
How does community-based natural resource management in Namibia change the distribution of power and influence? Preliminary findings

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Acronyms

AGM	annual general meeting
BDP	benefit distribution plan
CBNRM	Community-based Natural Resource Management
DFID	Department for International Development
FIRM	Forum for Integrated Resource Management
GFU	Grootberg Farmers' Union
GRN	Government of the Republic of Namibia
IRDNC	Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation
MET	Ministry of Environment and Tourism
NACOBTA	Namibia Community-based Tourism Association
NACSO	Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organisations
NBC	Namibia Broadcasting Company
NDF	Namibia Development Foundation
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NNF	Namibia Nature Foundation
PTO	Permission to Occupy
RF	Rössing Foundation
SWAPO	South West African People's Organisation
UDF	United Democratic Front
UNAM	University of Namibia
WILD	Wildlife Integration for Livelihood Diversification Project
WWF-LIFE	World Wildlife Fund - Living in a Finite Environment

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document reflects some of the preliminary findings of a field study undertaken by Eva Schiffer (University of Namibia and University of Bochum, Germany) between August and December 2002. The research focuses on the socio-political effects of communal area conservancies and community-based natural resource management (CBNRM).

Since 1996 communities in the communal areas (former homelands) of Namibia have the right to form communal conservancies to manage and protect their wildlife. This approach to conservation is expected to have ecological, economic and socio-political effects (Baker, 1997 and Adams, 1998). This research focuses on the socio-political effects, such as empowerment and decentralisation of decision-making. The report shows how stakeholders in two Namibian conservancies, and those on the national level, perceive the socio-political impacts of CBNRM. It describes the relationships between the respective stakeholder groups and gives warning of existing and anticipated conflicts. This report is aimed at scholars, facilitators and policy makers of CBNRM, as well as ground-level stakeholders in the conservancies.

The two field studies (in ≠Khoadi //Hôas and Ehirovipuka Conservancies in the Kunene Region) revealed that while some power has shifted to a local level, the local communities in general have not necessarily been empowered. The analysis of the relationships between different actors identified certain distinctive problems, including:

- *A gap between conservancy staff/committee and the rest of the local population.*
- *The unclear and potentially explosive role of the respective traditional authorities: they acted either as a motor or a stumbling block for conservancies.*
- *A difficult relationship between non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET), both following complementary development and conservation goals, but competing for influence and resources.*
- *Extremely high expectations from all sides, which overburden projects and lead to frustration when not met.*

1. INTRODUCTION

When this research was undertaken, much discussion was underway among the Namibian actors of CBNRM about the issues of power and participation. Before Independence, community-based approaches were tested by NGOs and engaged individuals, acting alongside or against the general trend of fortress conservation (Owen-Smith, 2002). After Independence, this experience was the basis for government pilot programmes, research and the development of an enabling legislation for CBNRM and the formation of communal conservancies. This legislation was put through in 1996 (Namibia, 1996). When this research was undertaken in 2002, the country had witnessed six years of conservancy formation and implementation; the time had come for revision and observation of lessons learned.

The beginning of the CBNRM process was characterised by struggles with those who did not believe that local people were able to manage their own resources (Jones, 2000), but the time came when CBNRM was stable enough to analyse the performance of past years and look at achievements and shortcomings. For an outside observer it was obvious that this discussion was both painful and difficult at times. However, the discussion continued and the results of this research, both critical and acclaiming, were received and discussed with interest and respect. This report shows how stakeholders in two Namibian conservancies, and those on the national level, perceive the socio-political impacts of CBNRM. It describes the relationships between the respective stakeholder groups and gives warning of existing and anticipated conflicts. It is aimed at scholars, facilitators and policy makers of CBNRM, as well as ground-level stakeholders in the conservancies.

2. OBJECTIVES

CBNRM aims to improve resource management and achieve the economic uplifting of the local population. It also strives for socio-political change, i.e. the empowerment of local communities to manage their own natural resources (Western, 1994 and GRN, 1996)

The objective of this research was to gain a clearer insight into the socio-political effects of CBNRM in Namibia. It looks at the interaction among the different stakeholders and the distribution of power and influence between them. To ascertain whether CBNRM meets the high expectations of empowerment and improved local governance, the following questions were asked:

Question 1: How do the stakeholders of CBNRM interact?

Question 2: What are the effects on CBNRM of the interaction among the stakeholders?

Question 3: What is the effect of CBNRM on the interaction of the stakeholders, and the socio-political set up?

3. METHODOLOGY

To approach these questions, a broad overview was combined with detailed analysis. The overview was established during **interviews with key stakeholders** at the national and regional level; a more detailed understanding was attained through developing **case studies in two conservancies**. In total 81 stakeholders of CBNRM were interviewed, including members of the following groups:

Table 1: List of stakeholder groups interviewed

Name of stakeholder group interviewed	Number of interviews	Local, regional, national
Governmental actors (MET and regional government)	7	Regional and national
NGOs	16	Regional and national
Traditional authorities	11	Local, regional, and national
Private-sector tourism	2	Local
Conservancy staff and committee	16	Local
‘Ordinary’ community people	24	Local
Researchers	4	National

The case studies were developed from work conducted in two neighbouring conservancies in the Kunene Region in the north-west of Namibia. One conservancy, ≠Khoadi //Hôas, lies in Kunene South; and the other conservancy, Ehirovipuka, lies in Kunene North. ≠Khoadi //Hôas is mainly inhabited by Damaras; and Ehirovipuka by Hereros.

The researcher organised four feedback group discussions with the different stakeholder groups in the conservancies (committee, staff, traditional authorities), as well as in Windhoek (researchers, MET, NGOs). At these meetings preliminary results were discussed to provide feedback and learning for the Namibian CBNRM programme and to put the results into perspective. In addition, **observations** were made at:

- Conservancy meetings (including one annual general meeting at ≠Khoadi //Hôas)
- A quarterly planning meeting of Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC) at Wereldsend
- A FIRM (Forum for Integrated Resource Management) meeting at ≠Khoadi //Hôas
- The facilitation of visioning workshops in Ehirovipuka (with IRDNC)
- More informal talk around the campfire

According to their knowledge and involvement the interviewees were divided into four groups:

- **Overview experts:** Those who work on a regional or national level and have knowledge about aspects of the policy processes, about national developments of CBNRM and/or have an overview over a number of conservancies.

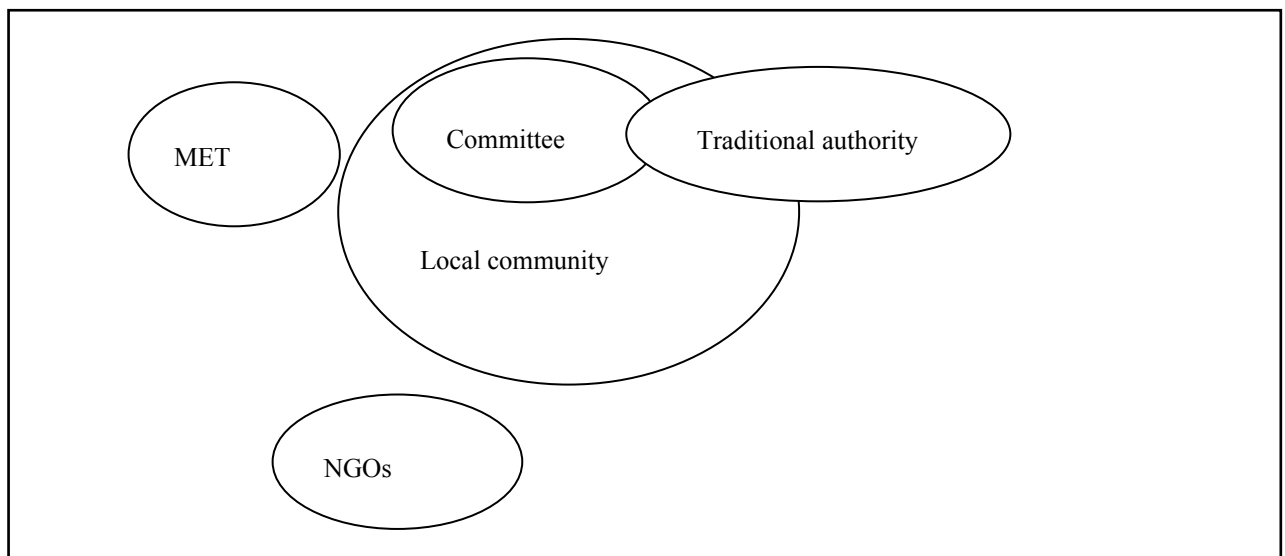
- **Experts on specific issues:** Those who work on a regional or national level and have expertise in specific aspects of CBNRM (for example, tourism or legal issues).
- **Ground-level experts/implementers:** The actors who have in-depth knowledge about one or more conservancies because they work either for implementing agencies (NGOs and MET) or for one individual conservancy as staff or committee member. Added to this group (because of a similar range of knowledge) are local people who are close to the conservancy and have an in-depth knowledge about it (without playing a formal role).
- **Target group with low detailed knowledge:** The target group of CBNRM consists of the members of the local communities. This group covers those members of the community with less detailed knowledge about the conservancy. They were interviewed to analyse the impact of the conservancy on local people's lives.

The overview experts and the ground-level experts were interviewed in a semi-structured interview, including a visualisation tool which is described below. With the experts on specific issues, qualitative open expert interviews were undertaken. For the target group with low detailed knowledge ('ordinary' community people) a flexible set of questions close to their day-to-day experience was developed in the field.

3.1 Semi-structured interview and visualisation tool

This section describes the methods used with overview and ground-level experts. The interview with them comprised three parts. The first part was a questionnaire with open and closed questions about their views on changes induced through the conservancy. In the second part the interviewees were asked to visualise their perceived stakeholder constellation (see Figure 1). This was achieved by asking them to list the important stakeholders of the conservancy and chose a board game playing piece to represent each. These figures were then organised on a sheet of paper according to their membership to different stakeholder groups such as conservancy committee, the local community, government, private sector, traditional authorities and NGOs.

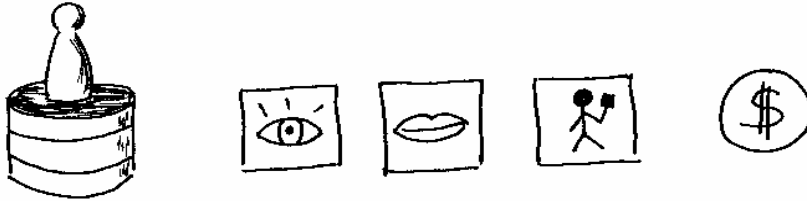
Figure 1: Example of a stakeholder constellation



Each actor was characterised by one or more symbols (board game playing pieces): as observer (eye), advisor (mouth), decision maker (person voting by show of hands), or someone who provides

money (coin). These are illustrated in Figure 2 below. The actors/playing pieces were then placed on wooden ‘power towers’ according to their power and influence in relation to the conservancy: the more powerful the actor, the higher the tower.

Figure 2: Stakeholder on ‘power tower’ and symbols for observer, advisor, decision-maker, and money-giver



The third part of the interview consisted of a qualitative open discussion about the power set up. This was necessary to gain a deeper understanding of where the power of the different actors came from and how it was expressed. Here other conflicts between stakeholders were discussed, as power utilisation is particularly obvious in conflict situations.

Thirty-four semi-structured interviews were implemented, with conservancy staff/committee (13), NGO staff (6), ‘ordinary’ community people (5), researchers (4), MET staff (3), traditional authorities (2) and interviewees who were traditional authorities as well as conservancy staff or committee (3). Two of these interviews were conducted as group interviews with more than one interviewee.

3.2 Qualitative open expert interviews

The experts on specific issues were engaged in qualitative open expert interviews. These interviews focused around themes as shown in Box 1; these ranged from the general approach of CBNRM to the individual expert’s role in the game. The course of the discussion followed the specific expertise of the respective interviewee.

<p>Box 1: Themes of expert interviews</p> <p>CBNRM as philosophy/general approach: Feasibility of the concept; tension between benefit and control, management and democracy, financial sustainability and welfare issues, individual and collective benefits.</p> <p>CBNRM in the set up of Namibian policy and politics: History of natural resource management in Namibia; development of CBNRM; strengths and weaknesses of the legislation; relationship to other policies and legislation; position in the devolution/decentralisation process.</p> <p>Implementation of CBNRM: Success factors and obstacles; indicators for success and failure; changes through CBNRM; role of different actors in the power play.</p> <p>Concrete cases: Individual conservancies; conflicts as examples for more general statements.</p> <p>Own role in CBNRM, plans and strategies of own organisation.</p>

Sixteen explorative expert interviews were undertaken. Nine of them were with NGO staff, four with government representatives, two with interviewees from the tourism sector, and one with a traditional authority member.

3.3 Flexible questions for ‘ordinary’ community people

The set of questions for ‘ordinary’ community people was developed in the field, as the experience from the first interviews made adjustments necessary. The core characteristic of the resulting set of questions was that their focus was on the day-to-day experiences of the interviewees. The interview started with questions about **costs** (i.e. problem animals) and **benefits** (meat, jobs, formal benefit distribution) of living with wildlife and within a conservancy. The following categories of questions were optional and chosen according to the knowledge and willingness of the interviewee. Here the focus was on the **conservation aim** of the conservancy, the **role of the local community** in the conservancy, the **distribution of power and influence** in the conservancy and community, and the **visions** for the conservancy (more detailed information can be found in Appendix 3).

This set of flexible questions was applied in 26 interviews; 15 in ≠Khoadi //Hôas and 11 in Ehirovipuka.

4. PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

The following sections present some of the findings and impressions gathered from the research. To facilitate navigation in the text, the findings are clustered according to actors. The reader is asked, however, to keep in mind that this is not a clear-cut structure because most issues are interrelated and the relationship between two stakeholders is also shaped by their relationship towards other actors.

The majority of the field research was done in the two case study conservancies, so the core focus of this report is on the information gathered there and on the impact of CBNRM on the *local* socio-political structure. The text is enriched with quotations from interviews and meetings. The interviews are numbered on a random basis as to ensure the anonymity of the interviewees, so the numbers of the interviews are not related to the list of interviewees in the appendices.

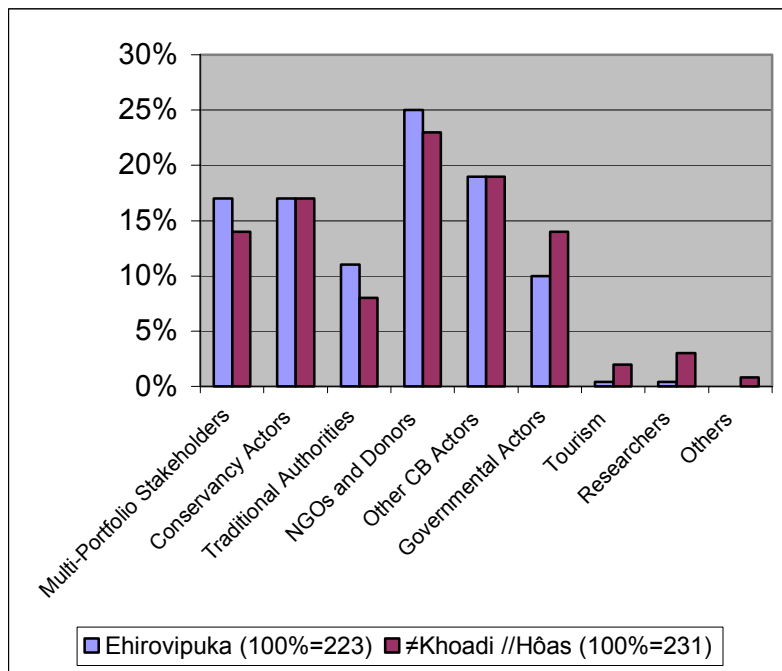
The stakeholder-specific data from the semi-structured interviews provides quantitative data. The information about each stakeholder in each interview was transformed into one set of stakeholder data (compare Appendix 4). For the two conservancies, 454 sets of stakeholder data were gathered and analysed: 223 for Ehirovipuka and 231 for ≠Khoadi //Hôas.

For constructive judgement of the answers given by different stakeholders it is essential to keep in mind that the distribution of power and influence was seen as a sensitive issue. Most interviewees seemed to have a personal agenda and/or organisational interest in directing the study in one direction or the other. Thus the answers have to be considered in terms of ‘who said what, with what kind of interest’.

4.1 Relations between the stakeholder groups in general

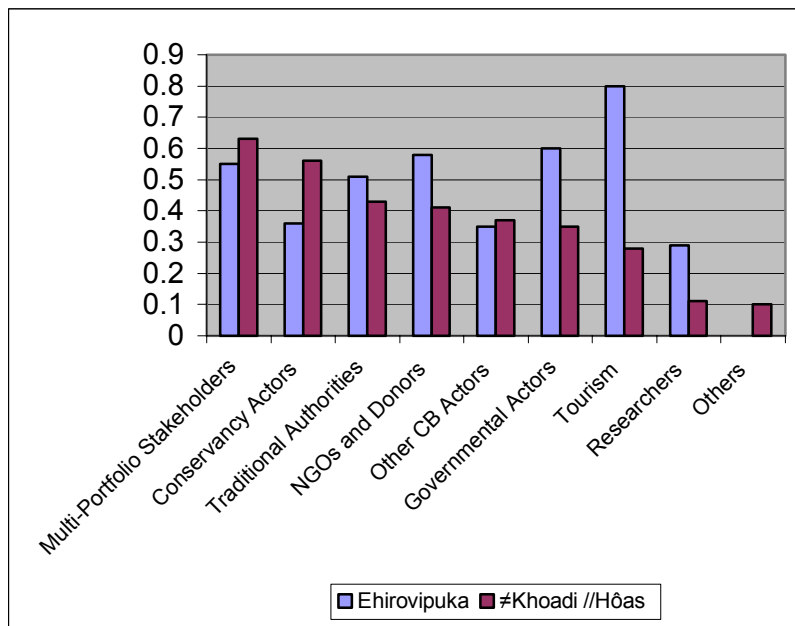
The importance of the respective stakeholder groups for the interviewees in general was judged by the frequency with which the various groups were named and the power status they were given. Figures 3 and 4 give an overview of these two indicators.

Figure 3: Proportions of stakeholder groups in data



The stakeholder groups have been derived from the data. The group ‘multi-portfolio stakeholder’ was created for those actors who combine a position within the conservancy staff or committee with one in another local stakeholder group such as the traditional authorities or a community-based organisation (i.e. farmers’ union). Those actors who combine two portfolios in the conservancy (i.e. as staff *and* committee members) also fall into this group. ‘Conservancy actors’ are defined in a narrower sense as members of the conservancy committee or staff. In the two case studies, the traditional authorities concerned were Damara (for ≠Khoadi //Hôas) and Herero (for Ehirovipuka). ‘NGOs and donors’ include a long list of national and international actors (see Appendix 5). ‘Other CB actors’ are those community-based actors who do not fall into any of the other groups, who are members of community-based organisations like farmers’ unions and women’s leagues, conservancy members and non-members, and local groups such as teachers’ or youth groups. The main ‘governmental actor’ in CBNRM is MET, but this group also includes the regional government and other Ministries (Agriculture; Rural Water Supplies; Local Government and Housing; and Land, Resettlement and Rehabilitation). The ‘tourism’ actors who were seen as stakeholders of the conservancies were private-sector companies who conduct trophy hunting or plan to build joint-venture lodges in the conservancies. In the small ‘researchers and consultants’ group, the Wildlife Integration for Livelihood Diversification (WILD) Project, organised through the MET and funded by UK Government’s Department for International Development (DFID), received most attention, as WILD researchers had been living and working in one of the case study conservancies for around two years when the interviews were conducted. ‘Others’ are the Namibia Broadcasting Company (NBC) and a neighbouring conservancy which served as a good example, each of which were mentioned once in one interview.

Figure 4: Average power and influence of stakeholder groups



The data on the power and influence of the respective actors was projected onto a scale of zero to one. The most powerful actor of each interview got power status one; those who were said to have no power at all were given zero. Figure 4 shows the average power status of the stakeholder groups. Here it becomes apparent that only frequency and power status taken together paint a realistic picture. The tourism stakeholder group is a good example: for Ehirovipuka it appears to be the most powerful group, with a power status of 0.8. However, Figure 3 shows that the frequency with which tourism was actually named was very low in Ehirovipuka: only one interviewee saw tourism as an actor of the conservancy at all, and ranked it high in the hierarchy of power and influence.

4.2 Community – committee

4.2.1 Participation

Many interviewees saw the *empowerment* of rural communities to manage their own resources as one of the core aims of CBNRM. The stakeholder data hints that local actors were seen as important decision makers in both conservancies: a high percentage of the data sets about decision makers concerned local-level actors (of the conservancy, traditional authorities, community-based organisations and the local community in general).

Figure 5: Proportions of local and external actors in decision maker data

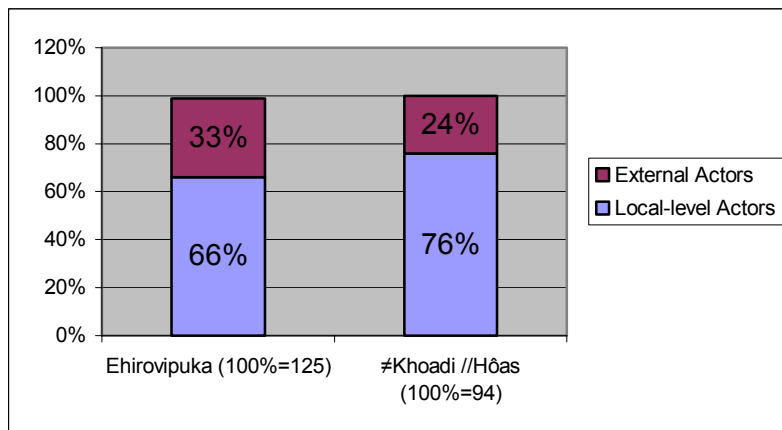


Figure 5 must be read with caution for two reasons:

- The data is biased towards local-level decision makers because the local interviewees described them in more detail (i.e. naming each individual committee member, but giving only one set of data for the MET).
- The high number of local decision makers does not necessarily indicate that *all* local groups have the same access to decision-making.

Conservancy committees are elected as representatives of the broader community. Thus some interviewees presumed that, because of this, committees represent the interests of the community. However, during the research there was a lot of discussion amongst all stakeholder groups about a **gap between committees and communities**. It was generally accepted that the involvement of the local community is a difficult and sensitive issue, and some interviewees saw it as problematic in the majority of conservancies.

However, interviewees judged the efforts of staff and committees differently when it came to the question: are staff and committee members really interested in participation? Some said that committees were trying hard and that the problems were basically of a logistical nature; while interviewees from NGOs, the government, and the research sector, as well as community members, criticised that some individuals in committees had little interest in strong community participation.

“When I was at the AGM at Grootberg [≠Khoadi //Hôas Conservancy] last year I told them, ‘Currently, you, the committee, decide on your own and only report back to the community.’ I also told Torra the same thing. I asked, ‘Where are the minutes of your meetings?’ In Torra only three people in the committee are doing things so it is not even the committee but only these few people. That is not community based. [...] I am concerned that the investors and committees are running forwards together leaving all other stakeholders behind.” (Interview 12, government)

“Certain individuals take their own decisions in the committee. [...] They tend to do things on their own, the committee without the community.” (Interview 40, community member, Ehrovipuka)

“It does not change anything whether you are registered or not. Community people have nothing to say.” (Interview 1, community member, ≠Khoadi //Hôas)

For those committee members who genuinely wanted to improve their interaction with the community, training and support were seen as important. Where committees did not want to give more power to the community, interviewees recommended increasing control through outside

agencies like NGOs and MET. Another recommendation was that outside agencies should approach the local communities directly to empower them, i.e. through training, if committees are reluctant to do so.

The rating of the power of community members showed a high variability in both conservancies. In ≠Khoadi //Hôas in particular, local people were either described as very weak or very strong actors in the conservancy.

One group of interviewees saw the **community as the strongest actor** within the conservancies: this group consisted mainly of conservancy staff and committee members, but also some NGO staff. The power of the community comes from the conservancy's constitution, as only the community can elect the committee and change the constitution.

“The members ARE the conservancy as the majority counts. They elect the members of the committee and can take down members, they make the constitution. Sometimes they are organised, sometimes not.” (Interview 4, staff, ≠Khoadi //Hôas)

There was also the perception that active community members mean more work for committees:

“The community, they ask questions, if you cannot answer you have to go back to the committee, ask them again. You are supposed to know everything and be polite and a nice person and tell the truth. [...] That is how Hereros are, even if you don't find a problem, they find one.” (Interview 49, committee member, Ehirovipuka)

However, there were also interviewees who saw the communities as strong in theory, but weak in practice. As one committee member of Ehirovipuka observed:

“If the community does not like the committee, they can kick us out. They need a 2/3 majority of all the members. We have 700-730 members, 2/3 majority, that is ok for us because where do you get a 2/3 majority? You cannot get that, never.” (Interview 42, staff, Ehirovipuka)

Those who saw the communities as rather weak criticised that committees did nothing to empower them, but also that local people were not active or well organised enough. In ≠Khoadi //Hôas, some interviewees were of the opinion that community members were afraid to participate. Several reasons for minimal community involvement were given:

- The local community does not have a history/culture of organising themselves.
- Impeding procedures and structures hinder participation.
- Lack of information/education.
- Poor logistics.
- People became inactive after unpleasant experiences.
- Exclusive power-networks/favouritism.
- Lack of community interest in conservancy matters.

These reasons are further elaborated in the following sections.

The local community does not have a history/culture of organising themselves

Especially for ≠Khoadi //Hôas interviewees stated that the history of colonialism still prevailed in the reluctance of local people to take action. Some people added that the social organisation of Damaras (small, scattered family groups) compared to that of Hereros (structured extended family networks) was an obstacle for self-organised participation. (This cultural difference is described in Malan (1998)).

“The community people here (≠Khoadi //Hôas) just have power at the AGM [annual general meeting]. Normally they do not talk, do not take action. Maybe it is their culture that they never demand a meeting, there they are different from the Hereros.” (Interview 23, NGO)

“People are still used to sitting down and waiting. That is due to the history of apartheid.” (Interview 13, committee member, ≠Khoadi //Hôas)

“Conservancy is still a new concept, there is a learning process about finances, tourism... We never had these chances before, it will take a long time to take people to the same standard of information.” (Interview 46, NGO)

Procedures and structures

Structures and procedures that hindered participation were found in the national CBNRM legislation, as well as on the level of conservancy constitutions. Some interviewees thought that the flexibility of the CBNRM legislation was problematic, with key elements like modes of election or benefit distribution being left to the community. While the idea behind the flexibility is to give room for culturally appropriate procedures, it does allow for manipulation and abuse by the intelligent and powerful. As one researcher described:

“The biggest problems at the moment are the issues of the devolution of decision-making from the committees down to lower levels, establishing transparent and accountable institutions and realising tangible benefits for local people. At the moment mostly only the already powerful have access to benefits.” (Interview 29, researcher)

MET representatives said that the legislation should be revised now that first-hand experience had been gathered:

“In the first act of the constitution of conservancies there is the definition of a conservancy as ‘any group of persons residing on communal land that decides...’ It is not clear who is included, that means confusion amongst the communities especially as benefits are coming. The law is too flexible, leaves too much to the community, everyone takes advantage of the unclarity [sic], it needs revision. [...] The legislation was done quick, quick. There was not much time spent on thinking it through properly.” (Interview 3, government)

In the two conservancies discussed here, there were intense discussions among staff and committee members about election processes. In Ehirovipuka, nine villages elected their representatives for the committee and the committee members decided amongst themselves about the portfolios. In ≠Khoadi //Hôas, committee members were elected and put into the different positions at one central AGM.

In ≠Khoadi //Hôas, the discussion on procedures and structures was fuelled by the last committee election in October 2002. Committee and community members, as well as external observers, were concerned about the process and outcome of the election. The inhabitants of one settlement, Anker, were over-represented in the new committee, thus the problematic tendency of geographical under-representation was consolidated. With one ‘power group’ from Anker central in conservancy decision-making, conservancy members in other areas said they did not feel fairly represented, and thus hostility towards the conservancy had started to grow.

The different stakeholders saw various reasons for the outcome of the elections. A lot of criticism focused on the constitution of ≠Khoadi //Hôas Conservancy, which only allowed for the election of people who were present at the AGM. This meant that unforeseen events such as funerals, as well as the lack of transport, could lead to the under-representation of some areas. Government representatives, NGO staff, researchers and committee members saw changing the constitution as one way forward. In a feedback discussion with the committee, staff and traditional authorities, changes to the election processes were discussed:

“We (committee/staff) are not content with the outcomes of the last election. We are thinking about ways to improve the process. We would like it if organisations like the farmers’ leagues, women’s association, youth league and so on nominate candidates beforehand, so at the general meeting you have a list of people to elect. So not anyone who comes to the AGM and brings a few friends along can be elected into the committee.” (Staff member, ≠Khoadi //Hôas, at feedback meeting)

Not all the committee members saw elections as the best way to choose the committee:

“Free and fair elections are a problem because then I can vote for whoever I want, just because he is my friend.” (Committee member, ≠Khoadi //Hôas, at feedback meeting)

Other stakeholders (government, NGOs and researchers) recommended changing from a central election to elections at a village/area level. This option was discussed at the feedback meeting in ≠Khoadi //Hôas. However, immense logistical problems were foreseen of having a committee with representatives from across the whole conservancy area, since the committee had experienced that members living in remote areas did not turn up regularly. The committee members of ≠Khoadi //Hôas were of the opinion that it was the job of the environmental shepherds, more than the committee, to communicate with the local public. One idea to improve communication was to have an additional staff member who would focus on outreach work in the community.

In Ehirovipuka, the nine villages elected their representatives, which essentially meant that every community member had a neighbour in the committee, but community members and NGO staff complained that feedback was not always conducted properly. When it came to the feedback of the quarterly planning meeting with the conservancies of the Kunene Region and IRDNC, one committee member asked:

“At the quarterly planning the conservancies present their report and say, ‘Feedback to committee and conservancy done.’ I asked this question, ‘What shall we write if we did not do it? We still have not done it (one month after quarterly planning).’ I asked them five times but I know in January when we meet for the next quarterly planning we have to say, ‘Feedback done.’” (Interview 37, conservancy committee, Ehirovipuka)

“We did not do the feedback of the quarterly planning yet. That is because our programme is so full. We need to do so many things to survive, meetings with NGOs, MET, other committees like water point committees, traditional authorities.” (Committee member, Ehirovipuka, at feedback of research findings)

“If there is a meeting in the office, they [Ehirovipuka Conservancy] should give feedback. Now they just give little feedback and slow. There should be more. [...] If there is any decision at the conservancy they should come before and ask, ‘Do you like that?’ Now they don’t do that. [...] A big problem we want to solve is feedback to the community.” (Visioning meeting with community members from Otjipau and Okovasiona)

“We don’t get a written feedback of committee meetings so we don’t know what happens (...). We are not well informed.” (Interview 48, community member, Ehirovipuka)

Some committee members in Ehirovipuka, especially those from the central settlement, were not content with the village-level elections. One NGO member summed up their complaints:

“Following the constitution here [Ehrovipuka], every village should have someone in the committee. So on village level it is possible that there is no one with adequate skills [...]. General elections would be better here so that you can elect those with the highest potential.” (Interview 32, NGO)

Another NGO interviewee predicted that committee members further from the centre of the conservancy would favour village-level elections. As did this committee member:

“It would not be good to select the committee just in one place because people from far away don’t know you. It is good to elect per village.” (Interview 49, committee member, Ehrovipuka)

“I think village-level elections [Ehrovipuka] are a good thing, you just have to involve outsiders like NGOs and MET to facilitate the process so that everyone is happy. [...] You don’t have to be educated to run a conservancy; you can see that with the Himbas [...]. I think it is good as you are more in touch than if you select at random from a big meeting. If you have central elections, how can you assure the information flow? Village-level representatives inform their people.” (Interview 46, NGO)

Lack of information/education

Generally, inadequate education and knowledge about the conservancy were seen as obstacles for strong participation of the community. Poorly educated communities are more prone to being manipulated by better-informed individuals.

“In Grootberg, more than 50% of the community are only semi-skilled, can just read and write. They don’t know the business. The chairperson (old committee) manipulates the situation instead of teaching the community.” (Interview 26, traditional authority, ≠Khoadi //Hôas)

But besides general education more specific knowledge of what the conservancy is about and how it works seems to be missing in parts. One NGO member warned:

“This (information) is very critical for the success of conservancies. People who are uninformed are usually angry, misinformed people make wrong decisions. It might mean more work but it makes your job easier in the long run.” (NGO staff at quarterly planning meeting)

Some of the interviews with community members were particularly short because they consisted of little more than:

“I do not know how the conservancy started, I was not at the meeting. It does not have anything to do with my life. They were here a long time ago, Bob (co-ordinator of environmental shepherds) asked what our problems are and how many people live here. No one of our family works at the conservancy. [...] I am not a conservancy member. I do not know where people are registered and what a conservancy is.” (Interview 17, community member, ≠Khoadi //Hôas)

This seems to reflect a general problem in conservancies at present.

“Information flow to members is also a common issue in conservancies. It is not effective. The information flow from members to the conservancy is not so much of a problem as they are too many anyway. People stay far away, there are no communication facilities like papers and there is a lack of transport.” (Interview 46, NGO)

In ≠Khoadi //Hôas answers like this were given by community members living close to the centre of the conservancy, as well as by those living further away from the main settlements of Anker, Grootberg and Erwee. For logistical reasons, in Ehrovipuka the interviewees were more extensively pre-selected by the conservancy committee and the interpreter. Thus, even though there were interviews with conservancy members who criticised the conservancy, there were none with people who were ignorant about it. In ≠Khoadi //Hôas it was possible to communicate with almost everyone in either Afrikaans or English, whereas in Ehrovipuka interviews without an interpreter were rare.

Both conservancy committees agreed in the feedback discussion that there was still a lot to be done to improve communication and the education of the community. The effects of training had not as yet reached ordinary community members. Conservancy constitutions were only available in English and Afrikaans: this is particularly problematic in Ehirovipuka where most local people only speak Otjiherero.

Lack of logistics

Interviewees from all different sectors saw the size of the conservancies (in square kilometres as well as membership numbers) as a challenge. In ≠Khoadi //Hôas especially, it was indicated that dissemination of information, options for participation and a feeling of ownership over the conservancy decreased the further people lived from the central settlements and the conservancy office.

“When people from the northern part of the conservancy did not go to the AGM, it is not just because of the funerals. They are disappointed by the conservancy, suffer a great deal from elephants and predators and do not get compensation.” (Interview 24, traditional authority, ≠Khoadi //Hôas)

“At the [≠Khoadi //Hôas] AGM people from the north of the conservancy, from the areas with most wildlife problems, are under-represented. These people are disillusioned about the conservancy, they do not care to go to a meeting and the committee does not want to mobilise them as they know these people are against them, the car collecting people for the AGM only went to Anker and Erwee.” (Interview 7, researcher)

“Transport is very difficult because we have a huge area and most people just have donkey carts for transport.” (Interview 19, traditional authority, ≠Khoadi //Hôas)

In Ehirovipuka most of the community involvement happened on the village level, so the transport of community people to meetings was not a burning issue. However, because the committee members are scattered all over the conservancy, transport to the committee meetings was a problem. During the field visit it was seen as normal by NGO staff and committee members that meetings started four hours to one day late because of logistical problems.

Bad experience with participation

The notion that people stopped participating because of bad experiences in the past was especially strong in ≠Khoadi //Hôas. Community members complained that criticism was not taken notice of, questions were not answered, and people were not allowed to talk at meetings. Committee members explained that people had to be restrained if they arrived at meetings drunk and discussed issues unrelated to the agenda. The researchers own observations at several meetings indicated, however, that these were not the only reasons for the committee silencing the audience.

“If you as a young man or a group of youths criticise something at a meeting, the traditional authorities or committee members just say, ‘Don't you have respect for someone who is bigger than you?’” (Interview 1, community member, ≠Khoadi //Hôas)

“When there is a meeting they have an agenda, there is no time for the community to talk, no attention to what people have to say. [...] If you stand up against them, the committee shouts you down. I have experienced that.” (Interview 18, community member, ≠Khoadi //Hôas)

“Asser [chair of the AGM], you scare us to say something, even your facial expression.” (Community member at ≠Khoadi //Hôas AGM)

Exclusive power networks / favouritism

Both sets of interviewees, in Ehirovipuka and in ≠Khoadi //Hôas, stated that members of certain networks were more likely to become influential committee members. In Ehirovipuka this network is structured mostly by the traditional authorities. A lot of committee members were close relatives

to traditional leaders or had a position in the traditional authorities, such as the acting headman (who was vice-treasurer of the conservancy) or the secretary of the headman (who was chairman of the conservancy). Many interviewees found it important that the power of the various local headmen corresponded with the number and position of their followers in the committee.

“Langman and Goliath [the two competing traditional authorities from Otjokavare] are one family. They have the important people in the committee. Licius [traditional authority from Otjetjekua] just has the additional members.” (Interview 42, staff, Ehirovipuka)

Those community members who were not related to these families (such as teachers from outside) described the resulting difficulty of becoming a committee member.

“It is a problem when people [in the committee] are too close to each other, family, they would not recognise if I make a mistake. People of [headman] Muzuma won’t see that their family makes mistakes or allow that they are not elected again.” (Interview 40, community member, Ehirovipuka)

“Information was withheld from us [teachers], they never wanted teachers to be included that’s why they hold the meeting in the holidays. Teachers are strangers; they only want to include their people. If you have people that are brighter than others, they will take over the top positions like the chair.” (Interview 40, community member, Ehirovipuka)

In ≠Khoadi //Hôas the nature of the power network was less clear. Some interviewees stated that powerful committee and staff members belonged to two extended families, which reside in and near Anker. The committee was strongly linked to the Grootberg Farmers’ Union (GFU) and contained an impressive number of well-educated government employees (which was not the case in Ehirovipuka).

“The [≠Khoadi //Hôas] committee, that is Asser [chairman], Jakes [vice-chairman] and the office staff. The additional members do not work; they are just puppets [...]. Most of the conservancy people are from the Guibeb family. [...] They keep on bringing their family in [...]. I heard that from another committee member. But that is normal, not a big issue.” (Interview 23, NGO)

In both conservancies those who initiated the conservancy and those who were formerly powerful were more likely to be the governing strength within the conservancy.

In Ehirovipuka, the traditional authorities worked together with IRDNC (the main implementing NGO for Ehirovipuka) and set up a system of community game guards long before the establishment of the conservancy (Owen-Smith, 2002). Therefore, traditional authorities were responsible for conservation before the conservancy started and still see themselves as important actors in this field.

In ≠Khoadi //Hôas the roots of the conservancy lie in a strong farmers’ union – especially as the farmers’ union and the conservancy operate from the same buildings and a lot of actors work for both organisations.

The difference of power networks is reflected in the rating of multi-portfolio actors in both conservancies.

In both conservancies interviewees complained that staff and committee did not always fulfil standards of accountability and transparency. Community members and external observers described favouritism and the exclusion of outsiders (those community members who are not part of the power network) as reasons for low participation among the broader community.

These complaints were more prevalent in ≠Khoadi //Hôas than in Ehirovipuka. This could be due to the fact that Herero traditional authorities (as in Ehirovipuka) constitute a strong and more *inclusive* network. Most local interviewees said they were relatives of at least one of the local traditional authorities. Thus the central power group in Ehirovipuka consisted of actors who were generally seen as legitimate local governing bodies long before the conservancy started. Complaints about exclusion came either from outsiders (who were not Hereros) living in the community or from the younger community members. The ≠Khoadi //Hôas power group was lacking such a traditional legitimisation of power, therefore the network appeared to be more *exclusive*.

Additionally, Ehirovipuka is a much younger conservancy than ≠Khoadi //Hôas (one year compared to five years since registration). Many community members in Ehirovipuka described the conservancy as “not grown up yet”, accepting that it might need more time to be able to produce substantial benefits. Community members in ≠Khoadi //Hôas were starting to become impatient about benefit distribution and suspected that members of the power group benefited without letting a broader community participate or benefit.

Lack of community interest in conservancy matters

One reason for poor participation which should not be underestimated is the lack of community interest. Participation is an effort that most people only make if they see an opportunity to benefit from it. The benefit does not necessarily have to be monetary:

“People go to meetings because of the meat, no matter what the subject is” (Interview 48, community member, Ehirovipuka)

If no benefit is seen as forthcoming, meetings are invariably unattended.

“Conservancy should be a body of community development. But if there is no outcome I do not waste my time on meetings.” (Interview 14, community member, Ehirovipuka)

“Everybody knows that there is a meeting. People do not come even though they are invited, that is the main problem.” (Interview 19, traditional authority, ≠Khoadi //Hôas)

“Most people don’t see the conservancy [≠Khoadi //Hôas] as influential, they do business as usual.” (Interview 7, researcher)

4.2.2 Changes in attitude and behaviour towards wildlife

Most interviewees in the two conservancies saw the protection of wild animals and the reduction of poaching as a primary objective of conservancy development; however, responses were varied. The questions were as follows:

- Has poaching been effectively reduced?
- Regarding wildlife and poaching, have the opinions of local people changed?
- If opinions have changed, was it a result of enforced control or self-attitude analysis?

Most interviewees in the two conservancies agreed that the control of poaching did not work well before the inception of the conservancy. The problems were described as more severe in ≠Khoadi //Hôas, where it was the responsibility of MET wardens who came for patrols every once in a while. In Ehirovipuka, on the other hand, the protection of game was already more localised before the conservancy was established. Headman Kephias Muzuma and IRDNC had set up a system of community game guards who were working on a voluntary basis. Some committee members, conservancy staff and NGO staff described the change of attitudes through the conservancy as quite dramatic: people feeling ownership over their wildlife, reduced poaching, and people reporting

poaching if they witnessed it. Overall people accept the costs of living with wildlife because they know they will benefit from it.

“[The opinion of locals about conservation] changed totally; poaching is minimised; if there is any poaching, members report it to the conservancy management who report it to the police.” (Interview 2, committee member, ≠Khoadi //Hôas)

A second group agreed that there was less poaching, but said that the reason was not so much a change of attitude but rather a result of more effective control.

“Poaching is no problem here anymore because of a lot of control.” (Interview 48, community member, Ehirovipuka)

“The benefit driven approach does not work for big conservancies [≠Khoadi //Hôas]. People at the moment don’t change their behaviour because of benefit but because of control.” (Interview 7, researcher)

Some of the interviewees (game guards, community members, and researchers) were less positive. They indicated that (some) local people still hunted and did not support the idea that “tasting game meat in a legal manner” had much impact on the behaviour of community people. Illegal hunting is a sensitive issue: a lot of the information about poaching was gathered during informal conversation rather than in interviews. There has been more in-depth discussion about poaching in ≠Khoadi //Hôas than in Ehirovipuka. This may be due to a different quality of contact with some of the local people, not because there is more poaching. Local people and outside observers identified the following reasons for illegal hunting:

- Poverty: The needs of today cannot wait till the benefit distribution next year.
- No/low feeling of ownership: The bonds between the community members are stronger than with the conservancy.
- Game is seen as an everlasting free resource: People reasoned that their ancestors hunted and there was still game available.
- Hunting is seen as part of tradition and culture, especially for young men as it fulfils the role of maturation and proof of strength.
- Predators are destroyed to protect livestock.

It was generally agreed that conservancies helped to reduce large-scale and commercial poaching by outsiders, even if the “hunting for the pot” was not as easily controlled.

Game guards (environmental shepherds) are in a difficult position because, on the one hand, they are community members; but, on the other, their job is to control their neighbours. As one interviewee put it:

“[A game guard] will never tell you, ‘Today I go into the bush. You might kill me.’ Some people say, ‘If I see you in the bush and I have a gun, I’ll kill you.’ Game guards are watching the wild animals so they are the enemy between food and him.” (Interview 41, committee member, Ehirovipuka)

Poverty

Conservancies are a long-term development. In ≠Khoadi //Hôas, a benefit distribution plan was set up approximately five years subsequent to the registration of the conservancy. As yet Ehirovipuka has no timeframe for the set up of a benefit distribution plan. This delay poses problems for the benefit-driven approach because the communities have to suffer the tangible costs of living with wildlife now, while waiting for the benefits promised to materialise at some undetermined point in the future. This was seen as problematic, particularly for the impoverished and vulnerable who do

not have the resources to buffer this time lag. Those who were most affected by wildlife often lived in remote areas where hunting is minimally controlled, thus reducing the danger of being caught. As one community member explained:

“One little piece of rotten meat every year will not stop us. You see that it stinks and then you see a nice fat kudu running there, you want to have that. People will not tell you they hunt, but if you come there and you see they have just ten goats but three children, they cannot go to the kraal every day to get meat. People are hungry here.” (Interview 30, community member, ≠Khoadi //Hôas)

No/low feeling of ownership

Some interviewees said that the conservancy was about “giving the wildlife to the people”, but there were local people who complained that it was only given to the committees:

“Benefits have not reached the community yet. I feel the only benefit that has reached the community is the distribution of meat. People still hunt. The community is waiting for benefits so they hunt to eat. It seems alright to them, it is not hunting for big money but for the pot.” (Interview 26, traditional authority, ≠Khoadi //Hôas)

“It is not the community but the committee that makes decisions. If there are a lot of promises and nothing happens, poor people have to go on hunting.” (Interview 14, community member, ≠Khoadi //Hôas)

“Most posts [in ≠Khoadi //Hôas] are far removed; people there do what they do anyhow. There is less commercial poaching, but on the household level hunting goes on. Hunting is negotiated with the local game guards, they often eat meat with people they find poaching.” (Interview 7, researcher)

Game seen as an everlasting free resource

The perceptions of the development of game numbers varied according to where people lived. Not every interviewee saw the need to protect game as strictly as the conservancies aim to do. Hunting was seen as tempting particularly because it does not decrease people’s individual wealth as slaughtering livestock does.

“Ok, we do not only hunt because we are hungry. But we want to eat meat, not pap. And if you go to your kraal, to get a goat, you have a goat less. But there is so much wildlife, you can just go out and hunt and keep your goats. You need them for emergencies, you sell your goats to pay school fees and hospital bills.” (Interview 30, community member, ≠Khoadi //Hôas)

Hunting as part of tradition/culture

Hunting is not only about food. This community member mentioned its cultural aspects:

“I do not say everyone hunts, but most of the households where you have strong young men. Hunting is also about being a strong man. You know going out into the bush at night, tracking an animal, killing it and coming back home with some meat for the pot to show that you can do that. Hunting is fun.” (Interview 30, community member, ≠Khoadi //Hôas)

If this perception is widely shared, it is unlikely that the distribution of meat (even in sufficient quantities) can stop people from hunting.

Predators killed to protect livestock

A specific issue is the illegal hunting of predators; they are not hunted for food but rather for the protection of livestock. Particularly in Ehirovipuka, views on when local people are allowed to kill predators were quite unclear.

“We have a lot of problems with predators like hyena and lions. If there is a problem, the local youth shoot it. The people of the conservancy say it’s not good to shoot it, but we say it kills our livestock. If they say we shouldn’t kill lions they should pay for the cattle that dies, but they don’t.” (Interview 52, traditional authority, Ehirovipuka)

4.2.3 Transparency and fairness of benefit distribution

The conservancy concept is based on the idea that benefiting from wildlife will change people's attitudes and behaviour towards it. Benefits can materialise in many different ways, ranging from intangible benefits such as empowerment to tangible benefits such as compensation for stock losses or meat distribution. Most community members and a lot of observers concentrated on the tangible benefits, so this community member's idea of benefits is rather exceptional:

"If you don't have a conservancy you can't stay with overseas people and tourists, share culture, learn their language, stay with a lot of friends, get worldwide support from donors because you work with people and nature." (Interview 51, community member Ehirovipuka)

More formal benefit distribution, following a benefit distribution plan, is a big – and as some people stated – 'scary' task for conservancy committees who have never before handled such activities, e.g. distributed large amounts of money.

"Everyone is watching Torra Conservancy because Wilderness Safaris and the hunting add money to their account all the time. What is Torra going to do with it? That is what everyone wonders. People from other conservancies would like to see them make their mistakes first." (Interview 32, NGO)¹

At the last AGM (October 2002), the ≠Khoadi //Hôas Conservancy Committee presented a draft of a benefit distribution plan. Committee members stated that they experienced a lot of pressure from outside organisations as well as their own community. Ehirovipuka was still at an early stage with benefit distribution mainly consisting of meat distribution and employment. Most interviews in ≠Khoadi //Hôas were conducted before the presentation of the draft benefit distribution plan, and all before the actual distribution started. Thus for both conservancies the report focuses on the more informal *ad hoc* distribution of benefits.

With regard to benefit distribution, two issues stirred up much discussion:

- How realistic are the expectations of the community?
- Does the community think the benefits are distributed in a fair and transparent manner?

"One thing is: do I finally get the job, do I get the salary? But the more important thing is: Do I have a fair chance to get it? Or can I be sure, they just give jobs to their family?" (Interview 1, community member, ≠Khoadi //Hôas)

There were high expectations in both communities, which had not yet been met fully. In Ehirovipuka, a lot of those interviewees who were hoping for more benefits from the conservancy perceived that the conservancy was still "growing":

"First animals were under MET, now we know they are ours and treat them like ours. We gain money from the animals. We have not yet started to utilise it because it is still low and we want it to become more. This conservancy is only one year old, not yet grown up." (Interview 53, community member, Ehirovipuka)

By contrast, community members in ≠Khoadi //Hôas were becoming impatient as their conservancy had already been registered for five years. Some of the community members gave fairly harsh criticism:

"They gave many promises but nothing changed. As a young man staying here there would be many options to be changed by the conservancy but they didn't." (Interview 1, community member, ≠Khoadi //Hôas)

¹ Since this research was conducted, in January 2003, Torra Conservancy has conducted a cash payout of N\$630 to individual registered conservancy members.

The question of fairness concerning benefit distribution cannot be answered easily. One group of respondents (a large number of them conservancy staff and committee) saw the distribution so far as fair. Another group was concerned that the distribution procedures might not be transparent and might be biased by family ties or geographical distribution.

In both conservancies there were complaints regarding unfair distribution of meat. In ≠Khoadi //Hôas, these remarks came from community members, researchers and traditional authorities. In Ehirovipuka, committee members, conservancy members and traditional authorities said that meat distribution did not always include everyone. Committee and staff members of both conservancies saw the logistical problems of distribution as a primary obstacle. In addition, community members had very high expectations when it came to the quantity of meat, but given the reality of the low hunting quota these expectations were unrealistic and impossible to meet. Community members agreed that the logistics of distribution were difficult, but also complained about favouritism, saying that the central power groups received more than the marginal community members. One representative of the MET observed:

“[Because of the high membership numbers] ≠Khoadi cannot satisfy all members. It is the elite groups versus those in conflict with wildlife, there are winners and losers.” (Interview 3, government)

In both conservancies the committee delegated the distribution of the meat to another level: in ≠Khoadi //Hôas to the farmers’ leagues, and in Ehirovipuka to the heads of extended households. In ≠Khoadi //Hôas most of the leagues were not functioning (only between one and three out of eight were said to be working well), which meant responsibility was delegated to a partner who – at the moment – was unable to perform the task.

“There was a meat distribution while you were here, under this tree, but people out there in more distanced areas probably got nothing. [...] Some people have no radio and no donkey, so until the people from the far away leagues come the meat might be rotten or distributed already. [...] Those in the far away areas think: why do I have to go far for a little bit of rotten meat? Yes, some leagues do not co-operate with the conservancy. Most people in the committee and the leagues don’t get a salary so they don’t do it properly.” (Interview 19, traditional authority, ≠Khoadi //Hôas)

When it came to the distribution of casual jobs, community members complained about unfairness (especially within ≠Khoadi //Hôas). This might be connected to the method of selecting people for such jobs. In ≠Khoadi //Hôas the office staff spread news of jobs by word of mouth through the farmers’ leagues. The staff stated that they then choose the workers following the guideline: “If we choose people from this side this time, we will choose people from the other side next time.” In Ehirovipuka the selection of workers was delegated at the village level. While it is not said that the method in Ehirovipuka is fairer in its outcome, it is likely to cause less friction because the ownership of decision-making is more localised and the procedures more transparent. In ≠Khoadi //Hôas many interviewees (who were not staff or committee members) described the distribution of jobs as skewed by the family ties of the conservancy actors.

“If there is a sponsored workshop there must be people to do the cooking. They come and collect people at the houses but it is only their own families and they get paid. It’s always the same people.” (Interview 1, community member, ≠Khoadi //Hôas)

“One lady from this village was doing the cooking and washing when the hunters were here. They include all people in jobs.” (Interview 48, community member, Ehirovipuka)

In ≠Khoadi //Hôas, the publication of job offers was delegated in part to the eight farmers' leagues, to strengthen grass-roots participation, but this posed problems because of the institutional weaknesses of the leagues. Criticism from outside observers reads:

“I say it is unconstitutional if the farmers' leagues have to do the conservancy's job (≠Khoadi //Hôas). [...] I support the integrated approach but if each one is said to carry the other side, nothing happens as no one carries.”
(Interview 3, government)

4.3 Distribution of power in conservancy staff and committees

In both conservancies, staff and committees worked closely together, and both conservancies had staff who also served on the committee. Thus here they are treated as one heterogeneous group.

4.3.1 Reasons for uneven distribution of power in staff and committee

Some interviewees stated that following the constitution, every committee member had the same power and influence and that staff were below the committee. However, a lot of interviewees explained that some members of the committee and staff had more influence in decision-making than others. They gave a wide range of reasons:

- Portfolios.
- Dedication.
- Skills and education.
- Influential networks and powerful positions outside the conservancy.
- Personality: leadership personality (positive) or power hunger (negative).
- Gender.

Portfolios

Those committee members with a portfolio such as chairman or secretary can be expected to be the ones with more power. Here the question is whether such members derive their power from their portfolio, or whether they were voted into the position in the first place because of power and influence from other sources. In some cases, people were seen as having little influence and power in spite of their portfolio. A patent example was the case of the vice-chairwoman of Ehirovipuka: most local interviewees did not even name her in the list of stakeholders of the conservancy, and those who did gave her a low power status. Other factors (such as gender and personality) seem to play a more important role in determining the status of an actor.

Dedication

Being a committee member means a lot of low-paid or unpaid work. In both conservancies it seemed to be possible to divide the committees into three groups according to their dedication to their work: the workhorses, the ordinary committee members and the 'invisible' members. In both conservancies it was the workhorses who accumulated power and influence. In addition to the committees, the office staff are part of a central power group, who were also (in part) described as very hard working. In ≠Khoadi //Hôas all three office staff members were seen as very powerful by most interviewees:

“Office staff: without them the conservancy will break down, so nothing can be done without them. They play a critical role in the conservancy; the progress of the conservancy lies on their shoulders.” (Interview 9, staff, ≠Khoadi //Hôas)

The situation in Ehirovipuka was slightly different: generally only one of two office staff members was seen as very powerful – the field officer. In the case of the second office staff member, the

community activator, the explanations for her weak position related either to her lack of dedication or to the fact that she was a woman.

Skills and education

One central skill which the powerful in the committees shared was the ability to communicate well. Also, being knowledgeable, both in general and in conservancy matters, and being able to speak different languages (English and Afrikaans) were factors which were described as increasing the power and influence of committee members.

“If there is a discussion about concessions, Filimon [field officer], Gerson [chairman], German [acting headman and committee member] and Benardt [vice-treasurer] will dominate it because they [...] know a lot about it. Their level of education and exposure makes them more comfortable with things. They have a high status in the community, also outside conservancy [Ehrovipuka] matters.” (Interview 46, NGO)

In ≠Khoadi //Hôas there were a lot of well-educated committee members such as teachers and other government employees, but this was not the case in Ehrovipuka. Therefore education was an important issue in discussions with committee members in Ehrovipuka, while in ≠Khoadi //Hôas it was barely mentioned. Some committee members in Ehrovipuka intended to make a certain level of schooling and language skills a prerequisite to becoming a committee member, but one NGO employee warned:

“If we take people [for the Ehrovipuka Committee] based on their level of education only, we are going on with supporting the elites. [...] When committee members say about others that they are illiterate and not capable for the job, a lot of it is bitching because of competition, a high level of unemployment [...] jealousy.” (Interview 46, NGO)

However, although skills and education were seen as important, they alone did not determine the status of committee and staff members. In Ehrovipuka the community activator had very good language skills and a high knowledge about conservancy matters, but was still seen as low in the power ranking.

Influential networks and powerful positions outside the conservancy

The status of a person in the community in general seemed to be very influential in determining the power and influence of this person in conservancy matters. As described above, Ehrovipuka had a central power group who were related to traditional authorities, whereas in ≠Khoadi //Hôas power in the conservancy was connected to power in the Farmers' Union. Some interviewees in Ehrovipuka said that conservancy matters remained distinct from matters of other networks:

“If someone is a traditional authority and a game guard, they talk according to the conservancy in the conservancy and according to traditional authorities in the traditional authorities.” (Interview 49, committee member, Ehrovipuka)

However, the more common perception was that in practice a person's status in the community did influence their status in the conservancy.

“There is no problem of authority when game guards are traditional authorities because you can split the role, the game guard can practise his headmanship outside work. In reality the person supervising this game guard will limit his actions towards him because he is like your father, you respect him, culturally he is your father.” (Interview 46, NGO)

Personality: leadership personality (positive) or power hunger (negative)

A lot of interviewees saw personality as central to determining the power and influence an individual has in the conservancy. This is where it became especially obvious that power and influence are seen both as something very positive (the ability to make things happen), but also as

quite negative (monopolising decision-making and benefits). People who had a leadership personality or were power hungry were observed to use many different means to gain and maintain power (e.g. getting a portfolio, acquiring skills, building networks). The traditional authority quoted below gave a positive description of a leadership personality when he lobbied before the committee elections for the new chairman nominee:

“He is a leader, straightforward, listens, debates, even compromises.”(Interview 26, traditional authority, ≠Khoadi //Hôas)

In ≠Khoadi //Hôas there were a lot of complaints about the outgoing chairman of the conservancy who was described as monopolising power because he was power hungry.

Gender

In Ehirovipuka gender obviously had an impact on the power and influence of committee and staff members, as the central power group there was exclusively male. Whereas in ≠Khoadi //Hôas there were powerful women in the staff and committee: for example, the female office staff member (information liaison officer) was generally seen as a very powerful woman:

“There would be no conservancy without her, she is an independent thinker, works together with the management and the rest of the staff.” (Interview 26, traditional authority, ≠Khoadi //Hôas)

On the other hand, the female staff member (community activator) of Ehirovipuka was generally seen as quite powerless; the reason was given as:

“Well, to be honest... She’s just a woman.” (Interview 50, community member, Ehirovipuka)

In Ehirovipuka, the stakeholder lists of all interviewees had a heavy weighting of male actors; no interviewee put any woman high in the power ranking. This was explained through cultural reasons: Herero women are said to be powerful in the house, but not in public matters (Suzman, 2002 and Malan, 1998). Even factors such as good education or being part of powerful networks (headman’s family) were not able to increase a woman’s position of power. This is not to say that women did not have any influence in the matters of this conservancy, but if they did, it was not obvious or acknowledged.

4.3.2 Conflicts in staff and committees

People in both conservancies talked about conflicts and discussions in the committee. Reasons for conflicts given were: poverty, jealousy, personalities and power hunger. Conflict was not only seen in a negative light, however. At the feedback meeting of the Ehirovipuka Conservancy, a committee member compared the conflicts in the committee with those in Parliament. He stated that disputes were necessary to reach the best possible solution. One interviewee from an NGO emphasised that conflict is inevitable when power is shifted. Nevertheless some conflicts in both committees seemed to go so far as to slow down the process, because the conflicting parties undermined each other’s work.

“There is a lot of hunger so people in the committee are not working together. A lot of conflict, everyone wants your job.” (Interview 42, staff, Ehirovipuka)

“I will not answer the question who is the strongest in the committee. We are all enemies of each other, there will be a problems if I name names.” (Interview 49, committee member, Ehirovipuka)

In Ehirovipuka as well as in ≠Khoadi //Hôas, interviewees complained about an uneven distribution of power in the committee and some individuals monopolising power. This seems to be a problem arising not only in these two conservancies. Some interviewees made suggestions of how structural

changes (i.e. of conservancy constitutions) could limit the options for the accumulation and abuse of power. One recommendation was that the conservancy constitution should prevent people from having many powerful positions at the same time. For example, the constitution in ≠Khoadi //Hôas does not allow staff of the conservancy to serve in the conservancy committee, but in Ehirovipuka there is no such regulation. Some interviewees criticised that a five-year term for the committee, as in ≠Khoadi //Hôas, was too long because it gave few options to remove committee members who were monopolising power. On the other hand, committee members and other stakeholders stated that a one-year term, as in Ehirovipuka, was too short to allow the committee to work effectively.

4.4 Conservancies – traditional authorities

Conservancies and traditional authorities have jurisdiction over two distinct resources – wildlife (conservancies) and land (traditional authorities) (GRN, 1995 and GRN, 1996). However, decisions about one resource influence the other, therefore traditional authorities are important local (and also regional/national) stakeholders of the conservancies and conservancies can have an impact on the action of traditional authorities.

The role of traditional authorities is not clearly defined in the conservancy legislation. The responsibilities and powers of traditional authorities in general were under discussion when this research was implemented, due to the establishment of land boards (GRN, 2003) and conservancies, the strengthening of regional government, amendments to the Traditional Authorities Act and discussions about people's park and concession policies (Werner, 2003).

To make matters even more complex, the strength and structure of traditional authorities varies between (and also within) different cultural groups. The two case studies were conducted in a community of mainly Damaras (≠Khoadi //Hôas) and one of mainly Hereros (Ehirovipuka). Some interviewees indicated that the position of traditional authorities in the Kunene in general is not as strong as elsewhere, i.e. in the Caprivi, and that traditional authorities are stronger in Kunene North (Ehirovipuka) than in Kunene South (≠Khoadi //Hôas).

One government representative described that in the Kunene South most traditional authorities only wanted to be consulted by the conservancy committees. In the Kunene North, however, he saw traditional authorities that wanted to be the decision makers of the conservancies. As described above, the stronger role of the traditional authorities in Ehirovipuka than in ≠Khoadi //Hôas was obvious. While in Ehirovipuka most committee members were, in one way or another, related to the traditional authorities, in ≠Khoadi //Hôas the traditional authorities were represented through one councillor as an additional (non-voting) member of the committee.

“Here [Ehirovipuka] traditional authorities don't feel threatened by the conservancy. It is a bonus to them. The committee consists of traditional authorities so they get more powerful.” (Interview 46, NGO)

“From the beginning the conservancy was not explained properly to see that conservancy and traditional authorities are not one thing but two different things.” (Interview 40, community member, Ehirovipuka)

“Traditional authorities, they don't have so much power in the conservancy, they just give advice.” (Interview 9, staff, ≠Khoadi //Hôas)

In some communities the conservancies conflict with traditional authorities. Interviewees from the national and regional level gave three reasons for conflicts between conservancies and traditional authorities:

- Traditional authorities who are not accepted by their people or are corrupt were said to fear conservancies as they latter imply higher degrees of control and a demand for accountability.
- Conservancies which exclude traditional authorities and do not consult them tend to have conflicts with them as well.
- Sometimes conflicts started within the traditional authorities, who then used the conservancy as a platform to exercise these conflicts.

“Traditional authorities fighting through the conservancy is not a common problem [of all conservancies], only in some conservancies, but for those who have more than one leader it is a burning issue.” (Interview 46, NGO)

“Influence of the conflict of traditional authorities on the conservancy [Ehrovipuka]? That depends on how the conservancy is run. If it is democratic and there is no discrimination against the followers of one headman, there should not be any impact. Up to now the conflict has no effect on the conservancy.” (Interview 46, NGO)

Conflicts between local traditional authorities in Ehrovipuka and ≠Khoadi //Hôas

In Ehrovipuka and ≠Khoadi //Hôas there were conflicts between traditional authorities while the case studies were being conducted. In Ehrovipuka the conflict evolved around the question of the legitimate successor of the late Headman Kephaz Muzuma. After the death of this powerful protagonist of the conservancy and traditional authorities, two traditional leaders (Langman Muzuma and Goliath Tjaveondja) claimed to be his rightful successors. At the time of the research most local interviewees stated that the conflict was not too serious because of the close family links of both traditional leaders and because the conflict did not include different political parties. Both leaders were seen as supporters of the conservancy and interviewees saw it as very unlikely that the conflict would have a significant impact on the conservancy.

“It is just a traditional authorities’ conflict, not for other people.” (Interview 39, community member, Ehrovipuka)

The situation in ≠Khoadi //Hôas was more complex and inscrutable. The conflicts of local traditional authorities were mingled with national-level political struggles. At the time of the field study the conservancy committee was strongly taking sides. Researchers, MET staff and committee members described the local conflict as the clash between a local traditional authority that was very involved in the conservancy matters right from the beginning (Ernst Gurirab), and a new chief (Max Haraseb) who was seen as a “Windhoek player”. While Ernst Gurirab lived in Anker and was described as a member of the central power group of the conservancy, Max Haraseb lived in the north of the conservancy where people in general expressed a lower feeling of ownership over the conservancy. At the national level Max Haraseb was part of a group of Damara chiefs who wanted to reduce the Damara King’s power to merely representative functions. Even though Haraseb said that he did not belong to any political party, the local public saw him as a SWAPO supporter (South West African People’s Organisation), while Damara King Justus Garoeb is the leader of the UDF (United Democratic Front), the opposition party. During the field stay the conflict grew more and more severe with members of the local community holding a meeting to try and remove Max Haraseb from his position as a chief. A MET representative observed:

“Traditional interests and political party conflicts are intermingled. The traditional side is not so much of a problem but the political difference between committees and traditional authorities, like in ≠Khoadi. There is a power struggle between Ernst and Max. The committee is busy choosing sides between these old men. They started on their own but the conservancy comes to make use of one traditional leader. [...] I tell conservancies to stay out of the matters of traditional authorities. Max is the recognised chief, he can write to the President, ‘They do not recognise me, they let the PTOs [Permission to Occupy] be signed by someone else.’ The conservancy can only lose there, the President listens to traditional authorities, they have more power than us, the MET.” (Interview 3, government)

At the feedback meeting in ≠Khoadi //Hôas, committee members clearly took sides:

“The conservancy always worked with Ernst. [...] Max comes very late for dinner and wants to eat. You [researcher] came when these issues of power were fought about. There was a meeting where people wanted to remove Max Haraseb. The community ordered King Garoeb to dismiss Max. He comes late and breaks our achievements. [...] He stays in Windhoek for weeks.” (Conservancy committee, ≠Khoadi //Hôas, at feedback meeting)

Multi-actor conflict around Hobatere concession area

Another conflict of traditional authorities and conservancies evolved around the Hobatere concession area. Hobatere was an issue of local, regional and national interest, with various stakeholders having their respective open and hidden agendas. When the issue was discussed, it seemed that rumours, facts and strategic answers were intermingled and matters were still very much unresolved.

As it had been part of the Grootberg Ward that constitutes their conservancy, ≠Khoadi //Hôas had wanted to include the profitable concession area in the conservancy right from the beginning. Following government recommendations it was not included in the conservancy application, but negotiations with the concession holder started as soon as the conservancy was registered. After long negotiations with the concession holder, just when the contract was finally close to being signed, the process was stopped by outside actors.

Different interviewees saw either the MET or the Damara King Justus Garoeb as the main protagonist stalling the negotiations. Justus Garoeb wrote a letter to stop all further negotiations about Hobatere without the inclusion of traditional authorities. In an interview he said:

“Sometimes leaders of NGOs conflict with traditional authorities. NGOs do not have a legal standing in the area so they use conservancies against traditional authorities to gain power over land. [...] Power over land lies with the chief. Sometimes NGOs want more power over land than the chief.” (Interview 10, traditional authority)

Government, on the other hand, wanted the process to be stopped until a concession policy was put into action. Some interviewees stated that reasons for the government to stop negotiations could have been the yet unfinished plans to establish a contractual people’s park, including Hobatere, but also plans to make Hobatere a rhino sanctuary were mentioned. It was said that some government officials did not think that local communities could properly manage these prestigious animals.

Some interviewees stated that parts of the MET disagreed with the broad devolution of power through CBNRM and tried to at least “save” small parts of the area to keep under Ministry control. Another concern mentioned was that of fairness. Some Ministry staff, traditional authorities and members of other conservancies said they would like to see broader distribution of benefits. Four possible benefit distribution possibilities were given: benefits could go to the ≠Khoadi //Hôas Conservancy, to all neighbouring conservancies of Hobatere, to the whole Damara community or to the whole Damara traditional authority.

The position of the Damara traditional authorities in this conflict remained unclear throughout the interviews. Committee members stated that right from the beginning the local traditional leaders were supportive of ≠Khoadi //Hôas including Hobatere into the conservancy. There were letters from the King stating they should go ahead at the beginning of the negotiations between conservancy committee and concession holders, and then there was a letter to stop all further negotiations just when the signing of a contract was close. Some interviewees hinted that King Garoeb wanted to secure the income for the Damara Royal House to strengthen his own position.

When other conservancies like Ehirovipuka stated their interest in Hobatere, that move was described as a conflict between NGOs. Some interviewees said that the Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF) (≠Khoadi //Hôas) and IRDNC (Ehirovipuka) were competing for territory. While this report was being written, negotiations between stakeholders have been taken up (and postponed) again, so no definite outcome can be given.

4.5 Conservancies – tourism sector

In both case study conservancies, so far the tourism sector has had little impact. Trophy hunting has been conducted in both conservancies, and Ehirovipuka had signed a contract for the building of a lodge at Ombonde River, but ≠Khoadi //Hôas was still looking for a tender for a lodge in Klip River. In both conservancies there were very high expectations among committee and community members of how tourism would improve the living standards of local people.

“After three to five years we will have no jobless people here, all the staff of the lodge will come from here, 25 people plus 15 for the campsite. [...] I think that at the moment there are about 20 people with grade 12 looking for a job in Otjokavare.” (Interview 50, community member, Ehirovipuka)

Some NGO staff added the expectation that increased income through tourism would change land-use practice in the long run to reduce the pressure that farming puts on the land. In contrast, some of the NGO and government staff saw the opposite as more likely:

“Are there any examples in southern Africa where additional income of tourism means people stop farming just because they have the money now? People here live from farming; there are more reasons for farming than just money. It is not at all said that tourism leads to a change in land use, I don't think there is any example.” (NGO at a meeting of FIRM, in ≠Khoadi //Hôas)

The high expectations lead to a risk of people seeing the conservancy as a failure in five or 10 years time if every goal has not been achieved. Many local people did not keep in mind that conservancies have very different tourism potentials.

“There are small conservancies like Torra with high potential and big conservancies with less potential like ≠Khoadi, that is a big area and they have only trophy hunting as income. [...] It is so densely populated, there are no spots for tourism.” (Interview 3, government)

In the second half of 2002, ≠Khoadi //Hôas was looking for a tender to build a lodge in the Klip River wildlife area. They did not succeed and the reasons given differed, as those given by a committee member and an interviewee from the tourism sector below illustrate:

“The time given to the tenders was one month. That was too short so people did not tender, they say they need at least six months for the whole process, to get back to their board of directors.” (Interview 13, committee member, ≠Khoadi //Hôas)

“They [≠Khoadi //Hôas] didn't have a tender for Klip River because there is not enough water in that place. You would need a fool to build a lodge there. He would only have water for two years, then it's finished. All the Namibian investors know that. The Klip River is a beautiful place but it is far from the big tourism routes. People underestimate the effort you have to put into marketing to get tourists there.” (Interview 47, tourism sector)

4.6 Conservancies – NGOs

Interviewees in general found it difficult to determine how much power and influence NGOs have in conservancies. The influence was seen as mainly connected to funding, and to a lesser extent to training and advice. A committee member stated that NGOs would not dictate what conservancies

had to do but funding was seen as a strong incentive for decisions according to the priorities of NGOs.

“It is difficult to decide on their power status because they are giving the money and money talks, but they do not tell us what to do, they do not force something upon us.” (Interview 2, committee member, ≠Khoadi //Hôas)

“We [NGOs] don’t tell the communities what to do, so that afterwards people cannot say, ‘You manipulated us.’” (Interview 46, NGO)

In ≠Khoadi //Hôas NNF was the central implementing NGO, and in Ehirovipuka this role was taken by IRDNC. ≠Khoadi //Hôas was described as an exceptional conservancy as it managed to register with comparatively little NGO support. This was mostly due to an existing strong community-based organisation, the GFU.

The researcher gathered the impression that there was still less NGO presence in ≠Khoadi //Hôas than in Ehirovipuka, as the latter is part of the network of IRDNC activities, including joint quarterly planning meetings with representatives of many conservancies within the Kunene Region. Committee members of both conservancies saw the NGOs mainly as positive, although some in Ehirovipuka complained about IRDNC being too strong, controlling every move of the conservancy. The majority of critical remarks about NGOs did not come from local actors but from government staff, researchers, the tourism sector and, to a certain extent, other NGOs.

It was generally acknowledged that CBNRM would not be where it was without the engaged work of some NGOs, and certain individuals within these NGOs. They were seen as strong protagonists in the political set up, but this led to questions of legitimacy and democracy, with some interviewees describing NGOs as stronger in resources and impact than the government.

“The problem is that most of the conservancy’s time is programmed by NGOs. [...] No time is planned for government to go in and work with the community. We can do nothing because the NGOs set them a full agenda. The vehicle is remote controlled, the management committee is remote controlled by NGOs.” (Interview 3, government)

Discussions with NGO staff showed that they themselves saw their position in a critical light, with one question being central: how and when do conservancies become sufficiently independent so that NGOs can withdraw their support?

“Sometimes you have to push people to keep their house in order. Yes, they should do their own things but it would be terrible to see it collapsing after you put so much work in it. If we see a conservancy is not working properly, like here [Ehirovipuka] where the committee does not turn up if you want to work with them, we [IRDNC] tell them we are going to pull out if they do not get their house in order. Now this problem is solved.” (Interview 32, NGO)

Conservancy committees, as well as external observers, said that the NGOs basically set the schedule of the conservancies. In the eyes of some interviewees, the NGOs’ priorities did not always reflect the priorities of committees and local people. One development seemed to be just underway during the course of the field study, as NGO staff and other stakeholder talked openly about the fact that there was a gap between committees and local communities. The researcher was therefore able to observe different approaches to facilitation and control to try to solve this problem.

As mentioned in Section 4.2, NGO staff had different opinions about democracy in conservancies. One interviewee saw it very positively:

“...now 12 years after Independence we have taken great strides towards grass-roots democracy. Ordinary people can vote and vote off committees [...]. Conservancies are a direct form of basic democracy: it is your neighbour you are accountable to.” (Interview 11, NGO)

But some criticised:

“They (the committees) tend to be too democratic. Like Torra, their benefit distribution plan is excellent but they keep going back to the community for years now. They are afraid to spend the money, it is the first time that the community ever had that money.” (Interview 11, NGO)

So, on the one hand, CBNRM is about grass-roots democracy; but, on the other hand, some NGO staff saw democratic processes as an obstacle to effective management:

“Democracy should be there but we should limit it. Everyone should have a say but people tend to misuse that. For example, if someone wants something to happen and does not think realistically. If people misuse democracy, you should rather have a few strong people.” (Interview 45, NGO)

At the AGM in ≠Khoadi //Hôas, the researcher was able to observe how self-confident committee members were acting in confrontation with outsiders. The chair of this meeting asked NGO staff, MET staff and researchers frankly:

“We are here to discuss and decide as members. So please if you are a visitor and observer, please just observe and be quiet, we don't need you to talk.” (Interview 13, committee member, ≠Khoadi //Hôas, at AGM)

4.7 Conservancies – government

The power of the government in conservancies is mainly related to the legislative processes, the registration of conservancies, the setting of hunting quotas and law enforcement in cases of poaching. Most interviewees saw the government as powerful when it came to setting a framework, but not so much in the day-to-day management of a conservancy.

“The MET, they are the big, big, big one, the top one. They gave us the conservancy and within that all the trees, animals, and natural resources. They are watching us, how we treat the wildlife. The community applies for a quota and they decide. That means they are the eyes of the whole conservancy. If an animal gets killed [poaching], the game guards take it to the MET; they do to that person what they want. They also look if this conservancy is going forward or being bankrupt. The MET has the right to de-gazette us. Being bankrupt, that is if there is money but no benefit distribution or if the conservancy cannot control poaching. No, de-gazetting of conservancies has not happened yet, because we are still new.” (Interview 44, committee member, Ehirovipuka)

However, there are observers (and government staff) who would like the MET to take a stronger role and be more pro-active in CBNRM.

“Proper monitoring mechanisms should be put in place and the status of the conservancies reviewed. MET should take action. They should kick [de-gazette] one and then everybody knows, action can be taken.” (Interview 54, researcher)

Some interviewees from government, researchers and committee members stated that the government could not be seen as one consistent body. The main government body involved in CBNRM is the MET. Interviewees saw different schools of thinking within the Ministry, which could be broadly described as a wildlife-centred and a people-centred school. The first one consists of those who doubt that local people can protect their wildlife properly and who favour parks over conservancies. The second one consists of conservancy supporters who are convinced that conservation has to be linked with the uplifting of local livelihoods.

“There is a white school and a black school in government. The white school sees less value in people than in animals. [...] Everyone wants to stop or slow down the pace of conservancies to get a piece of the cake but what can they do to slow us down?” (Interview 13, committee member, ≠Khoadi //Hôas)

“Many people in government have little trust in local decisions: they would rather decide or keep control over the decision making. They don't have a clear understanding of their roles.” (Interview 20, government)

“It is difficult to change people's attitudes, to get government, private sector and NGOs to trust in local people and their capacities.” (Interview 25, NGO)

Some interviewees saw that conservancies might be perceived as a threat by central government, since they shift power from the national to the local level. Regional MET staff were generally described as dedicated and supportive, but perceived themselves as “left out” in many cases.

“They [≠Khoadi //Hôas] leave out regional MET staff. There are strong links between the conservancies and central MET.” (Interview 3, government)

“NGOs feel all other stakeholders except for the communities have to be excluded [from the negotiations about Hobatere].” (Interview 3, government)

“Some of the regional/local MET people are afraid if we do our job well we will take their job.” (Interview 13, conservancy committee, ≠Khoadi //Hôas)

“The MET sets the rules but we do not see them around [Ehrovipuka]. [...] They are a senior player but have little human resources.” (Interview 32, NGO)

4.8 NGOs – MET

The responsibilities and roles of some NGOs and MET staff in CBNRM were overlapping, which could lead to shared responsibility and co-operation. However, many interviewees from both NGOs and MET complained about their MET/NGO counterparts respectively. They described their organisation as the one doing the most important work and the other (NGOs or MET) as basically interfering and disturbing processes. Government representatives raised the issue of a loss of democratic control when NGOs grew stronger.

“This set up of CBNRM and NGOs versus government, if you go further that is a political situation. We have to be very careful about that. We are busy transforming communities from indigenous knowledge to foreign knowledge and expertise. (...) At this moment we cannot say communities benefit, it is still donor driven, I wonder what will happen when the donors phase out.” (Interview 3, government)

“NGOs want to remain in the communities, they don't want the conservancies to become independent.” (Interview 3, government)

On the other hand, NGO interviewees criticised MET actors for being ineffective and not trusting in local communities.

5. CONCLUSION

This research delivers findings about the distribution of power and influence in CBNRM in Namibia in general and in two specific conservancies. Although interviewees from different sectors had different opinions about the matter, some general tendencies can be identified. CBNRM differs from other forms of natural resource management (like national parks) as it focuses not only on the natural resources but also on local people. Thus, to find out whether and why it does or does not work, it is not enough simply to assess game numbers and bank accounts. Socio-political development is one core aim of CBNRM, with shifting the distribution of power and influence being a part of that. This research indicates that conservancies in their own way induce power shifts as the conservancy legislation devolves resource management rights to the communities, but it is not clear yet whether the power is shifted entirely in the directions intended by the programme.

Gap between empowered committee/staff and the rest of the community

In the two case study conservancies, the committees and staff have been empowered through CBNRM with elements of the central government's power shifted to the conservancy committees. However, in both conservancies there were doubts as to whether this has empowered the community as a whole. Local people were only starting gradually to exercise their rights. Additionally, committees struggled with individuals in the committees trying to monopolise power.

Conservancy legislation and constitutions need revision

The conservancy legislation (GRN, 1996: 83) had been in place for a good six years when this research was undertaken. The interviewees with a national or regional perspective saw the need for a revision of the legislation according to the experiences of the last six years. Two changes were seen as especially urgent: the clarification of the roles of different actors, especially those of the traditional authorities, and the broadening of the approach to other resources to allow for one integrated approach to local natural resource management.

In both conservancies, the committees saw the need for a revision of their constitution. The problem that received the biggest attention here was the election procedure. The merits of central or village-level elections were judged differently, as were the durations of committee terms. Regarding the latter, many actors saw a five-year term (≠Khoadi //Hôas) as too long, while a one-year term (Ehrovipuka) was generally seen as too short to be effective.

High expectations but low and uneven distribution of benefits

Communication and participation of the broader community can still be improved; fairness of benefit distribution (as in meat and casual employment) was a vividly discussed issue. Local communities in both conservancies had very high expectations, but – for a whole range of reasons – only a few of them were actively participating in conservancy matters. As conservancies did not meet all people's expectations there were a number of discontented community members; this is likely to increase. Illegal hunting still continues on a local scale, but it is not clear how far that is a threat to wildlife numbers and endangered species. Although prestigious species like elephants seem to be quite safe, less spectacular endangered species may be threatened.

Unclear role of traditional authorities leads to conflicts that harm CBNRM

The role of traditional authorities is unclear in the conservancy legislation, which has led to conflicts between conservancies and traditional authorities. Conservancies also tend to be drawn into existing conflicts of traditional authorities if they take sides. The conflicts around the Hobatere concession area show that traditional authority conflicts can become mixed up with conflicts of political parties, of central and local leaders, NGOs, private sector and the government.

Strong NGOs are likely to exclude and overpower other stakeholders

NGOs were influential actors in the construction and implementation of CBNRM. It was also observed, however, that NGOs who facilitated successful CBNRM projects grew in strength *through* CBNRM. Therefore, to maintain their own position, NGOs – especially those focusing exclusively on CBNRM – need conservancies to be a success story. Thus generally NGO staff were open to constructive criticism, although sensitive when it came to public exposure of weaknesses. Issues that need to be discussed further include: the democratic legitimacy of NGOs, the dependency of conservancies on NGOs, accountability and transparency, and competition between the respective NGOs and between NGOs and government.

Lack of resources and unity leads to a weak position of the MET in CBNRM

The MET has played an important role in providing the framework for conservancies, but there were requests that it should be more active in assessment and evaluation, to ensure that CBNRM is not manipulated by the more intelligent and powerful within a community. Competition and a lack of trust between some MET employees and NGO staff took up a lot of energy and resources which could have been used in a more constructive way. Interviewees described, however, that in 2002 a lot of the barriers between these actors had been broken through and interaction had been revived. Throughout the research it seemed as if MET was aiming in two directions at the same time: one group of MET staff favouring wildlife-centred conservation such as National Parks and mistrusting local decision-making, and the other group strongly promoting people-centred conservation and local empowerment. Thus pro- and contra-CBNRM protagonists tried to slow each other down.

Further developments

During the field stay some further developments of CBNRM were started, or at least discussed. Important ones included:

- The revision of the CBNRM legislation to clarify the position of different stakeholders.
- The revision of conservancy constitutions.
- Activities to improve communication and community participation.

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APPENDIX 1: LIST OF INTERVIEW PARTNERS

This is a list of all interviewees in this research. The interview number in brackets after the quotations in the text do not relate to the interviewees' positions in this list or the order in which the interviews were undertaken. The numbers are only included to show which answers were given by the same interviewee. The interviewees were assured that "nothing you will say will be connected with your name". In the case of the community members their names will not be mentioned at all to avoid complications for those who spoke about sensitive matters. This list includes formal and informal interviews. If more than one date is given, either the interview was split due to lack of time or interviewees were consulted again to discuss open questions and preliminary findings.

Name	Date	Quoted as	Occupation
Abiude Kativa	03.11. & 23.11.2002	Committee member Ehrovipuka	Treasurer Ehrovipuka, vice-secretary of traditional authority Licius Tjjahura
Barnabas Tjindjou	20.10.2002	Committee member Ehrovipuka	Committee member Ehrovipuka
Benhardt Tjindjumba	09.10. & 23.11.2002	Committee member Ehrovipuka	Committee member Ehrovipuka
Gerson K. Uaroua	10.10. & 23.11.2002	Committee member Ehrovipuka	Chairman Ehrovipuka, secretary of traditional authority Langman Muzuma, game guard
Joseph Zaongara	20.10.2002	Committee member Ehrovipuka	Committee member Ehrovipuka
Kaupasaneua Tjeundo	19.10.2002	Committee member Ehrovipuka	Committee member Ehrovipuka
Olga Uahimisa	20.10.2002	Committee member Ehrovipuka	Committee member Ehrovipuka
No name	09.09.2002	Community member ≠Khoadi //Hôas	Community member ≠Khoadi //Hôas
No name	09.09.2002	Community member ≠Khoadi //Hôas	Community member ≠Khoadi //Hôas
No name	04.10.2002	Community member ≠Khoadi //Hôas	Community member ≠Khoadi //Hôas
No name	04.10.2002	Community member ≠Khoadi //Hôas	Community member ≠Khoadi //Hôas
No name	27.08.2002	Community member ≠Khoadi //Hôas	Community member ≠Khoadi //Hôas
No name	27.08.2002	Community member ≠Khoadi //Hôas	Community member ≠Khoadi //Hôas
No name	27.08.2002	Community member ≠Khoadi //Hôas	Community member ≠Khoadi //Hôas
No name	27.08.2002	Community member ≠Khoadi //Hôas	Community member ≠Khoadi //Hôas
No name	02.09.2002	Community member ≠Khoadi //Hôas	Community member ≠Khoadi //Hôas
No name	02.09.2002	Community member ≠Khoadi //Hôas	Community member ≠Khoadi //Hôas
No name	02.09.2002	Community member ≠Khoadi //Hôas	Community member ≠Khoadi //Hôas
No name	14.10.2002	Community member ≠Khoadi //Hôas	Community member ≠Khoadi //Hôas
No name	29.11.2002	Community member ≠Khoadi //Hôas	Community member ≠Khoadi //Hôas
No name	12.10.2002	Community member Ehrovipuka	Community member Ehrovipuka

No name	12.10.2002	Community member Ehirovipuka	Community member Ehirovipuka
No name	12.10.2002	Community member Ehirovipuka	Community member Ehirovipuka
No name	12.10.2002	Community member Ehirovipuka	Community member Ehirovipuka
No name	20.10.2002	Community member Ehirovipuka	Community member Ehirovipuka
No name	29.10.2002	Community member Ehirovipuka	Community member Ehirovipuka
No name	04.11.2002	Community member Ehirovipuka	Community member Ehirovipuka
No name	04.11.2002	Community member Ehirovipuka	Community member Ehirovipuka
No name	04.11.2002	Community member Ehirovipuka	Community member Ehirovipuka
Joseph Jorries Seiseb	04.09.2002	Conservancy committee	Chairman of the //Huab emerging conservancy
Asser Ndjitezeua	12.11.2002	Conservancy committee ≠Khoadi //Hôas	Chairman ≠Khoadi //Hôas since October 2002
Dawid Goagaseb	10.09.2002	Conservancy committee ≠Khoadi //Hôas	Chairman of conservancy committee ≠Khoadi //Hôas up to October 2002
German Muzuma	07.11.2002	Conservancy Committee Ehirovipuka	Vice-treasurer Ehirovipuka, acting headman of Langman Muzuma, Otjokavare
Ben Ilonga	03.09.2002	Government	Regional MET Khorixas
Hon. S. Tjongarero	03.09.2002	Government	Regional governor Kunene Region, traditional authority
John Hazam	13.08. & 10.12.2002	Government	CBNRM co-ordinator at MET
Nahor Howaseb	03.09. & 05.11. & 06.11.2002	Government	Regional MET Outjo
Rinus Mutirua	22.10.2002	Government	Regional MET Opuwo
Siegfried Gawiseb	03.09.2002	Government	Regional MET Khorixas
Siegfried Tjitjo	22.10.2002	Government	Regional MET Opuwo
Tsukhoe M. //Garoes	14.08.2002	Government	Co-ordinator of the CBNRM Support Department (CSD), MET
Abiude Karangee	30.10.2002	NGO	Freelance consultant working for NACOBTA
Amanda Horn	01.08.2002	NGO	Grants manager at NNF
Anna Davis	06.08. & 08.08.2002	NGO	CBNRM co-ordinator at NNF
Chris Brown	06.08.2002	NGO	Managing director of NNF
Colin Nott	12.08. & 02.10.2002	NGO	Institutional development unit IRDNC
David Ward	11.10.2002	NGO	Natural resource technical assistant and advisor WWF-LIFE
Garry G. Nekongo	11.10.2002	NGO	IRDNC, facilitator natural resource management
John Kasaona	22.11.2002	NGO	Deputy co-ordinator IRDNC Kunene, conservancy committee Anabib, technical advisor of traditional authority Lucky Kasaona
Lucky Kasaona	06.11.2002	NGO	IRDNC, committee member Anabib Conservancy, traditional authority
Margie Jacobson	17.10.2002	NGO	Managing director IRDNC
Norman Tjombe	16.10.2002	NGO	Legal Assistance Centre (LAC)
Patricia Skyer	14.08.2002	NGO	NACSO
Willie Boonzaer	17.10.2002	NGO	Consultant for NACOBTA
Raymond Peters	11.10.2002	NGO	Natural resource technical assistant and advisor WWF-LIFE
Ronnie Dempers	08.08.2002	NGO	NDF

Uziel Ndavera	30.10.2002	NGO	WWF-LIFE
Alfons Musimane	05.08.2002	Researcher	Project leader of CBNRM research programme at the Multi-disciplinary Research Centre UNAM
Andrew Long	31.07.2002	Researcher	Team leader of the WILD Project
Kit Vaughan	19.08. & 14.10.2002	Researcher	Senior researcher, WILD Project Kunene Region
Selma Nangula	05.08.2002	Researcher	Researcher at the Multi-disciplinary Research Centre UNAM
Bernandus Bob #Guibeb	28.08.2002	Staff ≠Khoadi //Hôas	Co-ordinator of environmental shepherds ≠Khoadi //Hôas
Gabriel Goagoseb	23.08.2002	Staff ≠Khoadi //Hôas	Technical advisor ≠Khoadi //Hôas
Helga /Howoses	30.08.2002	Staff ≠Khoadi //Hôas	Information liaison officer ≠Khoadi //Hôas
Antonia Muzuma	04.11.2002	Staff Ehirovipuka	Community activator Ehirovipuka
Filimon Kapi	20.10.2002	Staff Ehirovipuka	Field officer and committee member Ehirovipuka
Pine Pienar	04.09.2002	Tourism sector	Manager of the Brandberg Community Campsite
Steve Brain	12.10.2002	Tourism Sector	Concession holder of Hobatere
Justus Garoeb	14.08.2002	Traditional authority	Damara King
Ernst Gurirab	13.11.2002	Traditional authority ≠Khoadi //Hôas	Traditional councillor at Anker, ≠Khoadi //Hôas
Mariane Tsanigas	25.08.2002	Traditional authority ≠Khoadi //Hôas	Headwoman at Erwee, ≠Khoadi //Hôas
Max Haraseb	09.11.2002	Traditional authority ≠Khoadi //Hôas	Traditional chief at Marienhoeh, ≠Khoadi //Hôas
Michael Tulo /Gomeb	08.09.2002	Traditional authority ≠Khoadi //Hôas	Traditional councillor and environmental shepherd ≠Khoadi //Hôas
Wilem #Gawabab	29.08.2002	Traditional authority ≠Khoadi //Hôas	Traditional councillor at Anker, ≠Khoadi //Hôas
Goliath Tjaveondja	21.10.2002	Traditional authority Ehirovipuka	Traditional authority at Otjokavare, Ehirovipuka
Licius Tjigahura	03.11.2002	Traditional authority Ehirovipuka	Traditional authority at Otjetjekua, Ehirovipuka
Stefanus Turutjo	12.10.2002	Traditional authority Ehirovipuka	Traditional authority at Ohanyuna, Ehirovipuka
Timoteus Kavetu	21.10.2002	Traditional authority Ehirovipuka	Traditional authority at Otjipau, Ehirovipuka
Langman Muzuma	30.10.2002	Traditional authority Ehirovipuka	Traditional authority at Otjokavare, Ehirovipuka

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF MEETINGS ATTENDED/FACILITATED

Meeting	Date	Location
Community meeting	24.08.2002	Erwee, ≠Khoadi //Hôas
FIRM meeting, ≠Khoadi //Hôas	02.10.2002	Grootberg, ≠Khoadi //Hôas
Benefit distribution plan preparation meeting with community-based organisations, ≠Khoadi //Hôas	03.10.2002	Grootberg, ≠Khoadi //Hôas
WWF-LIFE event book training, Ehirovipuka	11.10.2002	Otjokavare, Ehirovipuka
IRDNC quarterly planning meeting	15-17.10.2002	Wereldsend
AGM ≠Khoadi //Hôas	25-26.10.2002	Grootberg, ≠Khoadi //Hôas
Traditional authority meeting about leadership conflict	31.10.2002	Otjokavare, Ehirovipuka
Meeting of Ehirovipuka committee with chief warden of Etosha and Skeleton Coast about parks and neighbours	20.11.2002	Etosha National Park
IRDNC visioning workshop Ehirovipuka	23-26.11.2002	Otjokavare, Otjomumborombonga, Otjipae, Okovasiona
Feedback of this research to Ehirovipuka staff and committee	27.11.2002	Otjokavare, Ehirovipuka
Feedback of this research to ≠Khoadi //Hôas staff, committee and traditional authorities	02.12.2002	Grootberg, ≠Khoadi //Hôas
Feedback of this research to WILD Project	04.12.2002	Windhoek
Feedback of this research to NGOs and MET	13.12.2002	Windhoek

APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS WITH LOW DETAILED KNOWLEDGE

Problem animals:

- Do you have problems with wild animals here (predators, elephants)?
- What kind of problems?
- What do you do if that happens (i.e. a predator kills livestock, an elephant damages your water pump)?
- Do you go to the conservancy? How do they react?

Benefits:

- What about meat distribution? Did you get meat from the conservancy?
- What did you get? Were you content?
- Do you know how the distribution is organised?
- Did you ever work for the conservancy?
- What kind of job did you do?
- If you didn't work for them, would you like to?
- Do you know how they chose the people to work for them?
- Do you know if there are plans for financial benefit distribution?
- If you could decide, what would you do with the benefits?
- Do you think they distribute benefits like meat and jobs in a fair manner?

Conservation:

- What is the conservancy there for? What is the aim of the conservancy?
- Do you remember how wild animals were protected before the conservancy started?
- The conservancy tries to stop poaching. How do they do that? Would you say they are successful?
- If interviewee states that there is still poaching: what do you think, why do people still hunt?

Information, co-operation with local people:

- Do conservancy people (staff or committee) come around to your place?
- Who comes?
- What do they do?
- When/how often?

- Where do you get information about the conservancy?
- Are you a conservancy member?
- Have you been to conservancy meetings?
- Could you explain to me what happens there?

Distribution of power and influence:

- What would you say: who are the strongest people in the conservancy?
- Are you content with what they are doing? If not, what goes wrong?
- Do you know what the role of the traditional authority is in the conservancy?
- I heard that there is a conflict between the traditional authorities, could you explain to me what it is about?
- Do you think that the conflict will have any influence on the conservancy?
- Are you of the family of one of the traditional authorities?

Vision:

- If you could change whatever you wanted in the conservancy, what would you do?

APPENDIX 4: SET OF STAKEHOLDER DATA (EXAMPLE)

No of interview	33
Date	XXX
Name of interviewee	XXX
Name of conservancy	Ehrovipuka
Name of actor	Committee member Ehrovipuka Jatiye Uaroua
Stakeholder group	Multi-portfolio actor
Sub-cluster stakeholder group	Multi-portfolio actor conservancy / traditional authority
Power tower total	4
Power status relational	0.4
Range of actions	Observe, advise, decide
Comment	Council of Licius. He is the one who says: Let's sit down and talk, don't shout. If there is an argument about boundaries, he knows the history and traditional borders.

APPENDIX 5: LIST OF NGOs AND DONORS IN THE TWO CONSERVANCIES (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

Desert Research Foundation of Namibia (DRFN)
Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, Germany (GTZ)
Institute for Management and Leadership Training (IMLT)
Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC)
Legal Assistance Centre (LAC)
Namibia Community-based Tourism Association (NACOBTA)
Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organisations (NACSO)
Namibia's Programme to Combat Desertification (NAPCOD)
Namibia Development Trust (NDT)
Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF)
Raleigh International
Rössing Foundation (RF)
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
US Agency for International Development (USAID)
World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

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