally acknowledged by all people interviewed outside the Topnaar community, such as ministry officials and NGO employees. Furthermore, the Topnaar community did generally not feel affected in their everyday life by the fact that they were living within a proclaimed

park. Factors affecting them were of more general nature such as water availability and lack of employment. The main problem according to most people interviewed was though the traditional authority of the community.

The structure of the thesis is as follows:

In the first chapter I lay out the theoretical framework of the research. I give an overview of the nature vs. culture dichotomy which has been a central dogma in Western thought since the Enlightenment era. The dichotomy has been widely discussed in ecological (and environmental) anthropology since the foundations of the discipline were established in the middle of the last century. Although the dichotomy has received a lot of criticism in recent years it is important to my research as it is still widely accepted in general discussion about protected areas. In many cases resident people are left out of management plans of protected areas. However, they are gradually gaining more rights in this regard internationally.

The methodology of the research is discussed in the second chapter. The fieldwork is described as well as the academic methods used for data gathering and analyzing the project. Furthermore, the limitations of the research are reflected upon in this chapter.

In the third chapter the settings of the research are explained. The natural environment of the area is described briefly such as the geology, flora and fauna of the park. The history of the national park is also summed up followed by a detailed description of the Topnaar community. Their history and the situation of the community today is described as well as their livelihood activities and natural resource use. The legal situation of park residents in Namibia is reflected upon in the end of the chapter with a special focus on the Topnaar community as park residents.

The fourth chapter is the analysis of the project. First the ministry perspective as well as the perspective of NGOs and consultants working in the field gets special attention. Then the perspective of the Topnaar people themselves is analyzed and discussed.

In the fifth chapter the conclusions of my research are summarized with general discussion about the findings.

1. Theoretical framework

> "The declaration of protected areas on indigenous territories without our consent and engagement has resulted in our dispossession and resettlement, the violation of our rights, the displacement of our peoples, the loss of our sacred sites and the slow but continuous loss of our cultures, as well as impoverishment. It is thus difficult to talk about benefits for indigenous peoples when protected areas are being declared on our territories unilaterally. First we were dispossessed in the name of kings and emperors, later in the name of State development and now in the name of conservation."

This comment is an indigenous delegates' closing statement at the 5th World Parks Congress (WPC) in Durban in South Africa 2003 (MacKay & Caruso 2004: 1). Throughout the world, indigenous peoples have been facing threats when their traditional territories have been proclaimed as protected. While the negative impact of mining, dams and other infrastructure projects is widely known and accepted, national parks and protected areas are usually not considered a threat to people. Rather, they are seen as valuable for the world as a whole and an important contribution to biodiversity conservation as well as local, regional and global environmental protection (MacKay & Caruso 2004: 1).

The phenomenon of national parks first came into being in the United States with the establishment of Yosemite National Park in 1864 and eight years later the Yellowstone National Park in the United States. These parks were established during the Romanticism era that arose in Europe in the 19th century. Romanticism was a response to the increased mechanistic understanding of the world when pragmatism dominated the intellectual middle class. When the first national parks were established they served primarily as romantic pleasure resorts. Since then areas of land have been protected all over the world for the enjoyment of current and future generations. Later, protection of entire ecosystems and biological diversity and natural resources were introduced (Macleod 2001: 223; Stevens & De Lacy 1999: 14; Luhrmann 1995: 220).

Most national parks in the world have been created on the 'Yellowstone model' where the attitude is isolationist, which includes the complete isolation of wildlife from human interference. Local and surrounding communities were thus excluded from the park planning and management. In most cases the local residents were forcefully removed from their

territories and prohibited from practicing their traditional means of resource use in the area (Pimbert & Pretty 1995: 3; Stevens & De Lacy 1999: 14; Macleod 2001: 222; Hinz 2004: 2).

When the first national parks were established in Africa, over 100 years ago, the leading conservationists were from the Imperial Institute of Forestry in Oxford. Based on the 'Yellowstone model' their management philosophy very clearly excluded all human residents inside park boundaries and emphasized that "the public good was best served through the protection of forests and water resources, even if this meant the displacement of local communities" (McCracken 1987: 190). According to Hinz (2004: 2) preservation was identified as the "complete insulation of wildlife and their habitat from human interference". Protected areas were established in which, apart from visitors and specially permitted persons, only conservation officials had the right to enter. Since then numerous protected areas have been proclaimed in Africa based on this philosophy (McCracken 1987: 190).

A lot has changed since the first national parks were established over 100 years ago. Today other benefits of protected areas get more weight, such as preservation of biodiversity; the preservation of ecological and evolutionary processes; the preservation of genetic resources; the preservation of natural resources as well as the ecosystems' importance in countering environmental hazards related to climate change such as storms, floods and drought (Stevens & De Lacy 1999: 31; Macleold 2003: 223).

According to the United Nations (UN) list of protected areas from 2003, 17.1 million km^2 of the earth's surface (11.5% of the land surface) are covered by terrestrial protected areas (Chape et al. 2003: vii). Today the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN 2013) defines protected area as:

> "A clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values".

IUCN (2012a) has made categories for protected areas in order to establish an international standard for data collection and for comparative purposes. The most widely known and the most commonly used category is national parks. The latest definition of a national park, since 2008, is as follows:

> "Large natural or near natural areas set aside to protect large-scale ecological processes, along with the complement of species and ecosystems characteristic of the area, which also provide a foundation for environmentally and culturally

compatible spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities".

As can be seen by the current definition the local culture is not left out of the definition of national parks. Although people have, through the last century, faced threats in relation to the establishments of protected areas, supporting local cultures and the livelihoods of the people residing in the area, as well as including them in management plans, has gradually been getting more attention in international organizations working within the field. Many researches have shown that the preservation of the local culture as well as collaboration with local communities not only go together with conservation goals but is in the majority of cases more successful (West & Brockington 2006: 611).

However, national parks are a highly Western phenomenon. In this regard national parks, as well as Western control over natural resources and ecosystems, can be explained with a view that has been dominant in Western thought for centuries – the nature vs. culture dichotomy. In this dichotomy there is a total separation between the nature and human beings, who are perceived as superior to the nature. This dichotomy has been a central dogma in Western thought for centuries and a key construct in anthropological discourse since the middle of the last century. It has had vast material and social impacts on the lives of people in the world and not the least, people in the Third World, first when their territory was exploited by the Western countries and later through the proclamation of their area as protected (Gupta 2006: 311; Steven & De Lacy 1999: 31; Pálsson 1996: 64).

The nature vs. culture dichotomy

The nature vs. culture dichotomy can be traced to the Cartesian separation between mind and body, deriving from René Descartes (1596–1650) and the Renaissance period. Then the systematic fragmenting of the world took place when the whole Western attitude to the environment, as well as knowledge and learning, was transformed. Humans were seen as superior to animals just like minds were superior to body. This notion was further developed during the Enlightenment period, which often is referred to as 'modernity' (Smith 2006: 58; Howell 1996: 127; Pálsson 1996: 65, 76). Gurevich (1992: 207) has argued that before that, during early medieval Europe, such separation or fragmenting of the world did not exist. According to him "nature was not thought to be external in relation to man, it was comprehended as an all-embracing, living element [and] he was inside it".

When the grounds of ecological, or environmental, anthropology were established, in the middle of the last century, the nature vs. culture dichotomy formed the foundations of the

discipline. Julian Steward is often referred to as the founder of anthropological discussions about human relations to the environment which he called cultural ecology. According to him culture was seen as a means of adaptation to the environment. Nature was considered a basic determinant of all action of human beings and models were imported from the natural sciences of causal explanations which they hoped to give better foundations to the social sciences (Steward 1955/2006). As Emilio Moran (2006: 15) points out:

> "Steward delimited, more than anyone before him, the field of human/environment interactions. He viewed social institutions as having a functional unity that expressed solutions to recurrent subsistence problems".

This way of thinking and making sense of the world can be applied to what has been called ethnoscience, or cognitive anthropology, which was common in the 1950s and 1960s. The focus was on cognized rather than operational models and on classification rather than action (Kottak 2006: 41; Ingold 2000: 160). Later, in the 1960s–1980s, cultural ecology (and ethnoscience) developed into ecological anthropology, with pioneers such as John Bennett and Roy Rappaport. Ecological anthropology emphasized the systems theory and research of energy flow of human population was common, led by Roy Rappaport. The focus was on small, isolated, non-urban communities and quantitative data collection was used rather than qualitative (Kottak 2006: 41; Moran 2006: 17).

These fields have received a lot of criticism. They reflect a very modernist view with a clear division between the nature and human beings. As Kay Milton (1995: 4) points out, if all actions of human society can be explained solely as means of adaption to the environment "the whole field of cultural anthropology can be characterized as human ecology". In the nature vs. culture dichotomy, humans are created as the self while the nature is 'othered' and seen as static. Bookchin (1993: 357) points out that human beings are a part of the evolutionary path just like the whole natural environment. If the non-human nature is separated from human beings they are inevitably seen as destructive to nature. The places they inhabit are thus not considered to be nature and as such nature cannot coexist with human beings (Igoe 2004: 14; Boockhin 1993: 357). The dichotomy has moreover been criticized for reflecting a highly Western way of thinking as different sociocultural groups understand and relate in very different ways to what Western derived cultures have thought of as nature. Indigenous people tend to see themselves and their lives as continuous with nature. A commonly used example of this are hunting and gathering societies where relations with wild animals are characterized by close cooperation. By killing an animal the hunter engages in a

dialogue with a member of the same world. As such, animals are seen as social actors just like humans are seen as a part of the nature, and vice versa. Thus, in the hunter‘s view, there is no separation between nature and society. However, it can also be argued that dividing human cultures into indigenous and non-indigenous is a branch of the nature vs. culture dichotomy (West & Brockington 2006: 609; Descola & Pálsson 1996: 2; Pálsson 1996: 74).

Gísli Pálsson (1996: 63-81) uses the concepts environmental orientalism, paternalism and communalism to explain different views of the relation between nature and culture or society. Below I use these concepts to explain how the Western utilization of natural resources in the colonies changed with time.

Environmental orientalism is related to Edward Said’s (1978) orientalism that he used to explain the patronizing Western attitude towards the Middle East, Asia and North Africa. In environmental orientalism human beings are the masters of nature and in charge of the whole world. There is a total separation between nature and human beings and nature is there to be exploited and utilized by human beings. This view has highly colonial connotations where the world becomes an empty field that human beings (or the Western elite) have the right to use for their own benefits. Furthermore, the depletion of resources is, according to this view, seen as an inevitable ingredient of economic progress. The Western exploitation of natural resources in the Third World that took place during the colonial period can be explained with environmental orientalism (Pálsson 1996: 67-69).

Paternalism shares the modernist human mastery assumption with orientalism with a separation between nature and culture. The difference is that the paternalistic view is characterized by protection of nature rather than exploitation. Scientific expertise is privileged and there is a clear distinction between laypersons and experts. It is a highly modern, environmentalist view that tends to fetishize nature and put it apart from the world of humans. However, some human beings are more favored as the ‘indigenous noble savages’ are seen as somehow closer to nature than the other human beings. The wave of conservation and protected area design that emerged in the end of the 19th century can be viewed as a form of paternalism (Pálsson 1996: 69-72).

Communalism differs from orientalism and paternalism as it rejects the total separation between nature and culture and suggests generalized reciprocity of human environmental relations. Communalism aims to fully integrate “human ecology and social theory, abandoning any radical distinction between nature and society”. According to Pálsson it “provides an avenue out of the modernist project and current environmental dilemmas” (Pálsson 1996: 72-76).

The paradigm of communalism has a lot in common with post-modern environmental anthropology where human beings are seen as continuous with nature. In postmodernism human beings are a part of nature and their actions are seen just as natural as the actions of other parts of nature (Kottak 2006: 41; Descola and Pálsson 1996: 1-21). This is closely related to Arne Næss', deep ecology, that considers the man in no sense higher than other human beings. In deep ecology there is no divide between the human and the non-human (Simmons 1993: 65). As Murray Bookchin (1993: 357) puts it "[h]uman beings belong to a natural continuum no less than their primate ancestors and mammals in general". However, he says, in human beings they reached a degree of elaboration and integration that yields cultures such as families, hierarchies, economic classes, states as well as modern technology. Although no other parts of the natural world have reached this, human beings should in no way be separated from the non-human natural world. Human beings should be seen as supportive to other species rather a dominant and destrucive one. It is also related to the dwelling perspective of Tim Ingold which is about the rich intimate ongoing togetherness of beings and things which make up landscapes and places. In the dwelling perspective there is no divide between nature and culture, there is only the environment. He says that "human beings do not dwell on the other side of a boundary between human and nature but in the same world that is inhabited by creatures of all kinds, human and non-human" (Ingold 2005: 501).

As can be seen, post-modernist views on conservation move beyond the culture vs. nature dualism to a holistic view on cultural and ecological realities of human beings. Scholars have argued that the 'new' post-modern environmental anthropology can contribute to the analysis and actions towards conservation in regards to both nature and culture as it analyzes both of these sides (Schmidt 2005: 13-15; West & Brockington 2006: 614; Bookchin 1993: 359). According to Schmidt (2005: 15) human beings need to move towards conditions ecologically and culturally diverse, but united by a common humanity.

Protected areas – Neo-colonialism?

> "After exploration and exploitation of the colonies, preservation was the principle that governed conservation policies in Africa"
>
> (Hinz 2004: 2)

As Pálsson's model indicates, the practice of putting areas aside for conservation has highly colonial connotations with roots in the nature vs. culture dichotomy. However, in a world where overexploitation of resources and the 'natural' environment is a reality, protected areas

are, indeed, of a great importance. With increased consumption, pollution and exploitation on a global scale the preservation of ecosystems where wild organisms 'naturally' still live, is of a great value.

As already mentioned, the exploitation of resources and natural environment today is mainly taking place in the Third World although the initiative comes in the majority of cases from countries in the West. Garett Hardin (1968) called it 'the tragedy of the commons' when resources that are meant to be used for common goods are depleted for a few individuals' own interest. If applied on a global scale it can be ratified that the resources of the world have been exploited for the interest of the colonial empires. This has been happening continuously, locally and globally since the beginning of colonialism in the 16th century. As Akhil Gupta (2006: 302) phrases it:

> "Most of the pollution in the world and the overwhelming proportion of resource depletion have been caused by rich countries in the North in the process of industrialization. For this use of common resources, the North did not pay anything. Now that poor countries in the South are industrializing, the North wants to put up barriers on the grounds that the commons cannot be allowed to deteriorate any further".

As the rich countries in the North[3] had more or less depleted their resources, industrialization and growth of capitalism was totally dependent on the exploitation of resources from the poorer countries, the colonies, in the South. As a result, the countries in the North proclaimed, and still proclaim, areas in the South protected that have not yet been depleted. Although it can be argued that national parks and protected areas are of a great importance for nature conservation and the campaign against overexploitation of natural resources, the countries in the South have hardly got any reward for the resources that they lost to the colonial empires. With increased industrialization in the South, the North tries to limit the exploitation by putting aside areas for preservation (Gupta 2006: 302; Merchant 1992: 33). As environmental problems, such as pollution, are not refined to a specific area and do not respect geographical boundaries, it has been argued that a global view on the environmental problems is necessary. In this contex Ingold (2005: 209) has pointed out, that a

[3] Here I use the same terms Gupta uses, "the South" and "the North" when talking about "the Third World" and the "the West", respectively, although in other parts of the thesis I use terms "the Third World and "the West". As already mentioned these terms have received a lot of criticism (see page 10).

global view on conservation can be seen as the culmination of the separation between nature and culture. The question still remains whether the South is on the same opinion (Moran 2006: 22; Luke 2006: 268).

As pointed out by Hill (2006: 216) the practice of putting areas aside for preservation has been referred to by local people, as "the religion through which the wealthy elite worships nature". There has been a resistance to nature preservation in Africa that can be traced back to the independence struggle in the 1950s simply as a part of a political resistance to the white elite rule (Hill 2006: 216; West & Brockington 2006: 613). This claim of control over ecosystems by the North that the long term residents may disdain has been referred to as a form of neo-colonialism, where the local communities paid with loss of land, resources, autonomy, traditional values, ways of life and identity when their land was proclaimed a protected area (Steven & De Lacy 1999: 31, 289; Kottak 2006: 42; Merchant 1992: 33). In many cases this can still be seen today in work around conservation and protected area management. Kottak (2006: 46) takes the work of NGOs (non-governmental organizations) as an example in this context, that are increasingly working in the field of conservation and protected areas internationally. Although the NGOs are generally viewed as responsive to local wishes and encouraging community participation there is a tendency to consider their employees as better representatives of the local population than the local people themselves. In this way it can be said that conservation and protected area management illustrate power relations between different social groups – the poorer countries in the South and the richer countires in the North, or, as commonly phrased: The West and the rest.

Nature vs. culture and people in protected areas

Although the nature vs. culture dichotomy has been abandoned in postmodernism it is mainly linked to academic discourse in environmental anthropology. The dichotomy is still very widely accepted in general discussions about the environment. Governments, institutions and NGOs still rely heavily on this division in the management of protected areas as well as when new protected areas are designed.

Pálsson's paradigm of paternalism can be used to describe a view that is common in conservation practices today. When protected areas are designed the emphasis is on biological conservation rather than conservation, or inclusion, of the local culture (Kottak 2006: 44). Due to this, as already mentioned, local people have been excluded from their traditional land with the proclamation of their area as protected or they are held to discursive standards that are impossible to live up to in practice often without a documentary proof that they were

harming park resources. In many cases, the creation of protected areas has altered their right of land use. This usually results in increased control of resources by the elite, the alienation of land and sea as well as influx of alien land and sea uses in places surrounding the protected areas. The restricted access through legislation, enforcement and privatization can be overwhelming for rural people which often results in criminalization of native people because of their land use practices (West, Igoe & Brockington 2006: 257). In some cases resident people were not even informed about the creation of the national parks and thus did not know that their activities were illegal. There are even examples of people being imprisoned without knowing why (West & Brechin 1991; Macleold 2001: 222; Steven & De Lacy 1999: 31; Njiforti & Tchamba 1993: 173). Top-down approaches usually fail to appreciate local practices and result in conflict between the government and the local people. This can result in hostility among local people toward conservation in general As previously mentioned there are examples of how violation of conservation practices has been used as a political resistance to the white elite rule because the native people were not a part of the conservation process (West, Igoe & Brockington 2006: 257; West & Brockington 2006: 613; Hill 2006: 216).

West and Brockington (2006: 614) argue that one of the persistent issues when it comes to the social effects of protected areas is that "social and natural scientists do not have sustained conversations about why deep social effects matter and how methodologies could be designed so that they take certain social beliefs and practices into account before projects are implemented". They advocate "approaches to protected area design in which the complexity of the social is given as much attention as the complexity of the biological". According to them the aim should be to preserve natural resources and biodiversity as well as promoting human welfare.

Scholars have argued that designing protected area without including the local population is not only a loss for the local communities but for conservation and the world as a whole. Kay Milton (2006: 354) has argued that to maximize the chances of survival of our (and other) species, conservation of as great a number of human interactions with the environment is essential. Protecting cultural diversity might therefore offer the best chance of conserving biodiversity. Milton (2006: 351) furthermore claims that although no human culture holds the key to sustainable ways of living, anthropological knowledge about various indigenous ways of living as well as their perception of nature can help in gaining more knowledge about how to live sustainably. This, in turn, can be of great help to maximize the chances of the human (and other) species to survive on this planet. Thus he says that we need to "see the nature as the all-encompassing scheme of things to which all human cultures and practices, as well as

non-human species and physical processes, belong. This enables us to "consider everyone's ecological value without assuming from the outset that some are 'naturally' better than others" (Milton 2006: 351). Similarly, Tim Ingold's (1996: 26) view on a genuinely ecological world is "one that would ground human intention and action within the context of an ongoing and mutually constitutive engagement between people and their environments".

Protected areas should be seen as sites rich in biological diversity as well as social interactions and reproduction. Including local people in park management is of great value for conservation of cultural and biological diversity and as such important for the world as a whole (West & Brockington 2006: 609). Moreover, it is of importance to the local people, as Redford et al. (2006: 238) argue "parks and the organizations that support parks can bring strong benefits to local people, benefits that would not otherwise be made available to these people".

Park residents and international rights

With increased awareness of human rights around the world, international organizations working in the field of conservation have gradually been acknowledging the existence and rights of people living within the borders of protected areas. Among these is the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) as well as the United Nations (UN) that have made several international recommendations and resolutions to emphasize indigenous people's rights to land, territories and natural resources where they have traditionally subsided. These are in line with international instruments, such as Agenda 21[4], ILO Convention 169[5] and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples[6] (IUCN 2012b).

The rights of people living within protected areas were first acknowledged at the 12th IUCN meeting in Kinshasa in Congo 1975. The value and importance of traditional ways of living were first recognized on this occasion as well as their vulnerability and the significance of their attachment to land. Until then people living within protected areas had received little consideration and numerous people had been removed from their traditional territories and

[4] A non-binding, voluntarily implemented action plan of the UN. A product of the UN Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 (UN 2013).

[5] A legally binding international instrument adopted 1989 by the International Labour Organization (ILO), which deals specifically with the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples (ILO 2013).

[6] Published 2008 and stands as a landmark for the rights of indigenous people world-wide (UN 2008).

allocated land in often very different environments, where their traditional way of life could not be practiced. In this context the recommendation was passed, that:

> "[in the] creation of national parks or reserves, indigenous peoples should not normally be displaced from their traditional lands, nor should such reserves anywhere be proclaimed without adequate consultation with the indigenous peoples most likely to be directly affected by such proclamation".
>
> (Nelson & Hossack 2003: 9)

The following decades, changes in international policies and legislations took place which increased the rights of people living within national parks. At the UN conference on environment and development in Rio 1992 it was agreed that international and national approaches on conservation should be in line with social needs and development plans (UN 1992). In the United Nation's Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) from 1992 indigenous people get attention regarding their importance for conservation of biological diversity. According to Article 8 (j) of the convention, each contracting party shall:

> "Subject to its national legislation, respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge, innovations and practices."
>
> (UN 1992: 6)

At the 1st World Conservation Congress (WCC) in Montreal, Canada 1996, Resolution WCC 1.53 "Indigenous Peoples and Protected Areas" was promoted which establishes a basic framework policy for indigenous people living within protected area.

Since then several resolutions have been made by the IUCN that emphasize indigenous people's rights and participation in all conservation initiatives and policy developments that affect them. Furthermore, they recognize their unique knowledge that is important to conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. Among these resolutions are the following:

- Respect indigenous peoples' knowledge and innovations, and their social, cultural, religious and spiritual values and practices.

- Recognise the social, economic and cultural rights of indigenous peoples such as their right to lands, territories and natural resources, respecting their social and cultural identity, their customs, traditions and institutions.
- Ensure full and just participation of indigenous peoples in all conservation activities supported and implemented by IUCN.
- Support indigenous peoples' right to make their own decisions affecting their lands, territories and resources, by assuring their rights to manage natural resources on which their livelihoods and ways of life depend, and strengthening their traditional institutions.
- Strengthen the capacity of indigenous peoples to ensure the potection of their knowledge and the fair and equitable sharing of any benefits arising from its use.
- Support processes for improving the national and international legal and policy framework relevant to the rights of indigenous peoples in the context of the environment and biodiversity conservation. To accomplish this IUCN's Commission on Environmental Law has set up an Indigenous Peoples Specialist Group.

In 1997 IUCN published their mission, which is:

> "to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable".
>
> (IUCN 2013b)

Furthermore, during its 5th World Park Congress in Durban, South Africa in 2003, IUCN acknowledged "that indigenous peoples have suffered human rights abuses in connection with protected areas in the past and in some cases continue to suffer abuses today" (IUCN 2003: 1). It was recognized that "effective and sustainable conservation can be better achieved if the objectives of protected areas do not violate the rights of indigenous peoples living in and around them" and that in order to ensure a long term achievement of conservation programs there needs to be a "consent for, and approval by, indigenous peoples among others, because their cultures, knowledge and territories contribute to the building of comprehensive protected areas". Subsequently recommendations were made for governments, intergovernmental

organizations, local communities, NGOs and civil societies about how to improve the rights of park residents (IUCN 2003: 1).

At the 4th World Conservation Congress in Barcelona, Spain, 2008 an important resolution was adopted regarding the legal aspect of indigenous people living within protected area. The congress called on governments to work with indigenous people's organizations to:

> "reform national legislation policies and practices so that they contribute to the realization of the relevant parts of the Durban Accord[7], CBD Programme of Work on Protected areas[8], as well as the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples".
>
> (IUCN 2009: 1)

As can be seen the recognition of rights of local and indigenous populations and their importance for protected area is today widely accepted by international NGOs working in the field.

International agreements and implementation of rights

Although international policies, recommendations and resolutions have been made by NGOs working in the field this does not mean that they are implemented in all cases. In this context there are several considerations that need to be addressed. For example these may not be well known externally; they may not be well understood by the local population; they may not be adapted to the customary norms of the people living in the area; they may not be compatible with national and regional policies and, according to the local government, they may constrain national economic development. In reality the involvement of indigenous people in the planning and decision-making process is complex and often falls short of the objectives (West & Brockington 2006: 613; IUCN 2003: 17).

The concept 'paper park' is used by people working in the field of conservation to illustrate how work around parks is sometimes conducted. This refers to when standards and objectives set for parks only appear on paper but are complicated, or even impossible, to implement in reality (West & Brockington 2006: 609). This is what Carrier (1998: 2) calls 'virtualism' which can be explained as the attempt to make the world around us look like an abstract model of it. Parks are 'designed' to fit a Western idea of what 'nature' should look like.

---

[7] Commitment made at the 5th World Park Congress in Durban 2003.

[8] The Convention on Biological Diversity, an international legal instrument addressing protected areas.

The IUCN categories mentioned in the beginning of this chapter can be seen as an example of how nature is meant to fit into an externally imagined set of categories and restructures the world to fit into these. Protected area legislation and policies made by international organizations and NGOs can also be seen as an example of virtualism as they define what behavior and actions should be practiced in the area sometimes without viewing the actions of the people living in the area. There is a tendency to abstract human decision making from its complex social context and build models of the world that do not take the complexity of people's social activities, practices and lives into the account. This can also be the case when it comes to making local people gain rights within parks (West & Brockington 2006: 609). Usually local people and people working in the field have different ideas about what the land in the protected area contains as well as its importance. Also, the evaluation systems they use to value plants, animals, and natural processes differ greatly (West, Igoe & Brockington 2006: 265).

Although it can be argued that collaboration with local people is crucial in protected area management it is a process that is usually not easily implemented. According to Redford et al. (2006: 237) it is a cliché to say that the empowerment of local people is crucial for preserving biodiversity. According to them communities do not exist in the modern world that "operate in a cohesive community fashion". Also, they say that it is often erroneously assumed that the livelihood practiced by earlier human generations continue to be practiced by contemporary peoples. They continue, quoting Borrini-Feyerabend (1996):

> "Communities are complex entities, within which differences of ethnic origin, class, caste, age, gender, religion, profession and economic and social status can create profound differences in interests, capacities and willingness to invest in the management of natural resources".
>
> (Redford et al. 2006: 237)

In this way they say that communities should not be stereotyped, while some will actively work with governments and NGOs in the field of conservation, other will not. Moreover, it can be said that work around parks internationally reflects the Western image of nature and culture and imposes it on the rest of the world. This, as mentioned earlier in this chapter can be viewed as a form of neo-colonialism (West, Igoe & Brockington 2006: 265; Steven & De Lacy 1999: 31).

However complex societies may be, many examples around the world have shown that cooperation strategies, where the government works with local communities on management

plans for protected areas, make success of conservation more likely than top-down approaches. Collaboration should be seen as the norm and not as an exception and the benefits and enquiries of all partners should be given equal weight. Work around parks should in all cases be conducted in close cooperation with local communities. Furthermore, it is important to advocate collaboration before protected areas are made or before new projects are designed. Protected area design should give the complexity of the social as much attention as the complexity of the biological. Thus collaboration and discussion of interventions is critical to improving the success of conservation efforts in general (West & Brockington 2006: 614; West, Igoe and Brockington 2006: 260, Hill 2006: 216). As Brechin et al. (2002: 44) put it:

> "The process must be ecologically sound, socially and politically feasible, and morally just. If not, we predict that interventions will most likely generate increasing levels of resistance and conflict at all geographic scales, thus derailing attempts at protection".

2. Methodology

The white, Western anthropologist

Bronislaw Malinowski, a central figure in the history of anthropology, is often mentioned as the founder of ethnographic research. In the second decade of the last century Malinowski went to Papua New Guinea to do a research on the local population, spending the majority of his time in Trobriand Islands. In contrast to research methods that were generally acknowledged at that time Malinowski lived with the community, learned the language and did his research among the individuals of the community. His ethnography 'Argonauts of the Western Pacific' (1922) is one of the best known ethnographies in the world. Since then anthropologists and students within the field have followed in his footsteps by going to exotic places to do research on communities living there.

During my M.A. studies in anthropology and while pondering about the final project for my studies, the image of Malinowski often came to my mind. I saw myself in far-away surroundings doing fieldwork with people of an exotic culture and background. As I had stayed in Africa the year before I started my studies, this continent usually came to my mind when thinking about my final project. With a very positive experience from there I was convinced that I would go there again in the close future. My dream came true when I got a position as an intern at ICEIDA a year later which provoked the idea of my final project.

However, after working with ICEIDA for several months I got a better understanding of developmental work and ethnographic field research altogether. While doing the research, I often reflected upon why a privileged Western researcher travels to a Third World country to study people that, in most cases, are living in poverty?

The appropriateness of a Western researcher doing fieldwork in the Third World has stimulated much debate, primarily from people concerned with power gradients. Moreover the validity of the data gathered as well as the objectivity of the researcher has been debated.

Ethnographic fieldwork emerged during the colonial era in Europe when anthropologists traveled to the European colonies to conduct research on their populations. Some anthropologists even worked for colonial empires or got funding from them to conduct their research (Bourgois 2007: 289; Eriksen & Nielsen 2001: 56). It has even been argued that the purpose of ethnographic fieldwork at that time was to define the people observed as the distinctive non-European 'others' (Ashcroft et al. 1998: 86). Although athropologists are

increasingly working in places more familiar to themselves and studying their own culture they are still known for trekking into the remotest corners of colonial territories trying to find people outside the reach of 'civilization' (Bourgois 2007: 290).

In the last decades the discipline has gone through various stages of self criticism. This was especially prominent during the rise of postmodernism in the 1980s when some younger anthropologists criticized how their forerunners represented the people they studied. The discipline was accused for 'exotifying' the 'others' and as such maintaining the 'subject-object' distinction which maintained a distinction between 'us' and 'them'(Bourgois 2007: 290; Eriksen & Nielsen 2001: 139). Even in the Third World anthropologists have become increasingly unpopular and have been referred to as "hunters for exotica and intellectual adventures" (Eriksen & Nielsen 2001: 145). Furthermore, the act of a privileged Western researcher that travels to a Third World country to do a research on people has been referred to as 'academic tourism' and the people doing the research as 'research travelers' (Scheyvens & Storey 2003: 2).

Most literature about this issue demonstrates the negative impact of such research. For example Arturo Escobar (1995: 45) criticizes how the voice of the Western 'expert' usually gets more weight than the voice of the local people. Many academics have pointed out that a Western researcher doing a research in the Third World moves up the social hierarchy which alters his or her place in cultural, racial, gender and, related to this, power contexts (Sidaway 1992: 403). Kristín Loftsdóttir (2002: 306) points out that this superiority and privilege of the Western researcher can be traced to colonial times. Whiteness is seen as a "neutral, invisible social category, giving the privileged position of being able to forget ones skin color". Due to this cross-cultural research is experienced unequally in different parts the world. James Clifford (1988: 22) has pointed out that "the West can no longer present itself as the unique purveyor of anthropological knowledge about others". This criticism has, in the most dramatic cases, resulted in abandoning development research altogether (Scheywens & Leslie 2000: 121; Sidaway 1992: 403).

However, there are also values of cross-cultural development research. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (1997: 36-37) mention in this context that research of this kind counters Western ethnocentrism; it provides understanding that cannot be obtained through standardized social science research methods or decontextualized reading and can result in a phenomena that would otherwise remain invisible. Futhermore, James Clifford (1988: 23) emphasizes that it is important "for different peoples to form complex concrete images of one another, as well as of the relationships of knowledge and power that connect them".

The fieldwork

The fieldwork was conducted over the course of four months. During that time I made six visits into the community ranging from a couple of days up to a week. Before the actual fieldwork started I had visited the community twice, once with ICEIDA, and once again to explore the settings. In the later visit I met the chief of the Topnaar community who gave me written permission, on behalf of the traditional authority and the Topnaar community, to conduct a research in the community. I also talked to employees at the Gobabeb Research and Training Centre (GRTC) about the research and logistics following staying in the desert. The nights during the fieldwork in were spent at the center, either in a tent or in a bungalow rented out by the center. The days were spent with the community. Between the field visits I stayed in the capital of Namibia, Windhoek, and in Swakopmund, a town located about 60 km away from the park boundaries. There I gathered literature and official papers about the topic, talked to ministry officials, NGO employees and other people that could give relevant information. The Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) in Windhoek was very helpful. I got access to their library where I got necessary reports and information.

As the community resides on a 120 km stretch along the Kuiseb River and considering the short time I allocated myself for doing the research, a vehicle of some sort was necessary to go between places. Out of convenience I chose to rent a car. I also used the car for driving between the desert, Swakopmund and Windhoek where I stayed between the field visits.

Altogether the number of interviewees was 27. Out of these, 22 interviews were made with Topnaar people living by the Kuiseb River, including the chief whom I interviewed twice during the research. I also interviewed two Topnaar people living outside the Kuiseb River area. Both of them had a job outside the community and had been working for the community on developmental projects with NGOs and the government. A handful of people that were not a part of the community were also interviewed. These were ministry officials from the MET, employees at an NGO that has been working closely with the community and a consultant that had been working in the field of community based natural resource management (CBNRM) in protected areas in the country. In the thesis a pseudonym is used where needed in order to disguise the identity of the interviewees quoted.

The Topnaar people interviewed were selected with the help of my interpreter, who also served as a research assistant. He was a resident of the community and thus knew the other residents quite well. My aim was to interview at least one person from each settlement. Generally people were willing to be interviewed although in one settlement all the people

asked denied an interview. In the end I got one or two interviews from the remaining 13 settlements. The age of the people interviewed was quite evenly spread. The oldest person was 90 years old at the time of the interview and the youngest one was 27 years old. There were 10 women and 12 men interviewed. The level of education varied. The oldest people (born before 1940) had not received any formal education, while the younger had got some years of formal education. All the youngest people (born around 1980) had completed grade 10 (elementary school) and one person had completed two additional years. Most of the interviewees had been living by the Kuiseb River from birth or since they were children. Only five of them had moved to the area after adulthood and out of these three belonged to a different ethnic group. Two to a different subgroup of the Nama ethnic group and one was of the Ovambo ethnic group.

The interviews were semi-structured and sometimes relatively unstructured. They had a predetermined focus where a set of guiding questions was used but new questions and topics were allowed to be brought up during the interviews as a result of the answers of the interviewees. A recorder was used to record the interviews. The participants were aware of the recording and in all cases they agreed on being recorded. Before the interview I introduced myself and I and/or my assistant explained my background as well as my research. I had made a checklist with topics that I wanted to address during the interview. To establish basic grounds for the conversation simple questions were asked to start with. Then I went through the checklist and tried to let the issues flow 'naturally' into the flow of the conversation (Crang & Cook 2007: 69). The length of the interviews ranged from about 45 minutes up to two hours.

All interviews within the community were conducted at the people's respective homes. As Crang and Cook (2007: 63) point out, interviews about peoples' lives and livelihoods are best conducted at home as illustration and corroboration can easily be made through reference to objects near at hand. However, issues considering privacy for the interviewees may have to be considered as the presence of other household members and their view can dominate the other's (Crang & Cook 2007: 64). Keeping that in mind most of the interviews were conducted in a location where other household members could not hear the interview.

The interviews with people that were not from the community were conducted at their respective offices in most cases. Before the interview I had made an appointment with the interviewee, either by sending an e-mail or by phoning them. In one case I got an interview by simply dropping by the office of the interviewee. In another case the interviewee was too busy to meet me. As it was a person of great importance for the research a telephone interview was

necessary in this case. As Hammersley and Atkinson (2009: 117) point out although interviewing through a telephone is not widely used in ethnographic research "they may give access to people who could not otherwise be interviewed, and may even elicit information that would not otherwise have been forthcoming".

Literature review was a big part of the data gathering. I had partly done this prior to and during the fieldwork but during the writing of the thesis I did it more thoroughly. Secondary data provided information of great importance for the research, which included published and unpublished data from various agents in Namibia, such as policy related documents, project proposals, research discussion papers, reports and various other documents related to the topic. The MET, GRTC and Windhoek Public Library were exceptionally helpful while collecting these data.

Limitations of the research and other considerations

When doing fieldwork in a far-away culture, language barriers are a challenge commonly faced by the researcher. It has been argued that learning the local language is necessary when conducting field research. As Scheyvens and Storey (2003: 135) point out "[k]nowledge of the local language enables richer and more textured data to be collected and generates greater opportunities to interact and enjoy the company of others in the researched community". However, although many anthropologists choose to learn the local language, their knowledge is always limited compared to the local population. Considering the short time allocated for the fieldwork, I concluded that it was not an option for me to learn Nama, the local language of the Topnaar.

Although the official language of Namibia is English people in rural areas generally do not speak English. During South African rule Afrikaans, English and German were the official languages of Namibia although Afrikaans was the most widely spoken out of the three. Due to this most people in rural areas still speak decent Afrikaans, along with their local language which is the case with the Topnaar community. As I had been working for almost half a year at ICEIDA I had gained some knowledge in Afrikaans which was the first language of most of the Namibian employees at the office. This turned out to be very helpful when communicating with people from the community. A research assistant, who also had the role of an interpreter, was thus necessary. For finding an assistant I consulted with GRTC that recommended a young man from the Topnaar community who formerly had been employed temporarily at the center. He turned out to be a very good assistant as well as a good interpreter. As he had worked as a research assistant before he had some experience and

qualifications necessary for a good assistant. He had a good knowledge of English, Afrikaans and Nama, and good communication skills. He was patient, dependable and able to get along with most elements of the local population. According to Devereux and Hoddinott these are all good qualifications for a research assistant (1992: 27). Additionally, for some of the female representatives interviewed I got assistance from a young woman from the community who also turned out to have the qualifications necessary for a research assistant. An interpreter was not needed in all the interviews as some of the younger interviewees spoke decent English. However, the assistants were of great help during these interviews as well, as in some cases they could help explain what the interviewees wanted to express as sometimes their knowledge of English was limited.

Although my research assistants turned out to be well qualified for their work there are always some considerations following having a local research assistant. One of the disadvantages is the fact that the information is received second hand through their interpretation. The interpreter can change elements of the interview to prevent potential embarrassment or they believe the information is irrelevant or of little use to the research topic. Also, as members of the community they had the potential to dominate the form of data collected by directing the research to their friends and family or towards their line of interest (Scheyvens & Storey 2003: 132-133). As English is their second, or even third, language and my second language there is a possibility that information has remained misinterpreted or poorly conveyed which may limit the accuracy of the data. Keeping this in mind, learning the local language would of course have been been ideal (Scheyvens & Storey 2003: 18).

A rough timetable was drawn upon which I based my schedule in the field. During my fieldwork the timetable was rescheduled several times because of unexpected events. In some cases time scheduled for interviews or visits turned out to be much longer than originally planned. As Schweyens and Storey (2003: 122) point out, when doing research in unfamiliar surroundings flexibility is a key component. Also, an ability to react to situations with tolerance is important (Schweyens & Storey 2003: 234). Moreover, Murrey and Overton (2003: 18-19) mention that a Western researcher has often a limited period of time on the field and little opportunity to fill the gaps when s/he has returned. Due to this, the researcher needs to be more sensitive to cultural and ethical issues than a home based researcher and be ready to re-design his/her research strategies.

Considering the limited time I had for data gathering in the field I tried to be well organized in order to gather as much information as possible during the short time I spent there. In spite of this I found it difficult to know when I had gathered enough information for

the research. This resulted in much time spent on collecting data on the field but less time allocated for reflecting on the data. Hammersley and Atkinson (2009: 159-160) call it the "it's all happening elsewhere" syndrome when "the researcher feels it necessary to try to be everywhere at once and to stay in the setting for as long as possible". Then a great deal of data is collected and little time is left for reflection on the significance of the data and implications for further data gathering. They also point out that it can be difficult to engage in sustained data analysis alongside data collection (Hammersley & Atkinson 2009: 160). This was something I experienced during the course of the fieldwork. As a result of this, limited time was spent on reflecting on the data during the fieldwork, in form of analyzing the data gathered and log keeping in the field. Instead a lot of time was spent on collecting data, especially in the form of interviews and documents on which my thesis is based.

During the course of analyzing, when going through the data, some of the interviews turned out to be less informative than initially thought although all questions I considered necessary were brought up. More elaboration on some of the answers would have helped in many cases as the answers often turned out to be short and inaccurate. This can be caused by the above mentioned 'syndrome', i.e. due to the limited time I had, I unconsciously put more emphasis on the quantity of the data collected rather than its quality. To avoid this Crang and Cook (2007: 69) emphasize the importance of encouraging elaboration of the answers while doing the interviews as the lack of this can limit the accuracy of the data. They also point out, that as the aim of interviews is usually to get the 'long story' of events, decisions and so on it is important to avoid the short, snappy, conventional and rehearsed answers. This is important as the overall aim of interviewing in ethnographic research is to reveal peoples own versions through their own words and actions (Crang & Cook 2007: 69).

The issue of validity and credibility of the interviewed is at heart of all qualitative research. Of course one can never count on the data gathered as direct evidence about the events or norms that are recounted. Furthermore, in modern anthropology it can be debated whether the traditional methods of data gathering are appropriate in the interconnected, globalized world we live in. What goes on in the world is, in some cases, beyond the methodological tools of the anthropologist. In the past anthropologists assumed that local people knew what is going on in their community. This has been highly criticized by anthropologists since the middle of the last century for example by Sir Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard. In reality hardly any sample of informants can supply all the information necessary for a research, as local people cannot fully understand all the processes and relationships affecting them (Kottak 2006: 49). Also, as pointed out by Hammersley and Atkinson (2009:

170) "[i]t is a seriously inadequate form of ethnographic analysis to present interview material as if it provided direct evidence about the events that are recounted, or the norms that are enunciated" and "it is not adequate to treat interview or conversational data as if they give the analyst unmediated access to a social actor's personal expectations and feelings." The interviewee's conception of the research can have a strong influence on what they say and how they say it (Hammersley & Atkinson 2009: 176). Futhermore, as Ashcroft et al. (1998: 85) point out the activities of the ethnographic fieldworkers themselves can never be neutral. According to them *what* is known depends on *how* it is known and the cultural knowledge is constructed rather than discovered with ethnographic fieldwork. However, the validity of the data is never an either or phenomenon. Data can never be either valid or invalid, the important thing are the inferences drawn from them (Hammersley & Atkinson 2009: 177).

The analysis of the data

The hardest part of my research and what took the most effort was probably the analysis of the data and the writing of the thesis. Crang and Cook (2007:131) point out that the analysis and writing usually take at least twice as much time as the data collecting. In my case it turned out to be even more than that. As mentioned earlier the amount of data collected turned out to be much more than initially planned. At the return I felt, in a way, overwhelmed by the quantity of data obtained. Scheyvens and Storey (2003: 205) point out that the field data can start to feel like a burden or even a huge monster after returning from the field. I returned in the spring and the intention was to write the thesis in the summer and the fall after I arrived. As a lot of interviews were done during my fieldwork, I spent a considerable amount of time in the summer transcribing and, simultaneously, writing the first chapters. According to Scheyvens and Storey (2003: 222) transcribing often takes longer than initially planned and timetables often have to be reworked to allow for this. This is something I experienced at this point. A full time job in the fall and further changes in my personal life resulted in that time left for the thesis was very limited. In the end only a part of the analyzing and writing was completed that fall and I did not start looking at the data again until almost three years later.

Keeping in mind that a considerable amount of time passed between the fieldwork and the writing of the thesis the accuracy of the data can be affected. As Hammersley and Atkinson point out (2009: 180) "[t]he dangers of neglecting the effects of time are particularly great where reliance is placed upon a single data source, especially interviews or documents." However, the time passed can also be an advantage as it is important to allow time for the fieldwork to settle after conducting the research (Scheywens & Storey 2003: 222).

During the course of analysis and while going through the vast amount of data collected I decided to narrow the research and limit the research question. Hammersley and Atkinson (2009: 160) point out that "it is frequently well into the process of inquiry that one discovers what the research is really about; and not uncommonly it turns out to be about something rather different from the initial foreshadowed problems". During the analysis of the interviews and through literature review I got a better understanding of the data I had collected. I found out that only a limited amount of the data was relevant for the topic which, according to Crang and Cook (2007: 134) is not uncommon as a large proportion of what is compiled is often irrelevant. While coding the data I therefore focused on answers that were relevant for the new emphasis of the research and left other data out.

I used a system of categories while coding the data, where categories were made for each of the topics addressed in the interviewes. As the interviews with people from the Topnaar community and people outside the Topnaar community were of different nature and different topics addressed they were coded in two respective groups. During the course of the analyzis these categories changed, some merged into one other, that I did not consider relevant to the topic, where left out. This is not uncommon, as pointed out by Hammersly and Atkinson (2009: 153) "the list of categories […] generally undergoes considerable change over the course of the research. In particular, there is typically a shift towards more abstract categories as the work develops".

The coding as well as the analysis of the data was done along with the writing of the thesis. As Crang and Cook (2007: 152) point out, the analysis of the data as well as the writing of the thesis should be done simultaneously as the interpretation of the data and writing is a part of the whole project process. By going through relevant literature simultaneously I got a better understanding of the data which made it easier to pull everything together. As a result I went back and forth in my work during the whole writing process, moving things around, building new arguments and reworking and rewriting parts and pieces. As Crang and Cook (2007: 152) point out:

> "Producing a finished [thesis] is just one of many levels of textualization through which we make sense from our materials, and is one where the discipline of piecing materials together into a textual account often reveals the flaws and contradictions buried in our materials, forcing us to look again and rethink our ideas."

3. Settings

The natural environment of the Kuiseb Valley in the Central Namib Desert

Geological features

The Namib Desert stretches along the whole Namibian coastline, some 2000 km, from the Olifants River in the Cape Province of South Africa to San Nicolau in Southern Angola. It is a relatively narrow tract of land, with an average width of only about 200 km, between the South Atlantic Ocean and the Great Western Escarpment (Fig. 1) (Seely 1992: 9). It has been in existence for the past 43 million years, which makes it the oldest desert in the world. It has been in its present form for at least the past 2 million years, although the climate has fluctuated considerably during that time (Seely & Pallett 2008: 18).

The cold Benguela current of the southeastern Atlantic Ocean flows along the Namibian coast, parallel to the desert, which plays a big part in its aridity (Seely & Pallett 2008: 33). As an inevitable feature of arid regions, precipitation in the desert is very low, with an average of about 100 mm per annum. There are frequent fogs in the desert that are much more predictable than the rain, and produce about five times as much moisture. Two types of fog dominate the area. One is caused by humid air crossing the cold Benguela current and the other by low stratus and strato-cumulus clouds (Seely & Pallett 2008: 38). The fogs give rise to other unique features of the desert such as the relatively great diversity of life it comprises (Seely & Pallett 2008: 33). Temperature along the coast is cool and stable due to the influence of the cold sea and inland the temperature increases, reaching up to 40°C or more (Van Eynden et al. 1992: 11).

The territory of the Topnaar community is in the Lower Kuiseb Valley along the Lower Kuiseb River in the Central Namib Desert. The Kuiseb River runs through the Central Namib Desert, draining a catchment of approximately 15,500 km^2. It is about 440 km long from its source in the Khomas Hochland, west of Windhoek to the Atlantic Ocean at Walvis Bay (Fig. 1). The altitude of the river ranges from 2,347 m above sea level down to the Atlantic Ocean (Henschel 2006: 28).

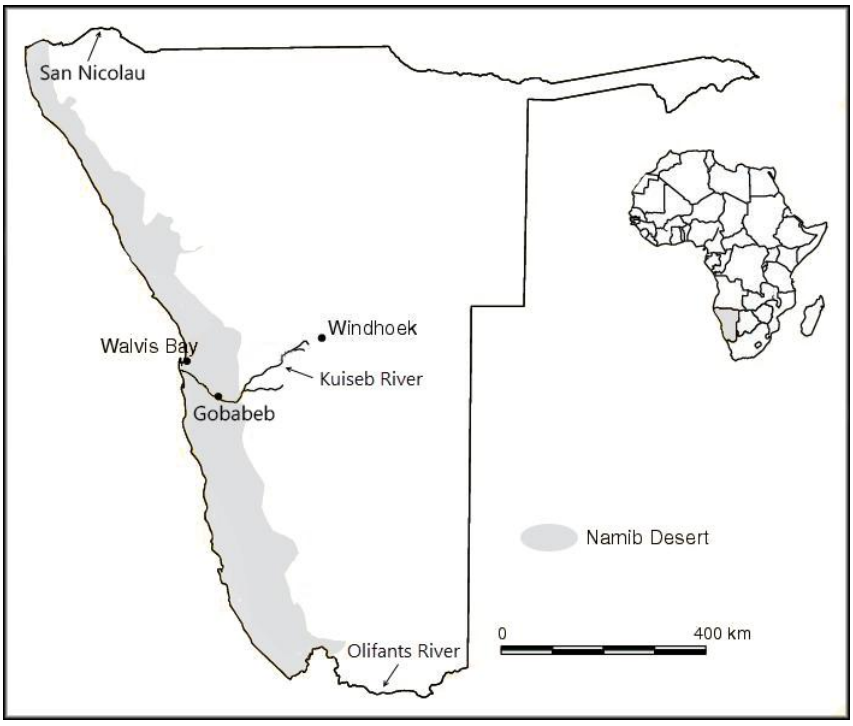

Fig. 1: The Namib Desert in Namibia

As an ephemeral river it has a temporary surface flow ranging from zero to around 100 days per year, with an average of 15 days per year (Botes et al. 2003: 3-4; Jacobson et al. 1995; Henschel 2006: 28). The average precipitation in the Lower Kuiseb Valley ranges from around 400 mm per annum at the source of the river in the Hochland area down to less than 20 mm at the coast. Additional water is provided from coastal fogs that can reach up to 100 km inland, giving an average of 30 mm precipitation annually along the river (Huntley 1985: 7). Mean evaporation in this area is high, about 1680–2380 mm per annum, increasing inland (Botes et al. 2003: 5). As can be seen, the water system of the river is extremely fragile and totally dependent on the precipitation in the highlands. However, only about 1,5% of the Hochland precipitation reaches the Lower Kuiseb River during flooding, which very rarely reaches the ocean due to absorption by the deep sands and alluvial aquifer under the river, which is larger in the lower reaches. Therefore, long-term benefits for human residency are greater in the lower reaches of the river, which is the territory of the Topnaar community (Botelle & Kowalski 1995: 9; Botes et al. 2003: 3-4; Huntley 1985: 7; Jacobson et al. 1995).

The Kuiseb River forms a linear oasis through the Central Namib Desert, from the Hochland escarpment west of Windhoek, to the coast at Walvis Bay. Most life is concentrated along the river, which comprises dense woodlands supported by the periodic floods that recharge underground water supplies and provide organic materials downstream, necessary for plant growth (Botelle & Kowalski 1995: 9; Huntley 1985: 12).

Flora and fauna

Out of around 130 species of plants that have been described in the riverbed only 11 are trees. These trees enable many non-desert adapted animal species to live in the area, of which human beings are one (Henschel 2006: 32). The most common tree species found in the woodlands are acacia species such as the anaboom (*Faidherbia albida* syn. *Acacia albida*) and the camelthorn (*Acacia eriloba*) as well as tamarix (*Tamarix usneoides*) and black ebony (*Euclea pseudebenus*) (Henschel 2006: 32; Huntley 1985: 12; Van den Eynden et al. 1992: 38, 44-45, 53). These plants are of great importance as their seed pods and leaves from low branches are an important food source, not only to wildlife in the area but also for livestock that make one of the most important livelihood practices of the Topnaar community (Henschel 2006: 32; Werner 2003: 4). Although vegetation is sparse in the dunes there are some species highly adapted to the dry environment. One of these is the before mentioned !nara melon (*Acanthosicyos horrida*), an endemic cucurbit and protected plant in the Namib Desert. Although the melon grows in the whole desert the largest concentrations are found in the Lower Kuiseb Valley (Henschel & Moser 2004: 55). The reason is that the water level is relatively high there and as the !nara abstracts groundwater from underground sources the conditions are particularly good. The ideal conditions for the !nara is groundwater level not deeper than 40 m (Müller 2004: 58; Van Eynden et al. 1994: 35). The !nara plant provides food, water and shelter for animals in the dunes and is of a great importance to the Topnaar community that harvests the melon for own consumption as well as commercial purposes. Another plant endemic in the desert and highly adapted to its dry environment is *Welwetschia mirabilis* (Henschel & Moser 2004: 56; Henschel et al. 2004: 17).

The Topnaar community resides on extensive granite gravel plains with very sparse vegetation at the northeastern side of the lower Kuiseb River. These gravel plains are a home to small populations of game, such as gemsbok, springbok, ostrich and zebra. However, the number of those has declined in recent years (Huntley 1985: 13-18). There are three species of carnivores adapted to live in the desert. These are the spotted hyena, the brown hyena and the black backed jackal (Seely & Pallett 2008: 48-49). The southwestern side of the river comprises an ocean of sand dunes. Large mammals are rare in the dunes that, however, are a home to diverse and highly adapted lower vertebrate and invertebrate species such as spiders, scorpions, geckos and lizards (Huntley 1985: 13-18; Seely & Pallett 2008: 69-71).

History and infrastructure in the Namib Naukluft Park

A brief history of the park, law and regulations

The Namib Naukluft Park traces its history to 1907 with the establishment of Game Reserve No. 3 which makes the nucleus of the park as it is today although the boundaries of the game reserve were not very well defined at that time. Quite contrary to the romantic idea of the first national parks, based on the 'Yellowstone model', the main reason of the establishment of the game reserve was to protect wild animals. These were considered valuable by the colonizers that commonly went on hunting trips in the 'wild' parts of the country. The animals were considered in threat because of intense hunting and due to that three game reserves were were established. These were Game Reserve no. 1, currently known as West Caprivi National Park, Game Reserve no. 2, now known as Etosha National Park and, as previously mentioned, Game Reserve no. 3, the current Namib Nauklut Park (Henschel & Wenning 2008: 71, 76).

With the proclamation of Game Reserve No. 3 in the desert, on 1st April 1907, all general human activity was prohibited in the park and no hunting was permitted without a special permission in writing issued by the government. Furthermore, the area that was protected from human activity was much bigger than the actual size of the game reserve. Violations of these rules were subjected to high fines. Exeptions were only granted to farmers within the park boundaries. The indigenous Topnaar community was not mentioned in the regulations and not granted any exeptions for residency in the park (Henschel & Wenning 2008: 71, 76).

Indigenous people were first mentioned in law amendments made in 1909. Regulations were then introduced that prohibited indigenous people to carry out hunting for Europeans. Some minor changes took place in the park the next decades. In 1915 the South African military took over the administration of the territory when the Namibia, then South West Africa, became a South African territory. A year later a law was passed to protect the plant *Welwitschia mirabilis*, an endemic plant in the desert and the first plant to be protected in the reserve. In 1925 the South West African Administration took over the administration of the reserve and finally the borders were defined (Henschel & Wenning 2008: 72).

Until 1968 the game reserve remained more or less the same although a few amendments were made of its size. In 1968 the reserve was expanded and proclaimed as the Namib Desert Park. The same year the Naukluft Mountain Zebra Park (NMZP) was established in the area (Henschel & Wenning 2008: 77-78).

In 1975 the Ordinance 31 of 1967 that guided the development of conservation in the country was updated and replaced by the new Nature Conservation Ordinance (Ord. 4 of

1975). This ordinance still forms the basis of conservation management in Namibia with amendments (Henschel & Wenning 2008: 76).

In 1979 the government announced the proclamation of the Namib Naukluft Park which included the previous Namib Desert Park, the Naukluft Mountain Zebra Park as well as some farmlands into one conservation area. In 1986 the government amended the park's boundaries which more than doubled in size to the present 49,786 km^2, making the park the fourth largest protected area in the world (Henschel & Wenning 2008: 79-82).

After the independence of Namibia in 1990 the government structures changed and the Directorate of Parks and Wildlife Management within the MET took over the administration of protectad areas. In the early nineties tourism development took place in the park. Mining activities have also been taking place in the area for over two centuries (Henschel & Wenning 2008: 89).

Tourism

The Namib Naukluft Park is the second most visited tourist destination in Namibia although activities are almost exclusively centred at the major attractions, i.e. Sossusvlei and the Naukluft Mountains. Some effort has been made in recent years to increase tourism in other parts of the park. For example, walking trails in various parts of the park have become increasingly popular with time. Other developments include the creation of 4x4 trails, and several overnight facilities at locations of special tourism value. The MET has reported that the Namib Naukluft Park is *"a world class desert tourism experience which is ecologically and financially sustainable and which contributes to Namibia's economic development"*. However, mines and mine prospecting in the park have been decreasing the value for tourism (Henschel & Wenning 2008: 89, 127).

The Topnaar community has engaged with tourism in various ways. There are two campsites in their area, the Lauberville campsite at Rooibank, which was initially meant to be a community campsite but is currently run by outsiders due to conflicts regarding the management of the camp; and the Homeb campsite that is run and maintained by the MET. Some Topnaar people have been undertaking training as tourist guides funded by NGOs in the area. Also, a tourism concession agreement was signed between the ≠Aonin Trust, MET and a private 4x4 tour operator through which the ≠Aonin Trust gets income (Werner 2003: 29). Further development of tourism in the Kuiseb area could provide job opportunities for the Topnaar people. However, options to develop tourism in the area are limited as the area where

they live is within a proclaimed park. However, some sort of a joint venture between the MET and the Topnaar community would facilitate the development (Werner 2003: 29-30).

Mining

There is a long history of mining in the Namib Naukluft Park. Among minerals found in the area are copper, uranium, gold, silver, manganese, beryllium, tantalum and lithium. Mine prospecting started in the 18th century and since then mining and mine prospecting has been conducted in almost the whole park area. In 1968 an administrative order was issued by the Department of Nature Conservation that withdrew the park from all prospecting. However, if these were in the interest of the nation a provision for the approval of the activities could be made (Henschel & Wenning 2008: 127). At the time of the research there was nothing in legislation that protected parks form mining and other infrastructure activities. However, an environmental impact assessment has to be performed before any specified development is made (MET 2000a: 3-35).

Increased prospecting and mining is a serious threat to the park and can have critical consequenses for the future of the Topnaar community as well as plant and animal life in the park. Currently many deposits are being prospected in the park, for example in areas with extensive !nara fields used by the Topnaar people (Henschel & Wenning 2008: 1).

Gobabeb Research and Training Centre

In 1962 the Gobabeb Research and Training Centre was established within the borders of the park. The center is located at an abandoned Topnaar settlement, right in the middle of the community, called !Nomameb, that translates to 'the place of the fig tree' in the Nama language. Initially the center was founded by the Southern African Museums Association along with Dr. Charles Koch, an Austrian entomologist who was the first director of the center. Since 1998 Gobabeb has been a joint venture between MET and the Desert Resarch Foundation of Namibia (DRFN). The center is internationally recognized for dry land training and research. A wide variety of research is conducted at the center ranging from Anthropological research to Biological and Geological research about the desert. Through the decades there has been a lot of interaction between the center and the Topnaar community. About ten Topnaar are employed at the center at the moment and the chief of the community is a member at the Gobabeb board of trustees (GRTC 2013).

The Topnaar community

The history and origin of the Topnaar people

The Kuiseb Topnaars, or ≠Aonin[9] as they are commonly known in their own language, belong to the Nama ethnic group, the best known of the Khoekhoe[10] ethnic groups of Southern Africa. Their language, Nama, features four different types of clicks[11, 12] (Van den Eynden et al. 1992: 3). The origin of the Nama ethnic group has been debated. According to current theories they originated from northern Botswana or Zambia, around the source of the Zambezi River. From there they migrated southwards, to South Africa. Some 2000 years ago a branch entered Namibia crossing the Orange River, which forms the borders between South Africa and Namibia. Other models suppose that they migrated eastwards from the Zambezi into Namibia and southwards from there to the Central Namib Desert. Today the biggest population of the Nama ethnic group is found in Namibia (Barnard 1992: 176; Boonzaier 2000: 14). The Khoekhoe group is now more or less limited to southwestern Africa although it used to be much bigger and more widely dispersed in Sub-Saharan Africa. Khoekhoe language influence is found in distinct groups of people as far as Kenya and Tanzania in Eastern Africa. In Namibia and South Africa they have largely been absorbed into the Baster population and in the rest of Africa they have been engulfed by people of Bantu ethnicity (Barnard 1992: 176; Diamond 2005: 384).

There is archaeological evidence of people living in the Lower Kuiseb Valley already in the early/middle Stone Age. Although these are thought to be nomadic people of Khoekhoe origin they are not likely to be the ancestors of the modern Topnaar people (Kinahan 2001: 88; Henschel & Wenning 2008: 38). The first evidences of people that are thought to be the ancestors of today's Topnaar are about 2000–1500 years old. These people later merged with the Nama pastoralists as there are evidences of nomadic pastoralism of the Khoekhoe ethnicity in the area that dates back to the first millennium A.D. (Kinahan 2001: 88; Vigne

[9] Topnaar is the Afrikaans version of their name and is a direct translation of the Nama name ≠Aonin. It is the most commonly used name in literature in English and German as well as Afrikaans. Therefore the name Topnaar is used here.

[10] The spelling of the ethnic groups differs in various literature, Khoekhoe, Khoikhoi and Khoe are common spellings. Here the spelling Khoekhoe will be used.

[11] The four clicks used in Nama are dental click (/), lateral click (//), palatal click (!) and alveolar click (≠) (Van den Eynden et al. 1994: 3).

[12] People of Khoekhoe origin were called Hottentots by the first colonizers who were of Dutch origin. In Dutch 'hüttentüt' means to stammer. Their language, Nama, may have sounded like stammering to the Dutch sailors (Lindfors 1999: 3).

1994: 6). Human utilization of the !nara melon seems to have started early with the oldest evidence of !nara usage in the area about 8000 years old. Pastoralism was probably more common by the coast while !nara harvesting was practiced further inland (Kinahan 2001: 88).

In 1677 a crew of Dutch sailors reported contact with people at Sandwich Harbor which most likely described the ancestors of the modern Topnaars (Vigne 1994: 7; Henschel & Wenning 2008: 33). Their reports described people whose culture was based on cattle, the !nara and marine products. Still today livestock farming and !nara harvesting make up the subsistence livelihood practices of the Topnaars although exploitation of marine products has ceased (Henschel & Wenning 2008: 4, 99; Kinahan 2001: 88; Vigne 1994: 6, 19).

The name Topnaar first appears in the writing of missionary Hahn in 1840. The name is a direct translation to Afrikaans from the Nama name ≠Aonin which, in the Nama language, translates to "the people of the point" or "the people at the furthest margin". The reason for this name has been debated but most likely it refers to their territory being at the edge of the Namib Desert, which is the most distant and extreme territory of any Nama tribe. Another name by which the Topnaar are known is !Naranin, which could be translated to "the !Nara people", referring to the importance of the !nara fruit in their subsistence economy (Budack 1977: 1; Dentlinger 1983: 7; Henschel & Wenning 2008: 36; Hoernlé 1925: 6; Vinge 1994: 2). Buddack (1977: 12) mentions two other Nama names of the group, which, according to him, indicates that the people were divided into two groups depending on where they lived and which was their subsistence natural resource. These are Hurinin, or "the sea people", referring to the coastal dwellers, commonly known as Strandlopers in Afrikaans; and !Khuisenin or "the Kuiseb people" that lived along the Kuiseb River with a seasonal mobility to the coast. The spatial separation of the communities left some early anthropologists believing that there was a difference between the groups although these were actually one and the same group. Today the Topnaar community is confined to the Lower Kuiseb River only as mentioned earlier (Henschel & Wenning 2008: 41).

Warfare and battles over land and power

The Topnaar people have a long history of fighting for their rights of living in their traditional area, both with European colonists as well as other ethnic groups. It is actually quite remarkable that the Topnaar community does still exist as a group along the Kuiseb River, taking all the attempts to wipe them out into the account. Due to this the Topnaar people today have a very diverse genetic stock as they have mixed with other Namibian tribes as well

as Europeans through the centuries (Dentlinger 1983: 15-21; Henschel & Wenning 2008: 32-34).

As mentioned above their existence is first described in 1677 by Dutch sailors dispatched by the Dutch Cape Colony to explore the southwestern coastline of Africa. They reported a "settlement of several huts, domestic dogs, and also a 'flychaser', a stick with the tail of a jackal attached to it, traditionally used by the Nama" (Henchel & Wenning 2008: 40).

In 1796 Jonker Afrikaner, a farmer of Nama origin, came to Namibia from South Africa with a group of the Orlaam people, a subgroup of the Nama ethnic group. They settled in the south-east of present day Namibia. Through established contact with European culture in the Cape of South Africa, Jonker Afrikaner and the Oorlams had learned European construction skills with stone walled settlements and they were even equipped with horses and firearms. Over the years the number of the followers of Jonker Afrikaner greatly increased (Henchel & Wenning 2008: 38-39). His troops reached the Lower Kuiseb Valley in 1798. Reports indicate that the Topnaar community suffered heavily from loss of cattle while fighting with the troops. Jonker Afrikaner had to fulfill his obligations with European traders which increased his demand for cattle. His continuous cattle raids in the Topnaar community soon led to a depletion of the herds. After that their livestock consisted mainly of goats and sheep, which is still the case today. Furthermore, they acquired a more European style of life as the Oorlams created a basis for European commerce in which the Topnaar became increasingly involved. The changes resulted in decreased resources of the Topnaar and much more poverty than before. This forced some of them to become a part of working force for Western settlers in Walvis Bay (Dentlinger 1983: 15-21; Henschel & Wenning 2008: 41; Henschel et al. 2004: 41-42).

Throughout the 19th century, the Topnaar supplied many men to the Oorlam forces which left only a few impoverished settlements along the Lower Kuiseb River. This fate of the Topnaar people reflects the fate of many former hunter-gathering societies (Henschel & Wenning 2008: 41).

For the next decades the Kuiseb Topnaar community persisted in poverty in the no-man's-land between white-owned farms in the east, the municipal area of Walvis Bay in the northwest, mines and administration in the north and the Namib sand-sea in the south (Henchel & Wenning 2008: 50). Records of the Topnaar people since early last century describe them as "half-starved beachcombers, preserving a primitive culture revolving round the harvesting of the fish and mollusks of the bleak Atlantic coast and the !nara of the otherwise barren Namib sand dunes" (Vigne 1994: 3). Winifred Hoernlé (1925: 12), a South

African anthropologist who published important articles on the various branches of the Nama ethnic group early in the last century describes them as "probably the most miserable of all the remnants of the Nama".

In 1878 most of the territory of the Topnaar came under British rule which made them the first population of Namibia to come under colonial rule (Vigne 1994: 2-3). In 1884 Germany proclaimed a protectorate over the area ranging from Lüderitz to Cape Frio. A treaty was signed between Piet //Eibib the then chief of the Topnaar community which recognized the 'private rights' of the Topnaar (Henschel et al. 2004: 42-43). More than three decades later, in 1915, Namibia, then South West Africa, came under South African rule and remained South African until independence in 1990 (Henschel & Wenning 2008: 6). Under South African rule Namibia's population was exposed to apartheid, with very racially biased development policies. These included mass rural and urban poverty, unequal income distribution, uneven access to land and natural resources along with poor education, health care and housing provision for the countries rural populations (MET 2000a: 3-43).

As mentioned before, the story of the Namib Naukluft Park starts in 1907 when Game Reserve no. 3 was established. This imposed many restrictions on the life of the Topnaar community with a number of attempts to remove them from the area (Henschel & Wenning 2008: 25). In 1906 a piece of land was granted to the Topnaar in Sesfontain in Kaokoland by the German government due to the proposed establishment of the game reserve. A few Topnaar moved to this area. There is still a small branch of Topnaar living in Sesfontain. In the Nama language they are called !Gomen which translates to 'stupid people' probably referring to their dialect which is said to be strange and unintelligible among other Nama speakers (Van Eynden et al. 1992: 6). Another attempt was made in 1923 when the Magistrate in Windhoek came up with a plan to move the Topnaar from the Kuiseb up north to the Nama reserve at Fransfontein. The official reasons were, among others, problems with the payment of grazing fees, poverty and bad sanitation. However, the reasons are more likely to be that the administration resented human presence in the game reserve. The Topnaar people though resisted to move (Henschel & Wenning 2008: 36).

In 1937 the idea of removing the Topnaar from the Game Reserve was taken up once again. A commissioner reported that although the tribe had no legal rights to the land they had a strong claim by custom and tradition. He recommended not to remove the people but rather to provide them their own reserve along the Kuiseb. Nothing came out of this and the status remained the same (Henschel & Wenning 2008: 51).

When the park was extended to the municipal borders of Walvis Bay in the 1967 the Park Ordinance stated that no-one could live in the park without permission. It was further prohibited to hunt wild animals, keep livestock and exploit other resources of the park, all of which were an important part of the livelihood activities of the Topnaar (Henschel & Wenning 2008: 52). Then the authorities intended to move the Topnaar community to Gibeon, in the south of the country where the Nama ethnic group traditionally resided on the grounds that they were a part of the Nama nation. However, the Topnaar people refused to move. The story says that they told the colonial administration to "take some !nara seeds to the area allocated to them in Namaland and plant them there. If the seeds would germinate !nara plants, they would move. If not, they would stay" (Botelle & Kowalski 1995: 74-75). To make a long story short, the seeds did not germinate and the Topnaar stayed. The Ordinance was though applied, their traditional rights in the area ignored and they had to live with a constant threat of being removed from the area (Hinz 2004: 48; Botelle & Kowalski 1995: 74-75).

In 1972 the Department of Bantu Administration and Development and the Department for Coloreds and Rehoboth met to consider options on how to force them to leave. Then the Topnaar community counted only 83 people in 15 settlements. As both threats and promises had been tried to convince the Topnaar to leave without success, they decided to make their life harder in the hope that they would leave voluntarily. Fences were erected that affected movements in and out of the park, trading was prohibited within the park which forced them to travel to Walvis Bay to obtain basic goods and identification papers were issued for the residents within the park and non-recorded residents were prosecuted. Quite contrary to the decisions of the administration, a police report spoke very favorable about the Topnaar. They were said to be clean, law abiding and helpful in controlling the protected area (Henschel & Wenning 2008: 53). Instead of leaving the area the Topnaar community increased in number the following years and counted 256 people in 1978. However, there had been a drastic decrease in livestock as goats served as a staple food. This year they were granted a semi-permanent right of residency in the park. The same year a school was built at Utuseb and water boreholes established in the park. However, their rights of residency were not reported in any legal document (Henschel & Wenning 2008: 53-54).

The issue of resettlement was raised once again after the introduction of the current park boundaries in 1986. This was done on the grounds that the Topnaar community was an obstacle for game migration in the park. The people living in settlements upriver (Homeb to Swartbank, see fig. 2) were to move downriver, west of Gobabeb, in order to reserve the

upriver regions for wildlife. Permanent plots were introduced with permanent water boreholes. However, the chief, who lived downriver, resisted to move on the grounds that tribal structures did not allow him to move into the territory of another Topnaar household (Henschel & Wenning 2008: 55). As a consequence of the park regulations restricting their movement and with the introduction of permanent boreholes the Topnaar gradually adopted a sedentary lifestyle (Henschel et al. 2004: 44).

The Topnaar community today

Today the territory of the Topnaar community is confined to around 120 km stretch along the Lower Kuiseb River, between farms in the east, the municipal area of Walvis Bay in the north-west, mines and administration in the north and an extensive sea of sand in the south that extends all the way to the harbor town Lüderitz, nearly 1000 km away (Henschel & Wenning 2008: 50; Dentlinger 1983: 36).

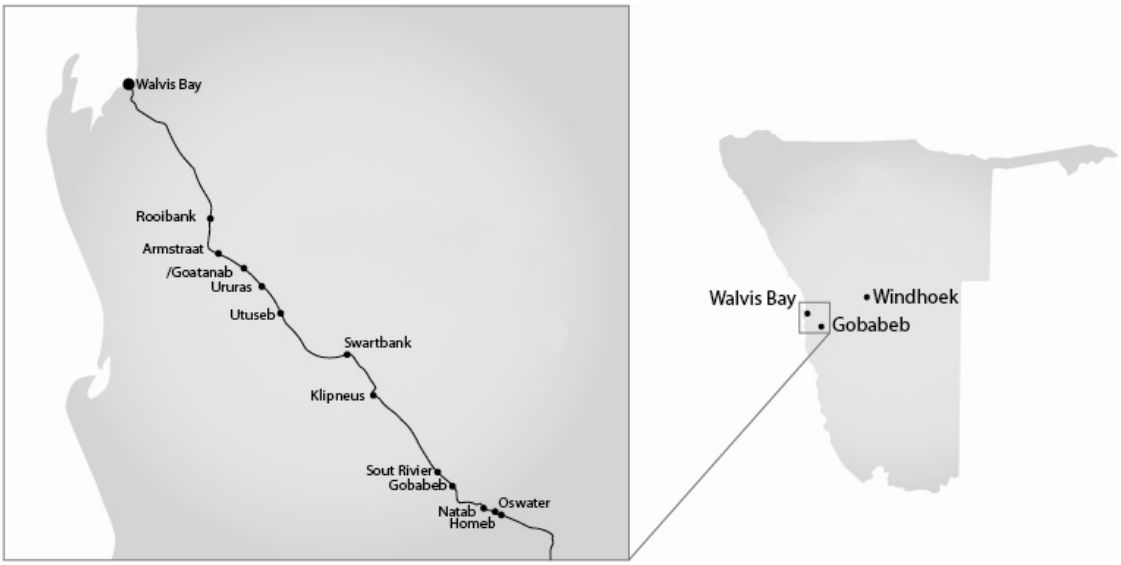

Fig. 2: The Topnaar community settlements by the Lower Kuiseb River

The community lives in 14 separate settlements scattered along the Lower Kuiseb River with an interval of about 2-15 km between them (Fig. 2). Each settlement has 5-25 inhabitants in up to 15 households. In the biggest settlement, Utuseb, a larger number of people is living. Ten of the settlements, from Homeb to Utuseb, are within the boundaries of the Namib Naukluft Park. The other four, from Ururas to Armstraat (the first settlement on the road from Walvis Bay), belong to Walvis Bay rural or the Walvis Bay enclave. The Lower Kuiseb River is commonly divided into two parts; upriver, referring to Swaartbank up to the last settlement at Homeb, and downriver referring to Utuseb to Armstraat (Werner 2003: 9; Botelle & Kowalski 1995: 14).

The current number of people living along the Kuiseb river is today estimated to be around 3-400 adults and children. There are also some Topnaar living in Walvis Bay in addition to those living in the Lower Kuiseb Valley. In 2007 the estimated total number of people in these two places was 620. People are constantly moving between these two due to work opportunities or lack thereof, which makes it difficult to estimate the exact number of people living in these two places respectively. Traditionally, when speaking about the Topnaar community, it refers to the community along the river (Henschel & Wenning 2008: 55; Botelle & Kowalski 1995: 28).

Traditionally the homes of the Topnaar were Nama huts made of branches of wood shaped into domes. Some people still lived in these traditional homes until late last century. Today, with a sedentary way of life, the houses are constructed of second-hand and scrap building material such as corrugated iron, cardboard boxes, flattened metal oil drums and other re-usable material suitable as a building material, or timber and tree bark found in the river bed (Botelle & Kowalski 1995: 14, 28).

Although Erongo Region, in which the Topnaar live, is said to be the second wealthiest region in Namibia this is mainly due to the industrial harbor towns of Swakopmund and Walvis Bay that have numerous employment opportunities. However, the Topnaar have been identified as the poorest and the most marginalized group in this region. Education in the community is poor and advancing slowly. In 2007 it was estimated that only 2% of the Topnaar attending Secondary School actually completed grade 12. Poor education can be caused by a number of factors for example long distances to school. Although Utuseb, the site of the school, is very centrally located in the community, the distance from there to the settlements furthest away is around 60 km. This often results in a high incidence of school dropout (Legal Assistance Centre 2013: 12; Henschel & Wenning 2008: 55-56).

Even though the native language of the Topnaar is Nama, most Topnaar people do also understand Afrikaans, as during apartheid, when Namibia was a part of South African rule, Afrikaans was the official language along with English and German. Since independence English has been the official language of the country. The younger generation generally speaks decent English as English is the medium of instruction in schools. The same applies to people in higher positions such as most members of the traditional authority and people that have been working outside the community.

Livelihoods and natural resources of the Topnaar community

Through the centuries the Topnaar community has had to adapt to the super arid environment of the desert. As a result of this they have developed very diverse livelihood strategies combining livestock farming, !nara harvesting, seafood exploitation and hunting. Following the period of European settlement, the establishment of protected area and the expansion of mining activities in the desert, the Topnaar were confined to the Lower Kuiseb Valley, the area where they are living today. Marine resources have therefore almost entirely disappeared from their diet. Furthermore, with the hunting restriction following the proclamation of the Namib Naukluft Park in 1907 the hunting of wildlife has ceased. In the last decades these two have been replaced by other activities such as employment and piecework as well as food aid and pension. However, livestock farming and !nara harvesting remain the most important livelihood activities of the Topnaar community although some families have ceased the the !nara harvesting in recent years. Gardening is also important for some households although many households have had to discontinue the gardening due to lack of water (Legal Assistance Centre 2013: 15; Henschel & Wenning 2008: 41). Following is a brief description of their main resources today.

- !Nara

"This is the thing that God created for them – so it is for them!"

The above comment is from a ministry official at the MET when asked about whether the Topnaar people were the only ones with rights to harvest the !nara. The !nara harvesting is a key for the Topnaar's existence and has been their subsistence food since they settled in the area. The Topnaar strongly associate the !nara to their identity and it confines them to an area that is theirs traditionally, but not legally. Still today the Topnaar are dependent on the !nara which forms a part of their culture, tradition, nutrition and economy and represents their dependence on and respect for the natural environment (Henschel et al. 2004: 33). According to Henschel et al. (2004: 41) after annexation of Walvis Bay in 1878 the British recognized the "Protection of Property Rights of !Nara" by the Topnaar. In Article 5, Clause 7 it says: "The chief is the guardian of the !Nara fields on behalf of the community. Damage, theft or any unknown trading in !Nara products are punishable".

Traditionally the Topnnar people had a system of private ownership over the !nara plants where families had an exclusive access to specific !nara bushes. The access was not confined to the land itself, only the bushes. The property relations have changed during the past decades as some families are not harvesting on their bushes on a regular basis which has

gradually resulted in an open access to all the bushes. This has led to conflicts, both within the Topnaar community and between the Topnaar and outsiders that have come to the area to harvest !nara (Henschel et al. 2004: 24-26; Widlok 2004: 100, 105).

The harvesting season of the !nara is a period of about four months ranging from November to April. In former times families moved seasonally to the fields during the harvesting season as the !nara fields are located a few km away from the Topnaar settlements. Today the pattern is usually that a few individuals go together to the field to collect !nara, staying on the field for a few days or a few weeks. A recent study shows that only about 1/5th of the households harvests for their economic livelihood, the other households harvest only occasionally and on a much smaller scale (Henschel et al. 2004: 45; Botelle & Kowalski 1995: 38-39).

The average work day on the field is about 11 hours and includes long walks in the hot desert temperature. The melons are picked from the thorny bushes with a long pointy stick and carried to a central place to be prepared. The flesh is then cut out and boiled down in a small barrel. This loosens the seeds from the pulp. After they have boiled the seeds they are separated from the pulp and dried. The pulp is either eaten warm or dried in the sun to make ≠hoagaribeb or !nara chocolate (Henschel et al. 2004: 28, 31). The harvesting is very labor intensive, requiring 2-4 man hours per kilogram of seeds. Only about 6% of the seeds is consumed by the Topnaar, the rest is sold (Henschel et al. 2004: 28). Due to groundwater extraction for urban and industrial supply the !nara has been affected as it, in some cases, does not reach the water level (Henschel 2006: 32).

- Livestock

Besides !nara harvesting livestock farming is the most important agricultural activity of the Topnaar community, both as an income generating activity and a food source. In former times cattle were the most common but in the last decades they have been replaced by goats. Sheep, poultry and donkeys are also owned by some families. The donkeys are roaming freely in the desert and mainly used for transportation. Some families also own horses, although they are very rare (Legal Assistance Centre 2013: 14; Henschel & Wenning 2008: 41; Botelle & Kowalski 1994: 43).

Due to the area‘s aridity, farming is possible only along the Kuiseb River. The stock sizes are kept small numbering around 40 on average for each household. With the introduction of boreholes into the settlements in late 1970s and early 1980s livestock number increased. The livestock never stays too far away from water points in the settlements along the river. The

livestock is mainly fed seedpods from trees growing in the dry river bed, such as the anaboom. Sometimes during the rainy season they are allowed to share grazing with game on the plains. The main threats for the livestock are the predators, jackals and hyena, as well as diseases. The perennial floods in the river can also cause a decrease in livestock numbers as the main grazing area is in the dry river bed (Legal Assistance Centre 2013: 14; Henschel & Wenning 2008: 41; Botelle & Kowalski 1994: 43).

- Gardens

The introduction of water boreholes into the area has made gardening more common in the community. About half of the households have a small garden, mainly for their own consumption. There is one bigger garden at Oswater, which was initially meant to be a community garden but is currently kept by one family. A range of vegetables is grown in the gardens such as pumpkins, tomatoes, beetroots, carrots, cabbages, cantaloupes and water melons. The gardens are usually irrigated with water hoses from the boreholes and fertilized with manure. Some settlements have had difficulties with sustaining their gardens due to lack of water as water pumps have broken down. Other common threats to the harvest are mice, birds and insects such as termites. Due to harsh environmental conditions, gardening is an unstable source of food and income (Werner 2003: 23; Botelle & Kowalski 2008: 52).

- Water

In the harsh arid environment water is one of the most important resources. Digging of wells several meters down to shallow groundwater, so-called ‘gorras’, was the method employed in the past by the Topnaar people. As a semi-nomadic group the Topnaar moved between 27 places along the river (Kinahan 2001; Ward 1985). In the late 1970s, the government installed boreholes at twelve places in the area that subsequently became permanent settlements. In 2002 solar pumps were installed by the Directorate of Rural Water Supply that replaced windmills and diesel engines in the settlements upstream. NamWater, a commercial water supplying entity, provided water to the settlements downstream for a service fee. Water point committees were established responsible for maintenance and water distribution. However, the water point committees have experienced problems related to the management and maintenance of the water points (Legal Assistance Centre 2013: 13; Werner 2003: 15-16).

Another problem is the increasing groundwater abstraction by the state in order to supply the neighboring towns Walvis Bay and Swakopmund with water as well as the Rössing Uranium Mine. This has resulted in a drop of the water table from a few meters deep (reachable with ‘gorras’) to the current level of 15-17 m deep. This can cause various

problems, for example for the !nara plant and various tree species that grow in the area as it makes it harder for them to reach the water level (Henschel 2006: 30, 32).

- Other sources of food and income

Drought relief and flood relief have been an important source of food for the Topnaar community since independence. It is distributed two to three times a year per household and contains for example maize-meal, cooking oil and some fish. Pensions received by elders are also vital for supporting households and are regarded by some people the most reliable source of regular income. The pension is usually used for daily necessities such as food and school fees for children. Furthermore, employment in Walvis Bay is important and often people in the rural areas are dependent on income from people employed in Walvis Bay. In turn, rural community members may look after the livestock of the people staying in Walvis Bay due to employment there (Legal Assistance Centre 2013: 12-13).

Traditional leadership

The first known chief of the Topnaar community was Frederik Khaxab in the mid-19th century. His successor was Piet ≠Eibeb. At his death in 1910 two factions struggled for the leadership, without success, which resulted in seven decades without a leader (Van den Eynden et al. 1992: 6). The Turnhalle conference in 1975 initiated political reform development in Namibia, which continued until 1977. One of the aims of the reform was elaboration of ethnic politics in the country with emphasis on the importance of ethnic representation in the government. In 1978, Easu Kooitjie was appointed headman for the Topnaar community by the Administrator-General of Namibia. He was replaced by his son Seeth Kooitjie in 1981, along with four councilors. Officially he was elected in democratic elections although some community members claim that he was nominated by the previous government (Botelle & Kowalski 1995: 79; Dentlinger 1983: 72, Rotberg 1980: 196).

The traditioal authority of the Topnaar community today consists of the chief and five councilors. All members are recognized by the government of Namibia. The traditional authorities act provides the legal framework for traditional authorities in the country. Elections for Topnaar chief and councilors are meant to take place every three years, according to the act, although this has not always been followed (Botelle & Kowalski 1995: 79; MRLGH 2002: 15).

Among the duties of traditional authorities are a general peace and welfare promotion, law enforcement, cultural and natural conservation as well as sustainable use of natural

resources. Act no. 25 since 2000, article 3(2)(c) states that the traditional authority has the duty:

> "[T]o ensure that the members of their traditional communities use the natural resources at their disposal on a sustainable basis and in a manner that conserves the environment and maintain the ecosystem, for the benefit of all persons in Namibia" (MRLGH 2002: 15).

In the Traditional Authorities Act it is stated that traditional authorities may make their own customary law. The customary law of the Topnaar community were compiled in 1995 by Seeth Kooitjie the current chief of the Topnaar community (MRLGH 2002: 13).

The legal situation of the Topnaar community as park residents

> "Rural communities in pre-colonial times had a well-established conservaiton ethic based on religious beliefs, the rights of chiefs and other cultural values. However, successive colonial administrations throughout Africa have alienated rural people from their environment by taking away their rights and responsibilities in favour of centralising control over natural resources and making traditional practices illegal."
>
> (Hinz 2004: 3)

The Topnaar community is one of two communities in Namibia that have successfully resisted leaving the land of their ancestors even though their traditional area was proclaimed a park by the government. The other is the Kxoé San community in the West Caprivi Game Park (Hinz 2004: 2; Jones 1997: 2, 4). These two communities have been forced to live in illegality as the MET has more or less ignored their presence on the land since it was proclaimed a park (Hinz 2004: 2).

In the case of the Topnaar community the exclusion took place as early as in 1907 when Game Reserve no. 3 was established and the government became the legal owner of the area where the Topnaar community resides. As pointed out by Buddack (1977: 4) the Topnaar people were never "consulted in connection with the proclamation of that reserve".

Officially, the Topnaar people do not have any legal permission to reside in the area. Their presence is not acknowledged in any legal documents and their rights within the area have nowhere been clearly defined. In terms of existing legislations, virtually everything that the community does inside the park is illegal (MET 2007: 1). According to Jo Henschel et al.

(2004: 43) quoting Brian Jones (1997: 3) the most important issue for the Topnaar people "is the need for government recognition of their rights on the land they occupy".

Officially the Namib Naukluft Park is state owned and managed by the MET. According to the park law it is illegal to "wilfully or neglectently injure, capture or disturb any animal" within the borders of the park, as says in Nature Conservation Ordinance since 1975. Furthermore, removal of animals or plants and introduction of domestic animals is not allowed within the park boundaries. Off road driving and driving between 21h00 and 05h00 on any road in the Namib Naukluft Park is forbidden unless it is a "proclaimed throughfare" (Government Gazette 1976). Thus, officially, most actions of the Topnaar community are illegal. On the other hand there is nothing that prohibits infrastructure development such as mines prospecting and tourism development within the protected areas although the Environmental Managing Act makes environmental impact assessment mandatory for all specified developments (MET 2000a: 3-35).

According to Article 4 of the customary law of the Topnaar community, the administrative management of the land is in the hands of the chief and his councilors. In the same article it says that the government is the 'trustkeeper' of "any traditional land or state owned land" (Topnaar Traditional Authority 1995: 9). Article 66 of the constitution of Namibia says that "the customary law and the common law of Namibia in force on the date of Independence shall remain valid to the extent that such customary or common law does not conflict worth this Constitution or any other statutory law" (Hinz 2004: 10).

As can be seen, control over land, hence access to resources such as water and grazing, is blurred between traditional leadership and regional or central government.

Increased rights of park residents

Although the legal rights of people living within national parks have been neglected in Namibia a lot has changed regarding their rights in the last decades. Since independence the change has been rapid and the new ministry has increasingly focused on the development of ideas and practices that link conservation with development to improve the quality of life for all Namibians. Efforts have been made to improve the quality of life of people that derive its subsistence from the environment as well as creating awareness of the importance of maintaining biodiversity and preserving the traditional ways of living. This is extremely important as two thirds of the Namibian population derive their subsistence from the environment (MET 2000a: 3-44).

In 1992, the MET conducted socio-ecological surveys of local views about resource management to identify problems and solutions. This survey was conducted in various rural communities all over Namibia, the Topnaar community being one of them. According to a consultant working on the survey in the Topnaar community the aim was to understand how park residents and neighbors lived in terms of natural resources. The aim was also to understand their attitude towards wildlife and conservation and if they saw wildlife as an economic option and as such a part of their development. Furthermore, the idea was to look at ways in which resources of the park could be used, linked with people's development, so their activities would be compatible with the objectives of the park. Also, to look at ways in which they could develop some sort of joint management approach and let the community get an income through for example trophy hunting and tourism concessions. However, the outcome of that survey for the Topnaar people, a report called "A preliminary report on the socio-ecological survey of the Lower Kuiseb valley" was not found on any library in Windhoek or at the MET. The report could have provided important information for this study.

Namibia has a well-developed community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) program. When the socio-ecological survey was conducted there were 50 community conservancies on communal land in the country. The aim of such conservancies is to enable local residents in communal areas to make decisions about the way they use the natural resources in the area, to make it possible for residents to derive income and other benefits from the use of these and to provide opportunity for communities to manage their resources in an integrated way (NASCO 2008: 7). However, the Southern African CBRNM projects are not linked to the protected area management. The residents on protected state land are left out and thus a different policy is needed for these residents (MET 2007: 1).

The MET has done some preliminary work regarding policy making in the field to meet the rights of people living within protected area. In 1994 a report entitled "Land Use Planning for Sustainable Development" was published by the MET which was meant to deal with park residents as a part of a set of broader policies (Jones 1997: 4).

In 1997 research was conducted "to document and analyze international approaches to protected area management which involve resident peoples" by Brian Jones who served as an independent consultant for the MET in the environment and development sector (Jones 1997: 1). This was done as a new government policy to establish game conservancies managed by local communities was being made by the MET. The outcome, a research discussion paper, was meant to be used to propose practical approaches that the MET could include in the development of its own "parks and residents peoples" policy and strategy (Jones 1997: 1).

In January 2007 a draft "National Policy on Protected Areas, Neighbors and Resident People" was prepared by the MET based on Jones' recommendations. According to Jones (1997: 5) a park resident policy is necessary in Namibia. For example to reduce conflicts that MET has encountered with the Topnaar people and park rangers respectively. Currently, the solving of such problems in Namibia is left to individual park managers who do not receive any specific guidance or training in dealing with such issues from the ministry (Jones 1997: 5). In the draft policy document it is stated that "[i]t is important to create positive attitudes of residents[13] and neighbours towards protected areas and capitalize on sound partnerships with them to enhance conservation activities" (MET 2007: 2-3). Furthermore, the policy says:

> "Where it is in the interests of improved conservation and promotion of national development goals, government will enter into cooperative management of protected areas with neighbours, people resident in parks or other relevant stakeholders, giving particular attention to promoting their socio-economic development and their involvement in the planning and development of the protected areas. Government will also provide incentives for compatible forms of land use to be developed on land adjacent to protected areas and will promote the development of mutually supportive relationships with all protected area neighbours".
>
> (MET 2007: 3)

This is in line with international resolutions and recommendations for park residents, discussed earlier. However, when interviewed, no ministry official could tell when or even if this new policy would be published.

Prior to independence the MET gave out tourism and trophy hunting concessions in order to enhance the development of the tourism and wildlife industry in Namibia. Along with benefits for tourism and wildlife industry the aim of the concessions was to give the local communities incentive for the loss of resources the proclamation of protected area included, for example the loss of wild meat following the hunging restriction. The way these concessions were implemented have been highly criticized as usually the local communities

[13] According to the draft policy document the term "resident people" refers to "those people who are not Ministry employees, but who are recognized by Government to be legally residing in a protected area" as well as other persons allowed to reside within a protected area in terms of an agreement between the MET and the legal residents (MET 2007: 3).

in the protected area had little or no say of how these operations are carried out. An agreement was usually signed between three partners, the MET, the local community and a tour or a hunting operator. Even though the local communities were included as partners in the concession, the concession holder had a much stronger position. These concessions are said to have dis-empowered communities by giving rights to outside operators over resources which the local residents consider theirs (MET 2000a: 3-47).

In 2007 the MET published a new policy on tourism and wildlife concessions on state land which enabled the MET to allocate concessions in protected areas directly to local communities. The policy provides key principles and guidelines for the awarding of concessions to communities living in protected areas as well as guidelines for the management of the concessions.

The new policy states that in awarding concessions to communities, the MET will:

- Use concessions to mitigate the costs that such communities suffer, to provide incentives for them to support the objectives of the protected area, and to stimulate local economic growth;
- Provide assistance and guidance in the negotiation of beneficial agreements with joint venture partners or investors, and technical assistance to access business management skills and resources;
- Ensure that the communities are not exploited in any sub-agreement or joint venture with other partners; and
- Ensure that community organizations or representative bodies entering into concession agreements with the State act in accordance with their mandate from their members.

Furthermore, local communities that reside inside protected areas will be given priority to the concessions as these people suffer the most costs caused by wildlife as well as loss of access to land and resources (Jones 2012: 26).

Park benefits granted to the Topnaar community

Although not acknowledged as legal residents, the Topnaar community does get benefits out of the park resources other than the ones they use for day to day living. A few years prior to the research the Topnaar community had been granted a tourism concession and the same year as the research was conducted they were granted a wildlife concession. They had also

been granted a right to get a share of the process of culling wildlife, both for their own consumption and to generate income for the community. The income generated out of these agreements is meant to go to the ≠Aonin Trust, a fund that is, according the the traditional authority meant to cater for the socio-economic development, needs and interests of the Topnaar community.

The tourism concession agreement was signed in 2000 between the Topnaar community, the MET and a tour operator called URI adventures. According to the agreement the tour operator is granted the permission to conduct 4x4 driving routes with tourists in the area where the Topnaar community resides. An annual fee is paid to the Topnaar community by the tour operator as sited in the agreement (MET 2000b).

The hunting concession between the MET, the ≠Aonin Trust and the operator was, according to the MET and the chief of the Topnaar community, meant to be signed in 2009, the same year as the research was conducted. At the time of data collection an operator for this concession had not been found. According to this agreement a trophy hunting operator would be granted the permission to shoot a defined number of animals within a specific area. Like with the former agreement an annual fee would be paid to the Topnaar community by the operator (MET 2009).

In addition to the concessions the community had some years ago been granted a right of getting their share of meat for consumption out of culling wild animals in the park. This way the community gets a share of the wildlife in the park and is, according to the MET, seen as an incentive for the loss of wildlife following living in the park. A delegation appointed by the ministry performs the culling. The meat is issued to the Topnaar community through the chief who, along with the traditional authority, is responsible for the dispersal of the meat to community members. While searching for secondary data sources about this agreement nothing could be found. However, all the interviewees from the Topnaar community asked, as well as ministry officials, were aware of this agreement.

A new management plan for the Namib Naukluft Park was drafted in 2003. According to the MET, this plan does take into the account the presence of the Topnaar community within the park. However, the MET could not tell in what way. According to the chief of the Topnaar community three representatives from the Topnaar community working with the ministry on the management plan. However, according to the MET this management plan was not accessible anywhere.

As can be seen, life in illegality has been the reality of the Topnaar people since the proclamation of the park in 1907. There is no existing policy for park residents in Namibia

and their presence is not acknowledged in any legal document about national parks in the country. Although the MET has been trying to facilitate their existence in the park in recent years this does not change the fact that they are still illegal residents which can have serious consequences for the community.

Their situation contradicts the internationally acknowledged recommendations by the IUCN (2003) that say that governments should:

> "Establish and enforce appropriate laws and policies to protect the intellectual property of indigenous peoples with regards to their traditional knowledge, innovation systems and cultural and biological resources and penalise all biopiracy activities"

It also contradicts the resolution mentioned earlier, that was adopted at the 4th World Conservation Congress in Barcelona 2008 that called on governments to work with indigenous people's organizations to:

> "reform national legislation policies and practices so that they contribute to the realization of the relevant parts of the Durban Accord, CBD Programme of Work on Protected areas, as well as the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples".

4. Analysis

Although the Topnaar community has no legal rights to reside within the national park, the question remains whether their life is seriously affected by this fact. In the following chapter my aim is to answer the questions I started with in the beginning, about whether, and then how, the Topnaar people are affected in their everyday life by the fact that they live within (or near) a proclaimed national park.

Two perspectives are reflected upon and discussed in separate parts of the chapter, the view of the people that are not a part of the Topnaar community and the view of the Topnaar community itself respectively.

In the first part the view of the people that are not from the Topnaar community is reflected upon, i.e. officials from the MET, NGO employees working in the area and a consultant working in the field. First the view of the MET and NGO employees are discussed as their views turned out to be very similar. The consultant had a slightly different view and will be discussed separately. In this part try to find out whether the existence of the Topnaar community in the park is generally acknowledged and, related to that, how their daily activities are viewed. Whether they consider the Topnaar people affected by the fact that they are residing within a proclaimed national park is also reflected upon as well as their relations with the traditional authority and the Topnaar community.

In the second part the view of the Topnaar people themselves gets attention and their perception on the fact that they are living within a proclaimed national park. Their view of national parks is reflected upon in the beginning as well as their view of conservation. Then their view on ownership of land and resources is summarized with a special attention to the !nara plant. Problems concerning living within a protected area get special consideration as well as problems of a more general nature. The Topnaar traditional authority gets attention here as well as the community's interaction with the government.

The Namibian government – a co-player in illegality?

Traditional, but illegal, residents in the park

> "I personally feel it is like a gentleman agreement. [...] They will stay in that traditional Kuiseb valley like they've been doing for centuries, so it is a gentleman agreement basically, I don't think it has been defined that says the Topnaar may not pass this line, this border, they know that. The law says you must not have domestic animals in the park but those guys, they have, so that is basically a provision we gave them and said ok, you may."

The above quote is from a ministry official at the MET when asked about the rights of the Topnaar community within the national park. He continues:

> "If you look at our law, our ordinance, we do not allow it but in a case like with the Topnaar we do allow it. Not only livestock but if you look at their domestic animals like dogs, dogs are also not allowed but in the case of the Topnaar community we make an exception. It is the same with the utilization of resources, they harvest the !nara, the seeds which also actually isn't ordinant but we do allow it because they live in the park and you know… and do so."

As can be seen by this answer the Topnaar community is allowed to do the routine activities for their livelihood within the park boundaries although according to the law it is prohibited. Furthermore, according to the ministry official the community has a special provision to reside in the park and to use the resources of the park that other people do not have. The MET allows them to practice their daily activities, such as gardening and grazing livestock which, according to him, "doesn't affect the day to day running of the park or management of the park". However, these are only oral allowances that are nowhere stated in print, as the same official commented on: "It is actually interesting questions you are asking me because I am quite sure it is not defined anywhere". On the same topic an NGO employee working in the area said:

> "Topnaars... I guess they've got a right of place, no-one ever argues with them, but on the other hand they don't have a right of place, it is not really their area, and this has never been clarified, it is not that the Topnaars have been defined, there are whole other political issues in there. Other national parks that have been established and people were shifted out and those people want their places back so the official granting of land rights to people inside parks is a much

bigger issue. You can understand that some things are maybe left unclarified indefinitely."

He continues:

"The Topnaar assume it is their area and the ministry assumes it is their area. It is a park and those two haven't either met. The legal situation from upper level, the state, is this is a national park, but nowhere does it actually clearly specify that people have the right of living here".

Judging by these comments the ministry officials and NGO employees working in the area acknowledge the existence of the community in the park. They also acknowledge their unofficial, traditional rights to reside in the area although they added that legally they do not have any rights. However, these are just oral statements. As a ministry official from the MET explains: "that is how they agreed with the government, with the ministry, even though there is nothing in writing".

Similarly, all the interviewees agree that although nowhere defined, the Topnaar people have a traditional ownership right of the !nara fields in their area and are the only ones that have the right to harvest the !nara although it is a protected species. As one ministry official puts it:

"The !nara plant, according to the Namibian forestry law is a protected plant […] that helps with the livelihood of the Topnaar, that is the stable living food […] and in fact the government is working hand in hand with the Topnaar to protect this that species".

Another ministry official had the following to say about the same issue:

"They harvest the !nara, so it is again, it is give or take gentleman's agreement [...] they live of it, that is one of their biggest food resources in the park."

He continues:

"These people they respect eh... the park, they respect the resources in the park, you will not find them going and destroying !nara bushes. Never. And that's nice, you know, working with people like that".

However, he added that there have been some disputes between Topnaar people and outsiders about the !nara fields:

> "There was an issue recently when people from Walvis Bay actually went and harvested some of the !naras, and there was a big problem, fight about it."

As with the issue of residency in the park the harvesting of the !nara is widely accepted by people working in the park. The attitude towards the !nara harvesting is generally positive and their use is seen as contributing to the preservation of the species rather than exploitive. This is in line with what has been said earlier about how conservation goals are more likely to succeed if the local population can go on with their day to day activities (see e.g. West & Brockington 2006). Judging by these comments the Topnaar people's utilization of the !nara plant does not seem to harm the plant in any way, rather it can be said that their usage contributes to the conservation of it.

When asked whether the Topnaar people had in some way a negative impact on the park a ministry official replied:

> "In fact the negative impact, the negative impact what is caused by the by the presence of the people within the park is not that heavy, I can talk of poaching, illegal poaching, we haven't arrested any Topnaar […] but we have arrested a lot of outside people on illegal hunting. There is not negative impact which is caused by them. The same applies even the use of fire, of the resources like the firewood […] they are collecting out only those dead plants, even though they need to be returned back."

However, one ministry official raised one concern:

> "[The donkeys in the park] all belong to the Topnaar, but they leave them to go out to wander all over the park […] because it is in the dry area they are using the leaves of the welvetschia for grazing, that's a big impact".

As can be seen, their impact in the park is not considered so severe. The attitude towards them was generally positive and according to them the community is using the resources in a sustainable way.

The community that benefits the most in Namibia?

When asked about whether they thought the livelihoods of the community were affected by the fact that they were living in the park, an NGO employee that used to work in close cooperation with the Topnaar Community said: "...my opinion, not based on facts, just what I've seen, they have had more per capita development money than any other community in

Namibia“. A ministry official interviewed was on the same opinion: “I personally think that the Topnaar community is one of the most benefited communities of all the communities in the country”. He said that the fact that “they live in the park, they harvest in the park, they’ve got livestock in the park, they get meat, trophy hunting and tourism concessions” made them “one of the leading communities when it comes to benefits out of parks” in Namibia. He continues: ”We’ve done more with the Topnaar community the last three years than has been done ever with them. By giving them the meat […] the guys are benefiting quite well”.

As can be seen the Topnaar community is generally seen as a community that benefits both according to ministry officials and NGO employees that have been working with them. In his answer the ministry official is referring to the previously mentioned trophy hunting and tourism concessions that the community has been granted as well as annual game meat quotas from culling the wildlife in the park. About the trophy hunting concession he continued:

> “they are given a quota for trophy hunting […] that will be sold for professional hunters and they will, they will sell them on trophy, all the money will go to the Topnaar. [The] trophy hunting concession that we put out in the Namib Naukluft Park will directly, is directly awarded by the ministry to the Topnaar community.”

These concessions are in line with the recommendations of the consultant quoted earlier in the chapter where he states that if restrictions are placed on economical livelihood activities of residents a step must be taken to ensure their access to income generating livelihood activities based on sustainable use of wildlife, for example through concessions.

The ministry official continued by saying that the benefits from culling wildlife in the park were quite big, both for the Topnaar community and for the management of the park. He explained the culling as an operative management tool where everyone benefits: “...they benefit, we benefit, the animals actually benefit out of it, so to me it is 100% [...] I use it as a management tool, get my sex ratio right in my heads, you know, too many males, I shoot males...“. According to him the wild meat is given directly to the chief who is present when this is conducted:

> “We just give them the meat and Chief Kooitije is actually in that time present and we actually hand it over to him and he distributes it amongst the community. So, the benefits are quite big, you know, big for them and are actually getting bigger with trophy hunting concession”.

Although it has been said that there have hardly been any poaching incidents in the past decades and the law is generally not implemented when it comes to the community's activities one ministry official said the following in regard to the meat provision:

> "I said to the chief, I said to him like that if there is one single Topnaar that poaches now in the park you are going to jeopardize this privilege you've got, and, and I know, looking into old records of many years ago that there used to be poaching incidents in the Topnaar community but up to, up to this date I have not heard of any form of any poaching from my staff from the Topnaar community, because they know they are benefitting of it."

Although no Topnaar has been arrested for poaching in the past years it can be debated whether it is because of the meat provision. Maybe the reason is that they are accustomed to different ways of life where hunting is not an option or that the park rangers have simply not been following the law in the incidents of poaching.

In terms of benefits one ministry official raised his concern regarding mining in the area, as uranium prospecting is taking place very close to the area where the Topnaar community is residing. According to him the mines did not take the existence of the community into account while prospecting. An NGO employee working in the area was of the same opinion: "Even if you say we have no right to be so selfish, we in a way feel we do own the place [but] what are we? They'll squeese us aside." He added that although the Topnaar people might look at mining in the area as an employment opportunity the mines hardly ever hire unskilled people. Furthermore, he raised his concerns about health related to radiation and dust, which are serious problems close to the mines.

Ministry relations and leadership

When asked about the relationship between the MET and the Topnaar community, a ministry official replied:

> "In fact the communication can be good and it can be bad [because at the] MET office we work through the traditional authority and they work through us, whatever message we want to give to the people we talk through the traditional authority, we have meetings together with them […] If I want to see the community, then I have to go through the traditional leader, and the traditional leader calls the community for me to talk to them in their presence.."

Another ministry employee replied: “we have got a very good relationship with them, most often Chief Kooitjie. We meet quite a lot, we talk a lot...“. An NGO employee replied to the same question that today the relationship was generally good and that it had changed a lot after independence:

> “Interactions were very different before independence basically we were in an apartheid situation and it was clearly *us* and *them*. And they didn’t know what their rights were and they just lived here and in fact, to some extent not that much has changed...”

When asked about the community’s relationship with the government, a representative from the traditional authority replied:

> “Yeah, on certain levels the relationship at this stage is very, very good, eh... the government now understands and the people in the high ranking officials also understand the true reflection of the Topnaar community to be in the park, therefore the relation started to change to positive site, but in the past it was not... but now we start to understand each other, I have to write to discuss all methods with the met officials even with the minister and the direct line with my minister I don’t even have to go to the... if I want to see my minister, I don’t even have to use channels, if it is important to see the minister, then I go see the minister, you see, that is the relationship.”

He also said:

> “When it comes to conservation our objective is to work closely with the MET, which is the government, so that the Topnaar community once again can bring back their culture and tradition into the conservation methods because most of the conservation methods are methods that are bound to the law of the country.”

Judging by these comment the relationship between the traditional authority and the ministry is generally good and has been improving over the past years. The aim of the traditional authority, or at least the chief, is to work closely with the ministry on conservation and to use the traditional conservation methods of the community in co-operation with the objectives of the ministry. As the channel of communication goes from all levels through the traditional authority it can be questioned whether the community itself is informed about what is happening between the traditional authority and the government. Due to this it can also be

questioned whether individuals in the community itself are benefitting from the above mentioned provisions given by the government.

When the ministry officials were asked about the situation within the Topnaar community itself one of them replied:

> "That one is a very difficult question […] I cannot tell you whether they are happy or not happy […] in fact what the ministry wanted from them was to draft a document which we call distribution of benefits, how are they going to distribute the benefits to the members, and then we informed them also that they were supposed to give us the list of all the members, all the Topnaars who live in the park, even though they know the number, but they have to write names and ID number and all sorts of things, and then we know, every year they have to be counted we need to know how much did they get a year, how much did they use on what, some of the things are still pending through the traditional authority."

Furthermore, he said that there were some clashes within the community as some people were benefitting more out of the resources they were granted than others.

> "It is not an easy issue, the government is resolving it, eh, there were some other misunderstandings, and, you know some of the people are really, very, very clever. They are getting chances from the people who are illiterate, getting some advantage".

Another ministry official said the following on the same issue:

> "There used to be some friction amongst the community, believe me I know, there are frictions there [...] that's their business but I know it, but I work with a recognized traditional authority, with Chief Kooitjie. With these people, I don't care who the other people are, they've got fights and problems, I communicate with the recognized chief by the government and that's it".

Not as good a situation as it seems?

Quite contrary to what the ministry officials and NGO employees had to say about the situation of the Topnaar community, a consultant, who has been working on rights of indigenous people within protected areas for years, regards the situation of the Topnaar community as quite serious. For example it is left to individual park managers to decide whether the law should be enforced or not, which can cause complications both for the Topnaar people and the park managers themselves. As he explains:

> "It is not a good situation for the people there and it makes it very difficult for the people and it makes it very difficult for the park managers, because if somebody of the Topnaar community drives to Walvis bay to visit family there and then returns after dark to their house in the park, that is illegal, driving in the park after dark, on the main road, and if you get a young enthusiastic warden who thinks it is his job to fine people after dark you get a lot of conflict obviously, then there's the peoples herds in the park with goats and so on, conservationists tend to see that as a bad thing."

This situation can lead to conflicts between the ministry and the community as the consultant points out:

> "There are conflicts in terms of land use and park objectives, we need to try to find ways to reconcile those. I mean, I... ok... quite a bit has changed over the past years and the ministry's approach has changed over the past years."

Due to this the MET has had conflicts with the Topnaar people and park rangers respectively. Botelle and Kowalski (1994: 75) mention that an agreement with a 4x4 tour operator in 1994 resulted in a fine for illegal off road driving. When the MET realized that the Topnaar were ready to test the case in court the MET withdrew the charges. Similarly, they say that game rangers expected to enforce park rules and regulations have encountered problems when their counterparts in Windhoek say that they do not apply to the Topnaar people.

As mentioned before there are changes being proposed on the existing legislation and a new management plan has already been drafted for the Namib Naukluft Park. The consultant has been working on the plan and made suggestions and recommendations in order to make the park residents gain rights within the park. He told me that the recommendations had already been handed to the ministry. He could not tell where in the process the plan was at the moment or whether the recommendations had gone through. Furthermore, the consultant had been working on the earlier mentioned draft policy about park residents, that was written in 2007 based on a research discussion paper from 1997. This policy has not been published yet. Although the consultant had been working a lot with the government on these issues he was not sure about "the extent to which the ministry really is willing to recognize people's right within parks". The consultant continued:

> "[The MET] can't ignore people living in protected areas, [they have to] enter into collaborative management agreement. […] The ministry should have a

> duty to enter into a collaborative management agreement […] where persons other than government employees legally reside in a protected area".

Furthermore he emphasized that an advisory committee for protected areas should be formed that included people living within the parks. According to him "any management plan would need to be developed with those people" which would "enable the minister to enter into written contractual agreement for cooperative management" and provide for the definition of their "rights, benefits, access, duties, obligations and conditions applicable". Moreover, he emphasized that the agreement had to ensure the rights of the resident people to "carry out normal daily livelihood activities". He continues:

> "Where restrictions are placed on economical livelihood activities of such persons as a result of implementation of conservation objectives in the protected area an equal step must be taken to ensure they have access to income generating livelihood activities. […] They must be given alternative income generating activities, strictly based on sustainable use of wildlife and so on. Any hunting or tourism concession in the protected area should be awarded preferentially to a legal body representing the people living in the area."

The recommendations of the consultant are in line with recommendations published by IUCN (2003) and WWF (Pimbert & Pretty 1995) in which management plans of protected areas should include the local communities. Also that participatory mechanisms should be established where respect for the local peoples' decision making is ensured and their local, sustainable management and conservation supported. As West, Igoe and Brockington (2006: 260) point out, cooperation strategies, where the government works with local communities on management plans for protected areas make success more likely and should be seen as the norm, not an exception. Top-down approaches by states often result in conflict between the government and the local people.

According to the chief of the Topnaar community the traditional authority was participating in the making of the new management plan:

> "We are in the management plan of the park, we are in the plan itself. The traditional authority appoints three people to represent them. [...] we have been involved as a community through our representatives from the start and from the beginning of the total plan until now. And even we are consulted by the government consultant people. You know the governments are working

> through consultants and those consultants must come to the traditional authority the traditional leaders, they have to consult, they have to gather information even before they can put anything on paper. So we are involved in that whole process.“

No ministry official interviewed could tell whether the recommendations made by the consultants materialized in the proposed new management plan for the park. Neither could they tell whether the draft policy on resident people would ever be published. When the interviews were conducted the recommendations had left the desk of the consultants and were in the hands of the MET. Although the ministry officials said that the presence of the Topnaar community would be mentioned in the plan they were reluctant to tell how and whether the plan would make them gain any rights within the parks. They were also reluctant to give any access to the draft plan without any clear reason. According to one ministry official: “it is a really, really thick document, a big, big one, so I doubt if they can release it to you“.

Summary

Judging by the interviews with officials from the MET and the NGO employees, their attitude towards the community is generally positive. The existence of the community in the park is acknowledged by all interviewees as well as their use of resources within the park. Moreover, their impact on the area is not considered severe, they are said to contribute to conservation, for example with their sustainable use of the !nara, rather than working against it. According to all the interviewees the community is benefitting well, some even said it is the community with the greatest benefits in Namibia. Also, all the interviewees said they had good relations with the community, at least with the chief, although they could not tell whether the communication between the chief and the rest of the community was good. The interviewees all raised their concern regarding the interaction within the community and said that there was some friction among the community members.

However, the consultant did not agree with most of the other people interviewed when it came to the legal situation of the community. He said that the situation of the community was quite severe, judging by the fact that they were not legal residents in the park. He said that there were conflicts between the management of the park and the Topnaar community. According to him a clear legal framework that acknowledges the community as residents is necessary in order to reduce conflicts within the park. Furthermore he recommended that the MET and the Topnaar community should enter into a joint management of the park.

Although a new management plan for the park was drafted in 2003 no ministry official could tell whether the official rights of the Topnaar community would change with the new plan or when, or even if, it would come into practice

The Topnaar people – traditional but illegal residents

As can be seen in the previous chapter the situation of the Topnaar community as park residents seems to be quite good judged by the ministry officials and NGO employees although the consultant was not on the same opinion. This raises questions about how the Topnaar people themselves regard their situation. Do they actually know that they are living within a proclaimed park? Do they know what rules and regulations apply to them? Are they informed about what is happening between the traditional authority and the ministry? Do they know what agreements have been made with the government and do they actually gain anything from them?

Topnaar as park residents

As mentioned earlier, national parks have been proclaimed all over the world throughout the last century without the awareness or consultation with local residents in the area (Njiforti & Tchamba 1993: 173). This was the case when the area of the Topnaar community was protected over 100 years ago. As Buddack (1977: 4) points out, the Topnaar people "have never been consulted in connection with the proclamation of that reserve". This raises the question whether the Topnaar people today do in general know that they are living within a proclaimed park.

When asked, as many as five people said they did not know that they were living within a national park and seemed surprised to hear about it. All of them were Topnaar by origin and all except one had been living in the area for many years. A person who had been living in the park for the main part of his life said:

> "What I know is that I'm living in area of the Topnaars, I don't know whether I'm living in a national park and I just want to know now, why it is a national park? I don't know it's a national park and I can't say nothing, only the government will tell us whether it is a national park or not."

Another person blamed the chief for not telling the community about the park:

> "If one is not informed by the chief about national park or about Namib Naukluft Park and whatever and how the park is operated and if he is only

> looking after his own personal problems and so on, how can I know and give you answers to that?“

The ones that said they knew about the park were generally positive when asked about their opinion on living within the boundaries of a national park. A person of the younger generations said: “I think the idea of living in a park is a really good idea.” Another person said: “No negative sides, I have not experienced something negative, it is good to be living in a park.“ Some people mentioned that as long as they could continue practicing their normal livelihood practices without the interference of the ‘conservation people’ they were content with living within a park. As an elderly man put it:

> “As long as we live in harmony with the animals and in contact with the conservation people, who is concerned about the environment also, as long as there is understanding and communication between us then I’m happy to live in a park. […] As long as I can go wherever I want to with my goats and they can go look for grazing it is no problem for me, it is not affecting me.”

One person talked about rights in this regard and that the Topnaar and the ministry must have equal rights within the park and that the people as well as the animals would need to be protected:

> “I’ve got no problem with to stay in the national park, if all the things is protected we include the people and include also... and also we must have that right and do the things we are in a park, the community and ministry, also the ministry we all must have, share equal, equal access to the park...“

It can be said that these answers reflects the view that local people need to be consulted regarding the management of the park and the latter answer indicates that the culture, *the people*, must be considered and protected in these areas just like the nature. Related to this two people mentioned that by living within a park they felt in a way like animals, as one of them phrased it: “I feel just like a part of the animals because we as human beings are also kind of animals as long as we live in harmony with the animals.” I find this answer quite interesting as it can be linked to the view that human beings should be seen as a part of nature, countering the nature vs. culture dichotomy. However, as it was a young person’s comment with a relatively high level of education it may be something she has learned or heard in relation to discussions about national park and conservation.

Most people said they did not feel in their daily life that they were living within a national park although one person said that she felt it because of people that come to visit the area. Two persons of the younger generation, with a relatively high level of education, mentioned in this context ownership of land the restriction that they were not allowed to do some things on their land as it was the property of the government. This shows that although they carry on with their normal day to day activities they seem to be aware of what activities are not tolerated by the park management. Both of them showed interest in raising a campsite on their ground.

> "...if I maybe start to, for example, start to setup a camp, then one or another ministry must come and say no, no, no, you must not do this and do that and do this, according to the article this and this and this […] no, I don't think own the park really."

> "…ok, my opinion, national park can be there, [...] but if they can give us the area, ok, Topnaar, from here to there, this is your area. You can take decisions. Maybe you want to build a camp, [...] like the campsite at Homeb is a campsite, Mirabib is there, Fogelfidel is there but everything belongs to the government, how, like us, the poor people, how can you make a living, if some tourist come and visit a campsite they must pay the government, if some people come to Fogelberg and Walvis bay they must pay the government."

It was quite interesting that there was only one person who had strong negative feelings towards living within the park: "We don't need a park here, we don't need a park here but how do you, where do you move from a place you are used to?"

Judging from the above answers it can be said that people are generally positive towards living within a national park and they do not feel in their everyday life that they are living within a park. However, although the Namib Naukluft Park was proclaimed more than 100 years ago there are people living in the park still today that are totally unaware of the fact that the area where they live is a proclaimed national park.

Related to the issue of national park people were asked about their view on conservation. Although some people were not aware of the fact that they live within a national park it can be said that the Topnaar people have a long tradition of conservation through their dependency on their natural environment, as the chief of the community put it:

> "Conservation in the national park is to conserve the nature as our ancestors, founders of this nature, have done it. They have done it in a more natural way

> [...] because they were dependent from the nature, so they have seen it as their own responsibility to take the conservation of the nature, that means, from the vegetation, trees, animals everything inside the area where they have got the traditional rights to live, they tried to conserve everything".

And he continues:

> "The Topnaar people, they have their way of conservation, of conserving the nature who was long before the same until now. Because when, when we talk about natural resource, natural resource is for people and it must be conserved for the people and the future life of the people so therefore it is very important that the government must see that way open trough its policies to bring in communities into the conservation areas. We also want to have the opportunity to come together with the ministry on old conservation methods so we can be involved as a community".

According to the chief the community has a long tradition of conservation through their daily livelihood practices. The !nara is probably the most important example of this today as they have been using the melon in what can be called a sustainable way for centuries. As mentioned in the previous section a ministry official pointed out that the Topnaar people were helping with conservation in the park through their sustainable use of the !nara melon. This is in line with what West, Igoe and Brockington (2006: 257-59) point out, that conservation programs are more likely to succeed when governments work with local communities on the management of protected areas and are allowed to continue with their livelihood practices in a sustainable way. Often people are removed from their area without proof that they are harming the park. As Milton (2006: 351) points out knowledge about indigenous ways of living can help in gaining more knowledge about sustainable ways of living.

Most of the people in the community said that conservation was important to them. Two views were the most common in this regard, the view that the nature had to be protected for future generations;

> "The wildlife and the nature as a whole we have to conserve it and the animals also so the generations who have to come after us have to see these things also."

> "I can't say it is good or bad but for the generations that come after me I think maybe it is better for them so I will say it is good so they can benefit by the

> fact that they are living in a park, and they are maybe given some opportunities to further their studies and so on.“

And the view that as their livelihood practices depend on nature it had to be protected:

> “Our livestock and ourselves and even the wild animals are dependent on the environment, for this reason I have to regard the environment as very important for me.“

> “We are the founders of the !nara, the nature conservation also found us here but now we understand their concern also about conservation which is good in the way that they have to look after the trees which also involves the !nara.”

Two persons said that nature had to be protected for the enjoyment of tourists. One of them said:

> “People from other countries also like nature, like tourists. There is also some of our own people who don’t know nature and they want to see it, from Okavango, Caprivi and they want also to see our nature so we have to look after our plants, our river, it has to be clean and our dunes also“.

Quite noticeably this comment indicates that there is no nature in other parts of the country. The other one mentioned that animals that were a tourist attraction should be protected while the ‘dangerous’ animals should not be protected:

> “I’m not talking about the hyena and jackals because they are eating our livestock, I’m talking about the springboks and the others“.

One person, who had a positive view towards conservation, talked about when he was young he noticed that some people were not cautious when hunting animals and addressed his concerns in this context:

> “So... ahm... the other thing, why I also have said that it is nice that to be living in a park and about nature conservation being good for me is that as I understand, understood in that time also, the old people was also kind of abusing or they was also killing out many numbers of animals. Sometimes if they encounter maybe an oryx and after they have slaughtered it and they have seen that this one is not fed or it is not good, or in good condition then they will just leave it there and they will proceed to the next, yeah“.

Although people were generally positive towards conservation, some people had negative experience from the 'nature conservation guys':

> "Mary: We already got the blame for animals that we don't kill, and even the nature conservation guys they just for nothing, preventing us and stopping us around / Me: stopping you from what, sorry? / Mary: like in the !nara field, there is also some parts where we don't have to go there because they say you mustn't go there because they are saving or protecting the animals and plants."

As can be seen, conservation is generally considered important to the people judging from the answers. However, it raises the concern whether everyone understood the terms national park and conservation. It is very likely that their understanding of the terms is different from the general Western understanding. My assumption was that younger people and people that understood English had better understanding of the terms and seemed to be more aware of things that were happening in the area for example regarding park issues. This is probably due to the fact that they have some education or training within the field of nature conservation and national parks that may have shaped their understanding an opinion on these issues. For example some people of the younger generation had training as tour guides, where they acquired some education about these issues. Furhtermore, these people had been in touch with people from Western countries that may also have affected their view.

Language barriers may also have biased the answers of some people, especially the ones that went through a third partner, my interpreter, as these terms may either not exist in Nama or may be used in a different way. A misunderstanding about these concepts can be seen in some of the answers. The following conversation is one example of this:

> "Me: do you feel in your everyday life that you're living within a proclaimed national park? / Lena: yes / Me: how? / Lena: I would say the weather, maybe the weather, yeah / Me: the weather? / Lena: yeah, maybe the weather makes me feel that I live in a national park"

In some cases people seemed not to bother to answer the questions properly, or they may not have understood them, as can be seen in the following conversation:

> "Me: are you aware of that you are living within a national park? / Sam: yes / Me: and do you feel that living within the park affects your life somehow? Sam: yes / Me: how? Sam: ooooooo... no it doesn't affect my life".

However, this answer may also indicate that he did not consider the question worth answering, since it did not affect him much.

Owners of the land and the !nara

> "They believe that they own the nature, because that is their life, that is their livelihood."

The above comment is from the chief of the community when asked about the community's sense of ownership of the land they live on. As previously mentioned, people were generally aware of the fact that they were living within a national park which, according to the law is owned by the state. However, the majority of the people interviewed claimed that the Topnaar people (or themselves) were the rightful owners of the land. Most people based this on the fact that traditionally the land was theirs and their ancestors had been living there:

> "According to our ancestors it is our land, it is the land of the Topnaar and from my view also I feel that this land is owned by the Topnaar"

In some cases there were more feelings involved, like in the case of a young man who had quite recently settled again in the area with his family:

> "Yeah, I feel it in my heart, I feel in the heart that the Topnaar is the owners."

A young lady living with her newly established family in the area also expressed her ownership of the land without any further explanations:

> "Me: Who do you feel owns the land where you're living? / Victoria: Owns? / Me: yeah, the ground, this land? / Victoria: Me."

Quite interestingly only two people said that the government was the owner of the land and they did not mention the ownership of the Topnaar, both of them were of the younger generation. One of them, who had a relatively high level of education, said:

> "I really heard, I really read, that the people in the Topnaar community lived in the area for a long, long, long time according to the research and according to the books that I read. So the people might have had the ownership but there are rules and regulations granted by the law and we have to follow these rules and regulations so I think there must be agreement between the government and between the people living in the area itself."

Two persons said that the land was traditionally the land of the Topnaar people but they knew that the government was the rightful owner of the ground and added that they knew they could not do whatever they wanted. One of them said:

> "I feel like that, I feel, I feel, I feel it is a possession for me. It is like an animal who is living in the park, because you've no rights."

One person said that the Ovambo[14] people were the owners of the ground. This is interesting as during the interviews I realized that many people disliked the increasing power of Ovambo people in the area (or even in the whole country). Some even said that the Ovambo people were taking over the !Nara fields with increased free access to the field.

Hinz (2004: 48) points out that althogh the Topnaar people claim ownership of the land some may express their claim reluctantly as they have been told for many years that the government is the rightful owner of the land. Similarly, in a report compiled by Werner (2003: 12) it says that "all households interviewed were of the opinion that historically the land and water of the Lower Kuiseb belonged to the Topnaar Community". My findings were similar to this although most people were quite confident when they expressed their ownership of the land, based on the fact that it was the land of their ancestors.

Similar to feelings of ownership in the land where they live, they had very strong feelings of ownership of the !nara fields. Almost everyone asked considered the Topnaar people the rightful owners of the !nara fields in the area, as one person phrased it: "As long as you are a Topnaar you are the rightful owner". Moreover, most people claimed that they were the only ones that had the right to use it. When asked why one of them replied: "Because it is the land of the Topnaar the rights are ours, we are the founders of the !nara."

As mentioned earlier, there was a harvesting system of the !nara fields in the past, when families had property rights on certain bushes. It can be debated whether 'property' is the right term here as their system was quite different from the Western understanding of property. Widlok (2004: 99) talks about the !nara regime in this context as it touches on different factors, such as ethnic identity, social relations and inheritance. The land of individual !nara bushes was not owned by certain families, rather it were the !nara plants and

[14] The Ovambo population is the most abundant ethnic group in Namibia and does not, traditionally, come from the area of the Topnaar or neighboring areas. Their political party, SWAPO (South West Africa People Organization) has been the most powerful political party since the independence of Namibia in 1990. The first president, Sam Nujoma, as well as his succeedor, Hifikepunye Pohamba, belong to the Ovambo ethnic group and the SWAPO political party. In some cases people may be referring to the government of Namibia when they talk about the Ovambo people.

their produce that certain families had their rights to harvest (Widlok: 2004: 99-101). However, things have changed and today the access on the field is open which means that the Topnaar people can go and harvest freely wherever in the field they want. Also, this new system makes it easier for people outside the Topnaar community to harvest the !nara, although they do not have the right to do it, judging from the ministry officials as well as the Topnaar community interviewed. Almost everyone agreed that the old system was better.

> "On this moment there is no management, because everyone goes where he wants […] the old ways, this is one families place, that one is one families place, that would be better."

> "The old way, it was the best way, because it is a lot of... we respect one another's property. Whenever somebody maybe pass in other ones field there was a certain way of doing it. Maybe if you are hungry or even if you know about it that this !nara is maybe sweet or whatever, you have to eat it in a nice way then you have to leave everything in order nicely, then they know, if they pass by and see someone was eating out here, I know this one is somebody who knows about our tradition. But like it is now I don't like it."

As mentioned above, with open access people other than the Topnaars come more frequently to harvest the !nara. This is a serious problem according to most people, especially because they do not have the knowledge and skills how to harvest the !nara:

> "[Other people] may come and harvest but they don't know how to, they don't have the knowledge how to harvest".

> "Like now, there comes, even some from Walvis Bay, they come in the !nara field and they do whatever they want to. They don't know how they are going to harvest it, but they can have an income from this !nara but they don't know how so it's kind of a waste."

> "Nowadays we see when we come, there are inexperienced people, not people from the community, outsiders, coming which don't know anything about the !nara. If you come to the !nara melon you have to know which !nara is ripe, to take of the !nara melon. But nowadays we find out that people are coming and they have no idea if the plant is ripe or not, if it is a male or female and they just come to destroy. And nowadays I can say, the number has decreased, the plant itself and it is not giving a lot of seeds at the moment."

One person explained that the old system was better because "if something belongs to yourself you respect it and you will look after it."

The reason why the old system did not continue was not clear and people had different explanations. One person said in this context: "The people have not understood each other so that is why they decided everyone must work like they want." Some people said that it was because some families were not using their field anymore, or went only occasionally to the field which resulted in that other people started using their field. Another person explained that the problem was that the new generation was not continuing with things that the old generation had started and said in this context: "The problem starts with us and not really the outsiders."

Some people said that with increased open access they felt that they were losing their traditional rights over the !nara fields. For some persons there were very strong feelings involved:

> "We don't have anything, we don't have any rights on these !nara fields, we don't have rights, we are rightless when it comes to the !nara fields, no, as with the Ovambo people coming and wasting and doing what they want. He is the one, the chief who bring them in here and give them the right to harvest the !nara […] we have to go and take them out, and Gobabeb have to help us to take these people out of the !nara field".

Here again the Ovambo people are mentioned as having a negative impact on the area and the chief is blamed for giving other people the rights to the !nara fields. This may indicate that the Ovambo people are seen as representing the government on whose side the chief is, according to this person.

My findings were similar to the findings of Botelle and Kowalski (1994: 39), that people are generally dissatisfied with open access. According to them the system of ownership started to decline in the 1970s. At the time of their research some people still had their own fields that they took care of. Today that system seems to have disappeared completely probably due to the fact that some families are not harvesting !nara anymore and some people are only going occasionally to the field and other people have started harvesting on their ground.

According to IUCN (1998) "[t]he ownership of land and sea within protected areas is the factor which causes most difficulty between indigenous peoples and conservation authorities". My findings show that this does not seem to be a problem in the case of the Topnaar

community. Although both the Topnaar community and the ministry claim it is their area the community is tolerated by the ministry, and the management of the park does not seem to affect the Topnaar community much in this regard. Furthermore, the Topnaar community's right over the !nara fields is acknowledged by the ministry, although nowhere stated in print. The management of the !nara fields have caused some complications in the recent decades. Rather than being a conflict between the ministry and the Topnaar community it is a conflict between the community and people outside the community that come and harvest the !nara "without permission".

Although historically there have been conflicts about ownership of land and resources this does not seem to be a big issue at the moment judging from my interviews. These conflicts and battles over the land may though have helped in shaping their strong feeling of ownership that was evident in my research both of their traditional land and the !nara fields. The !nara tradition itself has also played an important role in this context. As pointed out by Budack (1977: 4), one of the main reason why administrative parties in Namibia have been unable to consent to the removal of the Topnaar is "[t]he adaptation of their culture to the indigenous !nara fruit".

Rules and regulations of the park

People were generally aware of the fact that there were restrictions that they had to follow as residents in the area. The hunting restriction was the most commonly mentioned one in this regard. When the chief of the community was asked about the hunting restriction he replied:

> "People are not just going to hunt because of hunting. They are going out to the field to hunt because they have got family to feed at home, they've got children they've got wife. So they say, I'll take one oryx bring home, you know. But if you look to the policies then you are poaching. That's poaching. You have to go back to the government and say man I am hungry at home. Please I'm hungry give me something to eat. But now we have changed our minds. We go to the government and we tell the government, listen, you don't need to give me food, you need to give me right. I will go and do it myself you don't need to go and shoot and give me meat but I want to do it myself just give me the right and tell me I must do this and do this and tell me the regulations and I will follow the regulation as long as I can feed my people."

Other people mentioned the hunting restriction as well:

> "Staying in the park affects of course […] we cannot move or hunt as we were doing in the old days."

> "We mustn't kill the animals, yeah, only the MET has that right to kill for us and give us in the form of meat."

As the park was originally proclaimed to protect the wild mammals in the park the hunting restriction has been the most apparent restriction since its establishment which can explain why most people mentioned this restriction in this context. However, in most cases people said that they would like to be able to kill the predators, such as jackals and hyena, which were killing their livestock rather than hunting for their own consumption. As one person pointed out:

> "The problem now is the jackal and the hyena, it was given permission to catch these things or hunt them down because they were killing our livestock, and this is what we have been practicing in those days but nowadays there is nothing like that, even though when the jackal is maybe killing the cattle we don't get something back from the government."

This is inconsistent with what a ministry official said about the same thing. According to him, if the community is seriously affected by a predator in the area:

> "then I will directly declare that animal as a problem animal and I will destroy it or remove it, it depends on the issue, if it is a hyena that bites goats that kills goats you'll probably, you'll report it to the director and he'll take a decision on it and normally we'll destroy it then."

Whether people generally do not know about the rights the ministry official mentions can be questioned as well as whether the rights are implemented in practice. The dissatisfaction with the hunting restriction was especially prominent among older people, both regarding killing of predators and hunting for consumption, as some of them had in former times, before independence, gone on hunting trips. Although it was forbidden already then, people sometimes admitted, quite frankly, that they had broken the law, either in former times or still today:

> "Me: ...and have you killed an animal in the park? / Cliff: yeah, before independence / Me: and was anybody arrested for that, that you know? / Cliff: yeah, I know about three men who have been arrested from my house, one was the son I think and the other one was my uncle / Me: and what was the

sentence they got? / Cliff: three years / Me: and eh... what about recently, do you know if people are hunting in the park now? / Cliff: no“

Apart from the hunting restriction people mentioned that they were only allowed to collect branches and seedpods that had already fallen from trees; that their livestock was restricted to a certain area within the park; and that off-road driving was forbidden:

“You mustn’t do also off road driving in the park [...] plants also and trees you mustn’t take or destroy also trees“

“I know for sure I don’t have to destroy them [the trees] and I have to use the dry ones.”

However, these did not seem to affect them much. No-one mentioned day to day activities in this context such as !nara harvesting, animal husbandry, gardening or the sheer action of residing in the park as an illegal activity, although, strictly speaking, all these are illegal within the park. Generally, people said that their life was not seriously affected by the rules and regulations they mentioned. However, a couple of people regarded these problems as the main problems of living within the park. As one person pointed out:

“...it affects me in the way like if there is no fodder for the goats, like pods, I cannot go to the river and maybe take a branch for my goats because it is also against the law according to the conservation and also the same with the firewood I’m collecting, I have to know which wood I’m collecting for my fire, and even in going out into the wild or the place which we regard as wild, I can’t go there because it will be regarded as poaching.”

As can be seen by the examples above, very few people considered the park rules and regulations as problems. When asked about problems most people mentioned problems of more general nature that could not be linked directly to the fact that they were living within the borders of a proclaimed park. One of the most serious problems mentioned was water availability. Some settlements had been out of water for years as their water pumps or pipes had broken down and they were not able to repair them. As the next water post was some kilometers away they had to either carry the water themselves or use donkeys or a donkey cart to get water. This problem was though not evident in other settlements and drought was hardly mentioned as a threat to the community, quite contrary to what could be assumed by a community living in a desert. However, rain was sometimes mentioned in this context as well as the flooding of the river during the rainy season:

> "I think the only problem we have here is when the river is flowing in the area so all the plants and all the pods which the goats and the livestock is depending on is really in the riverbed and not in the riverbank so when the river flows the river flush and wash everything downstream, and then we lost everything, so I think, one thing I can mention is when there is rain."

For example the damage to the water pipes is often caused by flooding of the river which causes water shortage for some settlements, as one person pointed out: "The only time when we have drought is when the river comes [laughs]. So when we have water we have droughts". In this context most people blamed the traditional authority for not providing them water or repairing the pumps. However, as previously mentioned, the water committees established when the pumps were constructed are responsible for this.

Another commonly mentioned problem was shortage of paid work especially among people of the younger generation. Older people commonly mentioned that things were better in the past, when they were younger. Some people of the younger generation also expressed that they would like to live like the older generation used to live. As one person expressed it:

> "Everything must be changed so we can live the life like it was."

Among other problems mentioned were the declining harvest of the !nara. Some people mentioned the increased groundwater subtraction for industrial purposes in Walvis Bay as the cause of this problem, which made it more difficult for the roots to reach the water level. People also mentioned that the flooding of the river had destroyed some of the fields. Lack of markets to sell the !nara and lack of transport for the harvest were also mentioned in this context. Other commonly mentioned problems were lack of fodder for livestock; pests that were affecting their harvest in their gardens and transport problems within as well as outside the community. The most commonly mentioned problem though was the traditional leadership. This will be given a more thorough consideration in the next chapter.

As already mentioned there is nothing in legislation that protects parks from mining and other infrastructure activities. When asked about mining two views were the most common. Some people were positive towards it as they linked it with development and employment opportunities:

> "I think it is good, I say it is good because it brings employment."

> "It is good to have mines in the area and it is good that the community people are having jobs."

"I want to work in mines."

More commonly strong negative feelings were connected to the mines, health issues and environmental issues were mentioned in this context:

> "If an uranium mine is opened in the area it will harm the whole community and the livestock also and the area is open and there is nothing there that can cover the community, so uranium is bad."

> "If they do the uranium mine all of us will die out because uranium is very dangerous, you can even deliver babies that are ill."

> "Mines are bad, because those resources go up in the air and when we breathe in and we don't know for how long... maybe some of us have already cancer because we don't usually get good treatment."

> "Mines, that is destroying the world, mines are destroying, it is income but, you see, when the mining is over they just leave everything like that […] mines are destroying, like up here at Homeb, they are doing explorations there, that people, they are wasting oils, everything on the ground and when that exploration is finished they just go, they don't care about the desert, what happens to the beautiful desert they don't care, they go."

Sometimes there were mixed feelings involved:

> "It is maybe good in sense of employment but this is also, the employment is for their advantage, they just use you and then you are thrown away and maybe you are even getting sick, as long as they achieve what they were looking for."

As can be seen the problems the community is facing cannot be linked directly to the fact that they are living within a proclaimed park. The rules and regulations of the park do not seem to be considered much of a problem to the community although the majority of the people knew that there were some restrictions. However, their knowledge was in most cases limited to restrictions such as the hunting restriction. Restrictions that directly had to do with their livelihood, such as animal husbandry or !nara harvesting were never mentioned as restrictions. The reason is probably that this law is never enforced in the community and thus not a problem. Problems of more general nature were much commonly mentioned that can not be linked to the fact that they are living within a park.

Botelle and Kowalski (1995: 75) claim that many Topnaar are unaware of what rules and regulations apply to them as park residents. This, in a way, contradicts my findings as almost everyone asked knew that there were rules and regulations following residency in the park although the sheer fact of residing in the fact was never mentioned. Botelle and Kowalski (1995: 75) claim that the reason why people do not know about the rules and regulations is due to the fact that after independence the enforcement of these has been inconsistent, which is different from the situation as it was before independence when most rules were rigorously enforced. As pointed out earlier, today, it is in the hands of individual park managers to decide whether to enforce the rules of the park or not. According to ministry officials the rules are in most cases not enforced when it comes to the Topnaar community. Moreover, my research showed that the Topnaar community does not consider it much of a crime to do the things they mentioned that are against the rules and regulations. The different findings between these two researches can possibly be explained by the fact that almost two decades passed between these two research projects.

Leadership and ministry relations

As already mentioned, the most commonly mentioned problem was the traditional authority. Generally people were not satisfied with the work of the traditional authority and felt that the authority was not doing enough for the community. There were very strong feelings involved regarding this issue and people seemed to have the same concerns, regardless of age and status.

> "I have to say they have to go and learn leadership, better leadership, how to treat old people, how to do their job properly."
>
> "They have to learn [sic] the new children which are growing up now, and to give up because they are getting old, we are now the leaders for tomorrow."
>
> "In the past we were having meetings, regular meetings but like in now for the past years there haven't been no meetings so I don't know if there is a relation, a real relationship between the community and the authority."
>
> "I would like to go out in the community and have maybe... like collecting problems from the community, and maybe inform us so we can know what has happened and give us feedback so we can know what is happening and what is going on."

> "Even though I say I'm proud to be a Topnaar the livelihood is not that good […] because my chief has distance from me, he is the one who is going to open doors for us, if he is staying far from us, how can he?"

> "There is no communication and cooperation between the community members and traditional authority so I want communication and cooperation between the community members and the leadership"

Most of the people interviewed agreed that more communication was needed between the traditional authority and the community. In most cases they did not know what was going on within the authority or whether the authority was doing anything at all for the community. When asked what they would like to change people mentioned things like more community meetings.

When the chief of the community was asked about whether there were regular community meetings he could not give any clear answers. He said that it was difficult to have community meetings as the community was so spread. Furthermore he said that in order to reach more people they had divided the community into three zones and had the same community meeting three times, once for each zone. However, according to him, usually only a few people show up on the meetings:

> "Because when you talk about community, community means all people. I cannot have a community meeting with 20 people. And I am going to tell you I did have a community meeting in the size of 20. It is not a community meeting. The whole vast community is out there. They never have any information what is going on here. Maybe some of them are not even interested."

This contradicts what my interviewees said. Almost all of them seemed interested in knowing what was going on within the community and expressed their will to participate in decision making within the community. They said that the Topnaar people themselves should be asked about what development opportunities they would like to see in the area. Some people said that the promises they gave the community regarding development in the area did not materialize: "Sometimes promises rise that don't happen at all."

When asked about what were the most important issues that needed to be faced by the traditional authority most people mentioned the well-being of the people in the area, especially the elderly people and the children. Some people expressed the need of permanent housing for the elderly people in the area. Education for children and kindergartens was also commonly mentioned as well as water for their livestock and gardens.

Despite the generally negative attitude towards the traditional authority there were also some positive views. This was especially obvious among people that were either related to members of the traditional authority or were in a higher position within or outside the community. As one person put it:

> "…some community members support those leaders because they are relatives or they are family related so they want them to be in power, you know, and these are some of the conflicts we are having in the community, some will agree and some will not agree. That's about it."

When asked about the government of Namibia most people interviewed said they did not follow what was going on between the Topnaar community and the government. Usually they added that they could not follow what the government was doing as there were no meetings with the traditional authority. The interviewees who said they followed what was going on seemed in most cases satisfied. Some of them said that although the government was doing enough for the community the main problem was the traditional authority.

> "According to my understanding the government is doing enough for us but in some of the things or development that is going to take place it is our own leaders that is kind of handling this process of development which is coming from the government side."

> "Maybe the community leaders give the government pressure, I don't know. [...] They must go to the government and say these things are ok these things are not ok."

The people interviewed outside the community, from the ministry, NGOs and consultants expressed their concerns regarding the leadership in the community. As one person put it "the chief farms with the Topnaars", and then continued "he goes around saying 'look at us poor people' and then he gets the money and drives his Mercedes up and down". According to this person the chief takes advantage of the vulnerability of the community. However, it has to be added here that my research did not go deeply into issues concerning the leadership and communication between the respective parters.

This is similar to the findings of Botelle and Kowalski (1995: 80) that showed negative feelings towards the traditional authority. Most community members in their survey felt that the leaders did not serve the community well and felt that their leaders represented "themselves and their families" instead of community as a whole. Similar to my findings, the

people in their survey addressed lack of feedback from the leaders and lack of communication both between the traditional authority and the community and among the members of the traditional authority itself. This is also similar to the findings of Werner (2003: 28). According to him there is mistrust between the community members and their leadership "fuelled by a lack of transparency". Furthermore, according to his findings, the perception is widespread in the community that "their traditional leadership is divided on some important issues" and that this is hampering socio-economic development. Thus it can be assumed that not much has changed in the years that have passed since these surveys were conducted.

Benefits of residing in the park

When asked about the agreements between the Topnaar community and the government people generally knew about the agreements. As already mentioned the agreements are a share of wildlife from culling animals in the park, either for consumption or for selling and the tourism and wildlife concessions that they are granted from the MET through which the community gets money that is meant to be used for developmental purposes.

- Right of wild meat from culling wildlife

The chief had the following to say about the right:

> "We applied to the government for meat supply as a benefit because the people are living in the park, they don't have hunting rights, they don't have hunting rights, there are animals in the park there are no other ways the people can consume meat, it will be illegal so we applied to the government. [...] Every season we have got 55 animals. That is for the consumption, meat consumption of the community."

About the dispersal of the meat the chief said:

> "I have 55 [wild animals for] meat consumption, I will divide the 55. Maybe I will take 5 for old people, 5 for historical events, maybe the 40 or how much is leftover out of that 20 I will sell and put in a trust for the people and the other 20 left I will divide into the community. That is the responsibility of the recognized traditional authority."

When asked what the money they got for selling the meat was used for he said:

> "Maybe we will send our kids to the school, we can even take that money and look after our old people in the park, we can even look with that money into

> our water problems in our community. You see there are many developmental issues into it."

About half of the people interviewed were satisfied with their right of getting a share from wildlife culling in the park. A person of the older generation said: "the current system is the right one with the government hunting for us, that's a good system". Some people said that the system was good for conservation reasons:

> "Yeah, I think it is good in the sense that we are conserving our nature and even our life and by doing this the government is also hunting for us and giving us some meat."

> "If you kill then you are, you are over... overdoing, you don't obey the rules of the government, so they are already giving us the wildlife meat."

A man of the younger generation said:

> "When the elders in the past, like my father, he hunts wherever he likes to hunt and I was satisfied when he was bringing meat. But nowadays we are supplied with meat and there is no big difference. In the past it was my father hunting around but, ok, he was not destroying anyway, or my grandfather or someone my neighbors and so on."

However, this answer contradicts the fact that the law was more rigorously enforced before independence than now. According to this answer people did hunt even though it was illegal. This was not the only answer where this was evident. A few of the people said they were not satisfied because they wanted to have it like it was in the past, when the people could go hunting themselves. This was especially prominent among the older generation. Some of them remembered when the men in the community went on hunting trips, and some people had even gone on these trips when they were young. Although some of them showed interest in still being able to do so most people were satisfied with the current system.

The most common concern about the meat donated was about the sharing of the meat. Almost everyone who was not satisfied with the current system mentioned that the meat was spread unevenly in the community as the main reason and that either the people who spread the meat, or the chief, were taking the best parts for themselves and giving smaller or worse parts to the other members of the community. As one person phrased it: "It is not fair, I think the traditional authority thinks it is fair [...] but really, for the people, it is not fair."

One person raised a concern about the money the community got out of selling the skin:

> "The chief […] even sells the, some of the meat and skins also and gets the money, even though I don't know if it is going the right place the money."

One person said that only the older ones were getting meat and if one does not know an older person the family does not get any meat:

> "Albert: it is only the older ones that can get that meat / Me: is it? Why? / Albert: I don't know / Me: do you know? [turning towards my interpreter] Interpreter: actually, it goes like that in every house there is an old people, so they say if it is given to the old people then all the households benefit / Albert: no, if the older ones are staying there and I have my house on this side how must i benefit? / Me: but do you not have any old relative? / Albert: yeah, I have / Me: and you don't get any meat from there? / Albert: yeah, if I come there / Interpreter: what he is trying to say is that he got independent and he moved from the house... / Albert: that's what I... I cannot look for my old ones".

One person explained that instead of killing wildlife for consumption and concessions they should kill the predators for the community. This is similar to the answers about the hunting restrictions:

> "…for me it makes no sense, […] we have a problem of jackal here, they can come and kill the jackal for me it is ok, because you see we have livestock here the jackal is killing livestock […] I've livestock, I'm living from my livestock."

- Concessions

When asked about the tourism concession that the community had been granted the chief had the following to say:

> "Eight years ago, we applied for a 4x4 tourism concession in the Namib Naukluft Park and we have been granted that right eight years ago. And that was based on our historical rights. So we own a 4x4 concession right at this moment for already eight years which is now operating through an operator

which is URI adventures. The people are already benefitting from this concession already."

About the hunting concession the chief said the following:

> "We have already been, not officially but there is a paper, white paper that has been sent to the traditional authority for the right of developing a hunting concession in the Namib Naukluft Park. But that one is a very unique and a specific one because this is the first time in the history of Namibia that traditional people can be given a trophy hunting license in the park. The Topnaar community is in this case the first community being granted a trophy hunting concession. […] This one has not started already. This is the new one that we have received this year. The traditional authority is still in negotioations with the proffessional hunter. You must have a professional hunter."

When asked about how the money from the concessions was used for the community the chief replied:

> "There is a concession trust. That money is paid into the concession trust. That money is usually used for general development of the community. At this stage as you see there is no job opportunities, there is no income to the community members, so we even pay water to NamWater for people that lost the pipeline from that trust. We give for every Topnaar member that passes away who is residing inside the park, who has got the right in this area we give for every funeral 2000 N$ for every funeral."

When the people in the community were asked about the tourism and trophy hunting concessions most people seemed to know about it, although the trophy hunting concessions had not started yet.

According to the chief the money gained from the concessions was meant to go to the trust fund of the Topnaar community so the whole community would benefit, as he put it: "We can put that money in the trust and we can develop whatever we want." However, most people raised concerns about whether the money was going to the right place.

Most people linked the concessions with the traditional authority and seemed not to know much about it as they were not participating in it themselves.

> "Yeah, they are making money, like in this 4x4 adventures, they are going around with people like in motor bikes that come here and chase around our goats which we cannot even stop and say you are not doing the right thing and then they have… we have to be informed by them that chief has been granted the permission so…"

In this context many people started talking about general tourism activities in the area. Most people were not satisfied with the fact that they could not do tourism activities themselves in the area.

> "Maria: Like in Lauberville camp where the camp is today that is also where my ancestors were and they are making money out of, even though they say it is a national park they are making money out of the park. / Me: who is making money out of the park? / Maria: chief, chief / Me: How are they making money out of the park? / Maria: if somebody comes, like you maybe as a friend, come here and ask me can I have a place here to camp for the night, then I can even say, give you the permission and say yes, no I have to first go to the chief, the chief must give you the permission so he can get that money".

> "Like us, the poor people how can you make a living? If some tourist come and visit a campsite they must pay the government."

Thus it seems like most people were satisfied with the meat they got from culling as this was something they benefitted from directly. With the hunting and tourism concessions they were not benefitting directly as all the money went to the traditional authority.

Summary

Although most people knew they were living within a proclaimed national park and were generaly positive towards conservation, they still claimed ownership of the land they lived on as well as the !nara fields. However, people knew that there were restrictions due to living within the park boundaries. The hunting restriction was most commonly mentioned in this regard. Quite interestingly restrictions regarding the residency of the community and livelihood practices within the park were never mentioned although they are, strictly speaking, illegal in the park. Generally people did not feel that the restrictions were affecting them much, rather they spoke of problems of a more general nature such as water availability and lack of paid work. However, the most commonly mentioned problem was the traditional leadership that almost everyone mentioned as the main problem in the community. The

leaders were blamed for not serving the community well enough for example in terms of development opportunities. Furthermore they were blamed for not informing the community about things that were happening between the traditional authority and the government. In this regard the tourism and wildlife concessions that the community has been granted can be mentioned. Although most people knew about the agreements they complained that they did not know where the money was going that the community got through them. However, it has to be added that the research did not go into details about the communication between the traditional authority and the government and the community respectively.

Thus, judging from the answers of the Topnaar community, it can be said that the fact that they live within a proclaimed national park is generally not affecting them much in their day to day living.

5. Conclusion

When looking at the law, rules and regulations about the Namib Naukluft Park it can be said that the current park law reflects the highly Western view of separation between nature and culture. According to the law nature is put aside, away from human beings who are only allowed to enter temporarily with special permission. Pálsson's (1996: 69-72) paradigm of paternalism can be applied to the legal management of the park according to which the park should be protected from all human actions that are seen as unnatural and as such destructive to nature. In this regard it can also be said that the park is an example of a 'paper park' as the law, rules and regulations only appear on paper but are rarely enforced in reality (West & Brockington 2006: 609). Carrier's (1998: 2) term 'virtualism' can also be used in this context. The law of the park defines what actions should be practiced in the area without really looking at the fact that there are people living there and practicing their daily activities. In this way the park is 'designed' to fit a Western idea of what nature should look like even though the reality is different (West & Brockington 2006: 609).

By only looking at the legal framework one can assume that there are many inconveniences following residing within the park boundaries. However, my research showed that since the independence of Namibia in 1990 the park management has rarely been enforcing the laws of the park. This was evident both from the Topnaar community and other people interviewed. The Topnaar people generally knew that there were restrictions following living in the park although they never mentioned the residency in the park as a pert of this. Moreover, according to all ministry officials interviewed, as well as other key informants outside the Topnaar community, their existence within the park is widely accepted and the community gets to do all their current activities within the park. Since independence the MET has been working on making the community gain rights, for example by providing them with their share of natural resources of the park through concessions. Furthermore, according to the people interviewed outside the Topnaar community they are said to be contributing to the sustainable use of resources, such as the !nara plant, rather than working against it.

This fact, that the community's existence is being facilitated by the government of Namibia is in line with what Hinz (2004: 2) points out, "[the Topnaar people] are examples of life in illegality [and] the Government of Namibia is even an active co-player in illegality through its involvement in projects that contradict the philosophy of parks".

The answers of the Topnaar people themselves also indicate that the fact that they are living within a national park does not affect them much in their daily life. They were generally positive towards the national park and conservation, however, they showed a strong sense of ownership over the land they lived on as well as the !nara plant. Although the land is officially state owned all the key informants outside the Topnaar community acknowledged their traditional right to harvest the !nara, although this is nowhere stated in writing.

Factors affecting them in their daily life could not be linked to the fact that they are living within the borders of a national park. These were of a more general nature such as lack of water and shortage of paid work. Moreover, the traditional authority was commonly mentioned by the Topnaar community as a factor affecting them along with communication problems between the community and the traditional leaders. However, the study did not look very closely into communication issues between the traditional authority and the government on one hand and the traditional authority and the Topnaar community on the other. A further study on these issues is needed that looks more closely into communication and management practices between these three partners respectively.

Although the ministry officials and the NGO employees do not consider their issue severe the consultant interviewed considers the fact that no legal framework or policy exists for park residents in the country very serious. Although a new management plan has been drafted that, according to ministry officials, does include the Topnaar community, no one could tell when, or even if, this would ever come into practice. Also, a draft policy for park residents was made which had not been published at the time of this research. Although consultants had made several recommendations for the government regarding the official rights of park residents in the country, nothing had been implemented at the time the research was conducted.

As previously mentioned the current management, as well as the legal framework of the park, contradicts international recommendations and resolutions made about people living within parks. For example the following resolution adopted at the 4th World Conservation Congress in Barcelona 2008 that calls on governments to:

> "reform national legislation policies and practices so that they contribute to the realization of the relevant parts of the Durban Accord, CBD Programme of

> Work on Protected areas, as well as the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples".[15]

As long as there is no legal framework for the residency of the Topnaar people inside the national park, conflicts about their rights to the land, that have been a part of their reality since time immemorial, are bound to continue. In this context increased mine prospecting in their area can be mentioned as a serious threat to their position as park residents as according to the current legislation there is nothing that protects parks form mining and other infrastructure activities.

The Topnaar community has survived in their traditional land in the desert through the ages, despite harsh living conditions, political dynamics and a long history of battle over land and power. Hopefully the traditional homeland of the Topnaar community, that up to date are the only traditional residents of the Namib Naukluft Park, will also become their legal homeland in the near future.

[15] See page 28.

References

Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G. & Tiffin, H. (1998). *Key concepts in post-colonial studies.* London & New York: Routledge.

Barnard, A. (1992). *Hunters and herders of Southern Africa.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bookchin, M. (1993). What is social ecology? In M.E. Zimmerman, J.B. Callicott, J. Clark, K.J. Warren & I.J. Klaver (Eds.), *Environmental philosophy: From animal rights to radical ecology*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Boonzaier, E., Malherbe, C., Berens, P. & Smith, A. (2000). *The cape herders: A history of the Khoikhoi of Southern Africa.* Ohio: Ohio University Press.

Borrini-Feyerabend, G. (1996). *Collaborative management to protected areas: Tailoring the approach to the concept.* Gland: IUCN.

Botelle, A. & Kowalski, K. (1995). *Changing resource use in Namibia's lower Kuiseb River valley: Perceptions from the Topnaar community.* (Unpublished)

Botes, A., Henderson, J., Nakale, T., Nantanga, K., Schachtschneider K. & Seely, M. (2003). *Ephemeral rivers and their development: Testing an approach to basin management committees on the Kuiseb River, Namibia.* Windhoek: DRFN.

Bourgois, P. (2007). Confronting the ethics of ethnography: Lessons from fieldwork in Central America. In A.C.G.M. Robben & J.A. Sluka, *Ethnographic fieldwork: Anthropological reader.* Malden, Oxford & Victoria: Blackwell publishing.

Brechin, S.R., Wilshusen, P.R., Fortwangler, C.L. & West, P.C. (2002). Beyond the square wheel: Toward a more comprehensive understanding of biodiversity conservation as social and political process. *Society and natural resources 15*, 41-64.

Budack, K. (1977). *The ǂAonin Topnaar of the lower Kuiseb valley and the sea.* Johannesburg: African Studies Institute.

Carrier, J.G. & Miller, D. (1998). *Virtualism: A new political anthropology*. New York: Berg.

Chape, S., Blythe, S., Fish, L., Fox, P., & Spalding, M. (compilers). (2003). *United Nations list of protected areas.* Gland & Cambridge: IUCN & UNEP.

Clifford, J. 1988. *The predicament of culture: Twentieth-century ethnography, literature and art.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University press.

Crang, M. & Cook, I. (2007). *Doing Ethnographies*. London: Sage Publications.

Dentlinger, U. (1983). *Social and spatial mobility along the Kuiseb river in the Namib Desert, Namibia.* University of Cape Town, Department of Social Anthropology. (Unpublished B.A. Hons. Dissertaion)

Descola, P. & Pálsson, G. (1996). Introduction. In P. Descola & G. Pálsson (Eds.), *Nature and society: Anthropological perspectives.* London: Routledge.

Devereux, S. & Hoddinott, J. (Eds.), (1992). *Fieldwork in developing countries.* New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Diamond, J. (2005). *Guns, germs and steel: a short history of everybody for the last 13,000 years.* London: Vintage.

Dudley, N. (2008). *Guidelines for applying protected area management categories.* Gland & Cambridge: IUCN.

Eriksen, T.H. & Nielsen F.S. (2001). *A history of anthropology.* London & Ann Arbor: Pluto Press.

Escobar, A. (1995). *Encountering development: The making and unmaking of the Third World.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

GRTC. (2013). *About us.* Retrieved April 4, 2013, from www.gobabebtrc.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=91&Itemid=96

Government Gazette. (1976). Official Gazette of South West Africa 5667. Windhoek.

Gupta, A. (2006). Peasants and global environmentalism. In N. Haenn & R.R. Wilk (Eds.), *The environment in anthropology – A reader in ecology, culture, and sustainable living.* New York & Lonon: New York University Press.

Gupta, A. & Ferguson, J. (1997). Discipline and practice: 'the field' as site, method, and location in anthropology. In A. Gupta & J. Ferguson (Eds.), *Anthropological locations boundaries and grounds of a field science.* Berkeley: University of California Press,.

Gurevich, A. (1992). *Historical anthropology of the middle ages.* Chicago: University of Chicago press.

Hardin, G. (1968). The tragedy of the commons. *Science 162*(3859), 1243-1248.

Hammersley, M. & Atkinson P. (2009). *Ethnography: Principles and practice.* London & New York: Routledge.

Henschel J. (2006). Sustaining life and livelihood along an ephemeral river – The example of the Kuiseb River/Namibia. *Geographische Rundschau International 2*(3), 28-33.

Henschel J., Dausab, R., Moser, P. & Pallet, J. (2004). *!Nara: Fruit for development of the !Khuiseb Topnaar.* Windhoek: Namibia Scientific Society.

Henschel, J. & Moser, P. (2004). !Nara ecology – an introduction. In J. Henschel et al. (Eds.), *!Nara: Fruit for development of the !Khuiseb Topnaar.* Windhoek: Namibia Scientific Society.

Henschel, J. & Wenning, M. (2008). *History of the Namib Naukluft Park.* (Unpublished manuscript)

Huntley, B.J. (1985). The Kuiseb environment. In B.J. Huntley (Ed.), *The Kuiseb environment: The development of a monitoring baseline.* Pretoria: Council for Scientific and Industrial Research.

Hill, K.A. (2006). Conflict over development and environmental values. In N. Haenn & R.R. Wilk (Eds.), *The environment in anthropology – A reader in ecology, culture and, sustainable living.* New York & London: New York University Press.

Hinz, M.O. (2004). *Without chiefs there would be no game – Customary law and nature conservation.* Windhoek: Out of Africa publishers.

Hoernlé, A.W. (1925). The social organisation of the Nama Hottentots of Southwest Africa. *American Anthropologist, 27*(1), 12.

Howell, S. 1996. Nature in culture or culture in nature – Chewong ideas of humans and other species. In G. Pálsson & P. Descola (Eds.), *Nature and society – anthropological perspectives.* London & New York: Routledge.

Igoe, J. (2004). *Conservation and globalization: A study of national parks and indigenous communities from East Africa to South Dakota.* Toronto: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

International Labour Organization. (2013). *Convention no. 169.* Retrieved April 5, 2013, from http://www.ilo.org/indigenous/Conventions/no169/lang--en/index.htm

Ingold, T. (1996). The optimal forager and economic man. In G. Pálsson & P. Descola (Eds.), *Nature and society – anthropological perspectives.* London & New York: Routledge.

Ingold, T. (2000). *The perception of the environment – Essays in livelihood, dwelling and skill.* London & New York: Routledge.

Ingold, T. (2005). Epilogue: Towards a politics of dwelling. *Conservation and Society 3*(2), 501-508.

IUCN. (1998). *Indigenous and traditional people in protected areas – Principles, guidelines and case studies.* Gland & Cambridge: IUCN.

IUCN. (2003). *WPC Recommendation 24: Indigenous people and protected areas.* Gland & Cambridge: IUCN.

IUCN. (2009). *Resolutions and recommendations – World conservation congress Barcelona, 5 – 14 October 2008.* Gland & Cambridge: IUCN.

IUCN. (2012a). *Protected areas categories system.* Retrieved April 19, 2013, from http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/gpap_home/gpap_quality/gpap_pacategories/

IUCN. (2012b). *Indigenous and traditional peoples.* Retrieved April 5, 2013, from http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/social_policy/sp_themes_ip/

IUCN. (2013a). *About protected areas.* Retrieved April 19, 2013, from http://www.unep-wcmc.org/about-protected-areas_163.html

IUCN. (2013b). *About IUCN.* Retrieved April 19, 2013, from http://www.iucn.org/about/

Jacobson, P.J., Jacobson, K.M. & Seely, M.K. (1995). *Ephemeral rivers and their catchments: Sustaining people and development in western Namibia.* Windhoek: DRFN.

Jones, B. (1997). *Parks and resident peoples: linking Namibian protected areas with local communities.* Research discussion paper no. 24. Windhoek: MET.

Jones, B. (2012). Recognition and support of ICCAs in Namibia. In A. Kothari, C. Corrigan, H. Jonas, A. Neumann & H. Shrumm (Eds.), *Recognizing and supporting territories and areas conserved by indigenous peoples and local communities: Global overview and national case studies.* Montreal: Secretariat of the convention on biological diversity, ICCA Consortium, Kaplavriksh & Natural Justice.

Kinahan, J. (2001). *Pastoral nomads of the Namib Desert: The people history forgot.* Windhoek: Capital Press.

Kottak, C.P. (2006). The new ecological anthropology. In N. Haenn & R.R. Wilk (Eds.), *The environment in anthropology – A reader in ecology, culture and sustainable living.* New York & London: New York University Press.

Legal Assistance Centre. (2013). *Indigenous people and climate change in Africa.* Windhoek: Legal Assistance Centre.

Lindfors, B. (1999). *Africans on stage: studies in ethnological show business.* Glosderry: David Philips publishers.

Loftsdóttir, K. (2002). Never forgetting? Gender and racial-ethnic identity during fieldwork. *Social Anthropology (10)*3, 303-317.

Luhrman, T.M (1995). The resurgence of romanticism – Contemporary neopaganism, feminist spirituality and the divinity of nature. In K. Milton (ed.), *Environmentalism – The view from anthropology.* London & New York: Routledge.

Luke, T.W. (2006). On environmentality: Geo-power and eco-knowledge in the discourses of contemporary environmentalism. In N. Haenn & R.R. Wilk (Eds.), *The environment in anthropology – A reader in ecology, culture and, sustainable living.* New York & London: New York University Press.

MacKay, F. & Caruso, E. (2004). Indigenous lands or national parks. *Cultural Survival Quarterly 28* (1). Retrieved from http://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/none/indigenous-lands-or-national-parks

Macleod, D. (2001). Parks or people? National parks and the case of Del Este, Dominican Republic. *Progress in development studies 1*(3), 221-235.

Malinowski, B. (1922). *Argonauts of the Western Pacific.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.

McCracken, J. (1987). Conservation priorities and local communities. In D. Anderson & R. Grove (Eds.), *Conservation in Africa: people, policies and practice.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Merchant, C. (1992). *Radical ecology: The search for a livable world.* New York: Routledge.

MET. (2000a). *State of environment report on parks, tourism and biodiversity.* Windhoek: MET.

MET. (2000b). *Draft memorandum agreement.* Windhoek: MET.

MET. (2007). *National policy on protected areas, neighbours and resident people.* (A Draft Policy Document). Windhoek: MET.

MET. (2009). *Concession operator contract.* Windhoek: MET.

Milton, K. (1995). Introduction: Environmentalism and anthropology. In K. Milton (Ed.), *Environmentalism – The view from anthropology.* London & New York: Routledge.

Milton, K. (2006). Cultural theory and environmentalism. In N. Haenn & R.R. Wilk (Eds.), *The environment in anthropology – A reader in ecology, culture and sustainable living.* New York & London: New York University Press.

Moran, E. (2006). Ecosystem ecology in biology and anthropology. In N. Haenn & R.R. Wilk (Eds.), *The environment in anthropology – A reader in ecology, culture and, sustainable living.* New York & London: New York University Press.

MRLGH. (2002). *Traditional Authorities Act.* Windhoek: MRLGH.

Murray W. & Overton J. (2003). Designing development research. In R. Scheyvens & D. Storey (Eds.), *Development fieldwork: A practical guide.* London: Sage Publications.

Müller, M. (2004). Seed dispersal ecology of the !nara melon. In J. Henschel et al. (Eds.), *!Nara: Fruit for development of the !Khuiseb Topnaar.* Windhoek: Namibia Scientific Society.

NASCO. (2008). *Namibia's communal conservancies: A review of progress and challenges in 2007.* Windhoek: NASCO.

Nature Conservation Ordinance. (1975). Official Gazette Extraordinary 3469, No. 4 of 1975. Windhoek: MET.

Nelson, L. & Hossack, L. (2003). *Indigenous peoples and protected areas in Africa.* London: Forest Peoples Programme.

Njiforti, H.L. & Tchamba, N.M. (1993). Conflict in Cameroon: Parks for or against people? In E. Kemf (Ed.), *The law of the mother: Protecting indigenous peoples in protected areas.* San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.

Pálsson, G. (2006). Nature and society in the age of postmodernity. In A. Biersack, & J.B. Greenberg (Eds.), *Reimagining political ecology*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Pimbert, M. & Pretty, J. (1995). *Parks, people and professionals: Putting participation into protected area management* (Research discussion paper). Geneva: WWF.

Redford, K., Brandon, K. & Sanderson, S. (2006). Holding ground. In N. Haenn & R.R. Wilk (Eds.), *The environment in anthropology – A reader in ecology, culture and, sustainable living.* New York & London: New York University Press.

Rotberg, I.R. (1980). *Suffer the future, policy choices in Southern Africa.* Harvard: Harvard University Press.

Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism – Western concepts of the Orient.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.

Scheyvens, R. & Leslie, H. (2000). Gender ethics and empowerment: Dilemmas of development fieldwork. *Women's studies international forum 23*(1), 119-130.

Scheyvens, R. & Storey, D. (2003). *Development fieldwork: A practical guide.* London: Sage Publications.

Schmidt, G. (2005). Ecology & anthropology: A field without a future. *Ecological and Envioronmental Anthropology 1*(1): 13-15.

Seely, M. (1992). *The Namib: Natural history of an ancient desert.* Windhoek: Shell.

Seely, M. & Pallet, J. (2008). *Namib: Secrets of a desert uncovered.* Windhoek: Venture publications.

Shapera I. (1930). *The Khoisan peoples of South Africa.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.

Sidaway, J.D. (1992). In other worlds: On the politics of research by 'First World' geographers in the 'Third World'. *Area 24*(4), 403-408.

Simmons, I.G. 2006. Normative behavior. In N. Haenn & R.R. Wilk (Eds.), *The environment in anthropology – A reader in ecology, culture and sustainable living.* New York & London: New York University Press.

Smith., L.T. (2006). *Decolonizing methologies – Research and indigenous peoples.* London & New York: Zed Books & University of Otago Press.

Steward, J. (2006). The concept and method of cultural ecology. In N. Haenn & R.R. Wilk (Eds.), *The environment in anthropology – A reader in ecology, culture and sustainable living.* New York & London: New York University Press. (Original work published 1955)

Stevens, S. & De Lacy, T. (1999). *Conservation through cultural survival: Indigenous peoples and protected areas.* Washington: The Island Press.

Topnaar traditional authority. (1995). *Historical customary law of the Topnaar community.*

UN. (1992). *Convention on biological diversity.* New York: UN.

UN. (1992). *Rio declaration on environment and development*. Retrieved April 19, 2013, from http://www.unep.org/documents.multilingual/default.asp?documentid=78&articleid=1163

UN. (2008). *United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous people*. New York: UN.

UN. (2013). *Environment and development agenda.* Retrieved April 5, 2013, from http://www.unep.org/documents.multilingual/default.asp?documentid=52

Van den Eynden, V., Vernemmen, P. & Van Damme, P. (1992). *The ethobotany of the Topnaar*. Gent: University of Gent.

Vigne, R. (1994). '*The first, the highest…' Identifying the Topnaar of Walfis* Bay [sic] *and the lower !Kuiseb.* From the symposium Writing history, identity and society in Namibia. Hannover: University of Hannover. (Unpublished)

Ward, J. & van Wyk, A. (1985). Topnaar (≠Aonin) place names along the lower Kuiseb river, Central Namib Desert. *Bulletin of the Desert ecological research unit, 6.* Windhoek: Desert ecological research.

Werner, W. (2003). *Livelihoods among the Topnaar of the Lower Kuiseb.* Windhoek: Environmental learning and action in the Kuiseb (ELAK) programme.

West, P. & Brechin, S. (1991). *Resident peoples and national parks: Social dilemmas and strategies in international conservation.* Arizona: University of Arizona Press.

West, P. & Brockington, D. (2006). An anthroplogical perspective on some unexpected consequences of protected areas. *Issues in international conservation 20*(3), 609-616.

West, P., Igoe, J. & Brockington, D. (2006). Parks and peoples: The social impact of protected areas. *Annual review of anthropology 35*(1), 251-277.

Widlok, T. (2003). Local experts – expert locals: A comparative perspective on biodiversity and environmental knowledge systems in Australia and Namibia. In M. Casimir (Ed), *Culture and the changing environment: Uncertainity cognition, and risk management in cross-cultural perspective.* Oxford & New York: Berghahn Books.

Widlok, T. (2004). !Nara property relations. In J. Henschel, R. Dausab, P. Moser & J. Pallet. *!Nara: Fruit for development of the !Khuiseb Topnaar.* Windhoek: Namibia Scientific Society.