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Etosha-Kunene Histories: a weave of prior work

entangled and contested pasts, lands and 'natures'
in post-colonial Namibia

by Elsemi Olwage, with Sian Sullivan, Ute Dieckmann and Selma Lendelvo

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Abstract

This report presents a weave of prior work produced by the principal investigators of the *Etosha-Kunene Histories* project, funded by the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council and the German Research Foundation. It brings together key points of convergence and thematic overlaps between their work and creates a generative and interdisciplinary dialogue on Etosha-Kunene's complex and entangled pasts, lands and 'natures'. Broadly speaking, this report explores the contributions of the three authors to understanding Etosha-Kunene's overlapping colonial and social histories of settlement, land, conservation and indigeneity. In doing so it considers changing livelihoods and land-relations, and the diversity of resource use, management and knowledge practices which co-constitute the past and present of Etosha-Kunene's 'cultures' and 'natures'. The report thus reads across their work to provide insight into the historical processes, changing policy and legal mechanisms, and colonial and global discourses which have shaped Etosha-Kunene's emerging socio-materialities, and contributed to hegemonic ways of imagining, valuing, and knowing 'nature'. A focus here is on 'African landscapes' and dryland ecologies, and the ongoing and dialectical construction of cultural identities, ethnicity, and indigeneity. Their work argues for learning from locally-rooted and culturally-inflected land-relations, diverse tenure institutions, and Indigenous and gendered knowledge systems and values: both for conservation praxis and for informing environmental and land management debates. Lastly, the report explores their contribution to decolonising environmental knowledge and heritage management practices through an ongoing engagement with, and mapping of, 'relational ontologies', and of occluded social and cultural landscape histories.

[1] Elsemi Olwage is a Namibian post-doctoral researcher commissioned to contribute this review for the *Etosha-Kunene Histories* project. The remaining three contributors are the project's UK, Germany and Namibia Principal Investigators respectively.

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List of Acronyms

ACLRA	Agricultural Commercial Land Reform Act
AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council (UK)
CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resource Management
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CLRA	Communal Land Reform Act
DFG	Deutsche Forshungsgemeinschaft / German Research Foundation
ENP	Etosha National Park
FMD	Foot and Mouth Disease
HWC	Human-Wildlife Conflict
IPPC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
JV	Joint Venture
LSU	Large Stock Units
MCA-N	Millennium Challenge Account – Namibia
MAWLR	Ministry of Land Reform Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform (formerly Ministry of Land Reform, MLR)
MET	Ministry of Environment and Tourism (now MEFT - Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NWR	Namibia Wildlife Resorts
LAC	Legal Assistance Centre
PES	Payment for Ecosystem Services
SME	Small to Medium Enterprises
SSU	Small Stock Units
SWA	South West Africa
TA	Traditional Authorities
UK	United Kingdom
VCF	Veterinary Cordon Fence

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1. Introducing 'Etosha-Kunene Histories'

Introduction

This report was commissioned in year one of the *Etosha-Kunene Histories* (www.etosha-kunene-histories.net) research project, to assist the lead investigators with generating a fresh overview and synthesis of their prior work underscoring the project: its connections, overlaps and gaps. *Etosha-Kunene Histories* is a collaboration between academics at Bath Spa University (UK), the University of Cologne (Germany) and the University of Namibia, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (UK) and the German Research Foundation under a bilateral funding programme for Humanities research.

Etosha-Kunene Histories 'proposes a multivocal and historical analysis that contributes new thinking on colonialism, indigeneity and "natural history" in Namibia' (https://www.etosha-kunene-histories.net/about). The overall aim 'is to support laws and practice in biodiversity conservation to more fully recognise the diversity of pasts, cultures and natures constituting this internationally-valued region' (*ibid.*). With *Etosha-Kunene Histories* the three principal investigators seek to bring their combined research experience and prior work together into a regional social history of conservation for an area of national and international conservation importance. Their aim is to contribute a cross-disciplinary analysis that is simultaneously ethnographic, historical, and spatial in understanding the making of 'Etosha-Kunene' as a combined geographical and organisational unit with significant biodiversity conservation and cultural heritage value. Since the early 1990s 'Etosha-Kunene' has constituted the setting for ethnographic, oral history, archival, livelihoods and ecology research by the three researchers comprising the academic team leading this application. In chronological order the emphases of their research is as follows:

- Sian Sullivan (UK Principal Investigator, Bath Spa University) has carried out on-site oral history, cultural landscapes mapping and 'ethnoecological' research since 1992 in the Damaraland Communal Land Area (as delineated in the Communal Land Reform Act 2002), including the Palmwag Tourism Concession, neighbouring conservancies, Skeleton Coast National Park and settlements south of the 'Red Line', mainly with Khoekhoegowab-speaking Damara / ǂNūkhoen, ǁUbun and Nama, and most recently through the project *Future Pasts* (www.futurepasts.net);

- Ute Dieckmann (German Principal Investigator, University of Cologne) has carried out on-site oral history and cultural landscapes mapping with Khoekhoegowab-speaking Haiǁom in the Etosha National Park (ENP) since the late 1990s. She has also worked in the neighbouring Outjo district and contributed detailed historical and anthropological analyses of the perspectives and experiences of Haiǁom, as well as previously advantaged and disadvantaged farmers, government and NGOs;

- Selma Lendelvo (Namibian Principal Investigator, University of Namibia) has analysed indigenous knowledge in managing Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) bordering ENP, tourism experiences in ENP, and livelihood concerns of Himba-Herero pastoralists in Ehirovipuka Conservancy west of ENP.

Publications by these initiators of *Etosha-Kunene Histories* connected with their prior work in Namibian contexts are listed at https://www.etosha-kunene-histories.net/prior-work. Much of this work is also available through Namibia's Environment Information Service at http://www.the-eis.com/. The *Etosha-Kunene Histories* project proposes to combine, build on and extend this prior and preliminary work through a new programme of research (for more information, follow the links at https://www.etosha-kunene-histories.net/workpackages).

In embarking on this new collaborative project we realised it would be helpful to us for a fresh eye to read through our prior work and help us to articulate the 'weave' more clearly between it, so as to more fully integrate our research backgrounds in the different areas across our 'Etosha-Kunene' research area. Commissioning the present report was also partly a response to COVID-19 travel restrictions which meant that the field research components of the project had to be delayed, freeing up time for more review work. This is how the present report, led by Elsemi Olwage, came about: as a commission to read the prior work of the three lead investigators with an eye to two things simultaneously:

> 1) documenting patterns regarding content (as in discourse analysis), drawing out key areas of focus (and gaps), key findings, points of comparison and difference, and changes in our perspectives through time;
>
> and 2) connecting with themes identified as priorities in our original project funding application submitted in February 2019 (see Sullivan, Dieckmann and Lendelvo 2020).

The methodology involved reading across and reviewing around 95 publications shared between the three authors over a period of six months and in chronological order, starting with Sullivan's list of publications. A reference management programme (Citavi) was used to organise the publications thematically and to identify those publications where their work strongly overlaps and/or creates generative and transdisciplinary dialogues. Subsequently these publications were read more closely, summarised and coded, to further aid with refining the thematic categories and identifying interconnections and comparison points.

'Etosha-Kunene': setting and context

The *Etosha-Kunene Histories* project is located in an analysis of colonialism and coloniality. Specifically, it is concerned with how intersecting layers of formal colonial governance and desire interacted with local cultural and ecological complexity and generated shifts in land and socio-spatial organisation, and relations of power. Histories of colonial governance stretch back to the British annexation of the harbour town of Walvis Bay and the coastal islands in 1878, and the later formalised colonial 'protection' of present-day Namibia – first through German colonial rule (1884-1915) and subsequently that of South African colonial and later apartheid rule (1920-1990); with the territory of 'South West Africa' (SWA) becoming a British Protectorate in the wake of World War 1 and initially governed as mandated territory (1915-1920). The colonial encounter and the mapping of colonial and state policies, discourses and practices generated lasting impacts and historical entanglements within and across Etosha-Kunene's diverse social and cultural ecologies. As Sullivan, Dieckmann and Lendelvo (2020) summarise:

Etosha-Kunene is shaped historically by both Anglo and German colonial interests stretching back to the mid-1800s, and subsequently by apartheid policies that partitioned land and populations during South Africa's administration of former 'South West Africa' in the 20th century. The geographical constellation of ecologies and cultures constituting Etosha-Kunene… stretches westwards from the celebrated Etosha National Park centred on the massive Etosha saltpan in north-central Namibia, to the Skeleton Coast National Park encompassing the interface between the northern Namib Desert and the Atlantic Ocean. Etosha National Park (ENP) itself is the current incarnation of a 'game conservation' area established in 1907 as Game Reserve No. 2 by the former German colonial state of Deutsch-Südwestafrika (1884-1915). As observed for major conservation areas elsewhere in Africa (see Adams & McShane 1996 on the Serengeti), the establishment of Game Reserve No. 2 was related to declines of human and livestock populations caused by a series of factors: the rinderpest epidemic of 1897 (Miescher 2012; Rizzo 2012: 25); drought from 1900-1903 (Wadley 1979); and [ultimately] a genocidal colonial war of especially 1904-1907 (Bley 1998; Olusoga and Erichsen 2010; Hartmann 2019).

Control of this new conservation area [Game Reserve No. 2] deepened as the state territory became a UN Mandated Territory (the British Protectorate of South West Africa) in the post WW1 period. Initially, indigenous Hai‖om inhabitants were able to live in the Game Reserve but were later evicted as ENP was increasingly enacted as an "African wilderness" from which people were absent(ed) (Dieckmann 2007[a]). The area west of present ENP boundaries was also shaped historically by layers of land clearances, connected with the post-1958 westward extension of the Etosha protected area (Sullivan 2017[a]) [and the expansion of surveyed freehold farms for white settler farmers]. Various boundary changes again took place in connection with the creation of new 'homeland' areas following government recommendations in the 1960s. At this time, much of the western portion of Etosha was reallocated as part of the 'homeland' of 'Damaraland' and the western park boundary was moved eastwards to its 1970 position [reducing its size from 93,240km^2 to 22,270km^2], allowing the Skeleton Coast National Park to be gazetted (in 1971) (Tinley 1971). Later, the Damara Regional Authority committed a large area of land in between these two Parks as the … tourism concession of Palmwag. Today this area is a popular high-end 'wilderness' tourism destination, and home to the largest population of endangered black rhino (*Diceros bicornis bicornis*) outside of a National Park (Muntifering *et al*. 2017).

After independence in 1990, the government addressed the land dispossession of the Hai‖om through a resettlement programme, but sustainable livelihood options remain a challenge on these farms (Dieckmann 2011). Areas west of ENP became more deeply woven into Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) approaches through establishment of communal area conservancies (Sullivan 2002[a]; Kimaro *et al*. 2015) …

Etosha-Kunene conservation territories are populated and shaped by an array of individuals and groups who embody and enact diverse histories, experiences, and perceptions. They include livestock herders, small-scale farmers, state and NGO conservation and development professionals, miners, tourists, tourism lodge managers and varied entrepreneurs, who are also groups and individuals with a clear sense of ethnic identity: European settlers; Khoe-speaking Hai‖om, Dama[ra] / ǂNūkhoen and ‖Ubun of various *!haoti* (land and lineage based groups); and Nama, Herero and Himba pastoralists. These overlapping and intersecting ethnic categories are themselves caught within and made through formations of power and associated discursive regimes (Butler 2006[1990]; Sullivan 2001a-b; Dieckmann 2007[b]) …

> [In particular] conceptions and constructions of indigenous natures and cultures as somehow ahistorical – as external to and background for historical change and development – can … arise (Adams and McShane 1996). The Etosha-Kunene conservation contexts have certainly been caught within this frame: spectacularised as 'last wildernesses' (Hall-Martin *et al*. 1988) yet nonetheless inhabited in some corners by exotic(ised) indigenous pastoralists (Jacobsohn 1998[1990]) and primitive 'Bushmen' (as critiqued for Etosha in Gordon 1997; also Hitchcock 2015) for whom the permissibility of presence becomes entangled with projections of acceptably 'pure' traditional practices. All these ideas of natures and peoples have been dramatically shaped by historical factors that can be documented.

Through weaving together of the work of the three principal investigators the *Etosha-Kunene Histories* project articulates its approach to the historical, socio-ecological, and material-discursive entanglements which shaped and continue to shape the mutual constitution of Etosha-Kunene's 'natures' and 'cultures'. This weaving is ongoing, with Sullivan and Dieckmann documenting the Etosha-Kunene historical trajectories in detail through a series of chronologies online at https://www.etosha-kunene-histories.net/wp1-historicising-etosha-kunene, as well as spatialised historical journeys by varied colonial actors at https://www.etosha-kunene-histories.net/wp4spatialising-colonialities. This report aims to further support and deepen this process. The next section briefly provides a broad overview of reviewed prior work and the structure of the report.

Report structure and overview of prior work: executive summary

Following this opening chapter, this report is structured into four subsequent chapters, each organised thematically. The different themes in each chapter overlap and inform each other, with key threads weaving through all of the chapters.

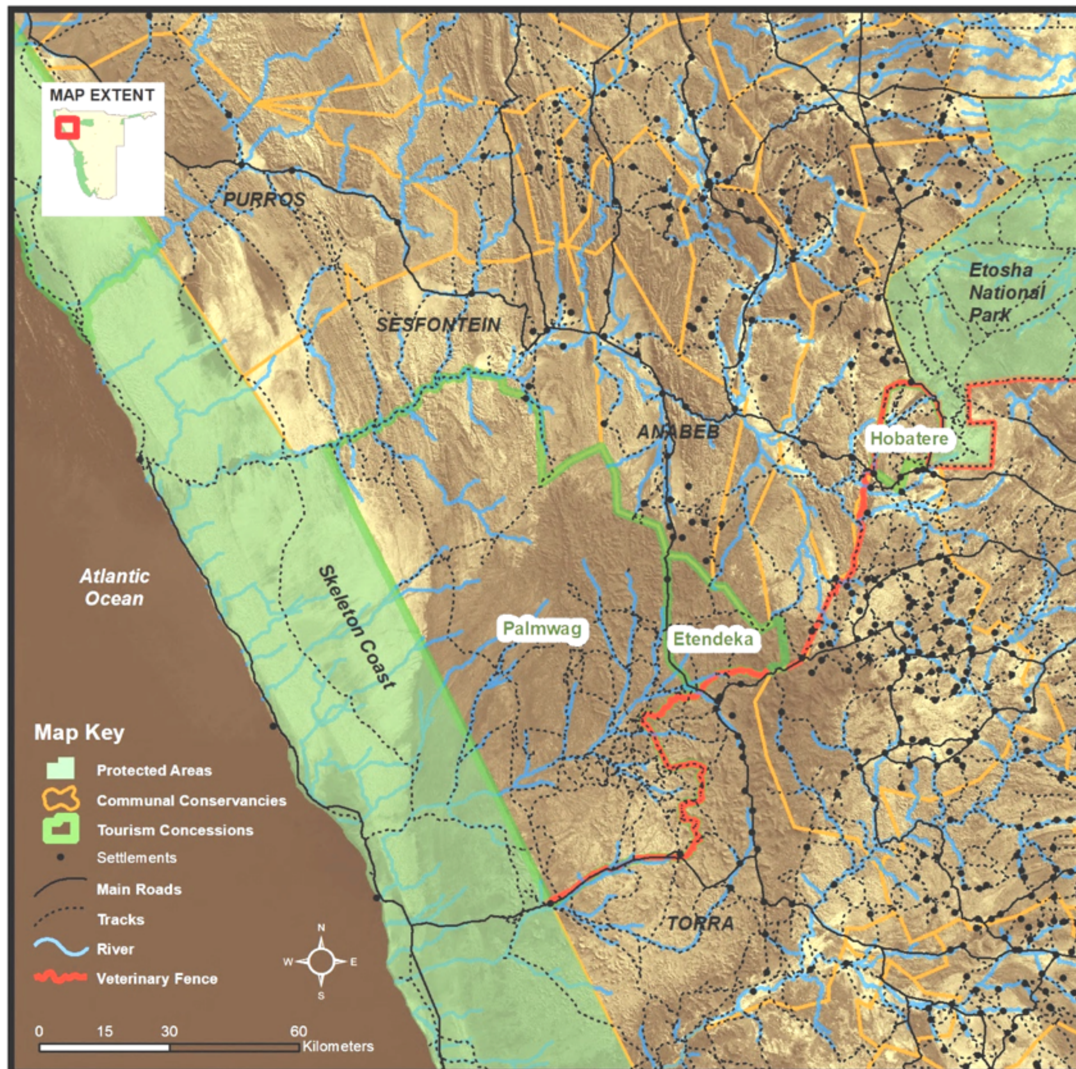
***

Chapter 2 opens with a focus on the roles of ***Colonialism, science, and the state in the historical making of Etosha-Kunene.*** This chapter examines more closely how the work of Dieckmann and Sullivan, over the years, is complementary in detailing parallel and overlapping processes of colonial socio-spatial reorganisation co-constituting the historically entangled Etosha-Kunene territories. Their research thus details processes of dispossession and layers of displacement, the negotiation of settler agriculture and private property, the cordoning off of landscapes for formal conservation areas, and the expansion of colonial industry and mining (see, for instance, Sullivan 1996a, 1998, 2017a, 2019a, 2022; Dieckmann 2001, 2003, 2007a, 2007c-e, 2013, 2020, 2021a; Sullivan *et al.* 2016, 2019a; Hannis and Sullivan 2018a-b; Sullivan and Ganuses 2020, 2021a).

Chapter 2 traces meeting points between Dieckmann's and Sullivan's work in addressing the historical discourses and underlying ideologies which shaped these processes of re-territorialisation and colonial dispossession and which, over time, came to constitute dominant ways of knowing, governing, imagining, and valuing Etosha-Kunene's 'natures' and 'cultures'. Their work in

combination, and to differing degrees, explores how the ordering of knowledge, including through colonial scientific practice and governance regimes, was crucial in the entrenchment of colonial power relations and coloniality (see references above). Although this theme is introduced in Chapter 2, it weaves through subsequent chapters. Both Dieckmann and Sullivan draw throughout their work on critical discourse, revisionist historical and anthropological analyses to deconstruct taken for granted 'truths' and their contingencies in contemporary conservation and resource management praxis, and in post-colonial identity and heritage politics within Etosha-Kunene. This past and present work of these two authors intersects in trying to understand impacts on Etosha-Kunene's different indigenous Khoekhoegowab-speaking groups, and on their changing access to land, resources, livelihoods, representation, and cultural and historical recognition.

Much of Sullivan's research, which began in the early to mid-1990s, is situated within southern and central Kunene region and west Namibia more broadly where she has engaged primarily with Khoekhoegowab-speaking groups and persons residing in the apartheid-era 'Damaraland' and 'Kaokoland' homelands, reframed as Communal Land Areas as per Namibia's Communal Land Reform Act 5 of 2002 (see Sullivan 1996a, 1998). Her research has crossed north and south of the veterinary fence that crosses the Damaraland Communal Land Area, with a recent focus on the connected landscapes of the Palmwag Tourism Concession, Sesfontein, Anabeb and Purros communal area conservancies established from the late 1990s onwards, and the Skeleton Coast National Park (Sullivan 2017a-b, 2021; Sullivan and Ganuses 2021a) – see Map 1. Based on field research starting in 1992, 1994-1996, 1999 and the 2000s, Sullivan's early work, including her PhD (1998), interrogates the ethnographic archives and dominant environmental and historical narratives for the Damaraland Communal Land Area, specifically in relation to histories and practices of resource and land use and management. In doing so, and from the start, Sullivan examined and traced how these narratives and practices were shaped by and embedded within colonial histories of dispossession and displacement, including those driven by the ongoing parcelling up of land for 'nature' conservation purposes and for settler agriculture and mining. In particular, her early work examined how and why deep cultural histories of association with places and land and experiences and knowledges of the west Namibian landscape were excluded and occluded from then emerging land and wildlife governance institutions, official cartographies and archives, and hegemonic environmental discourses (see for instance, Sullivan 1998, 1999a, 2000a, 2005a, 2019a, 2022, and review in subsequent chapters). Sullivan's later work in the context of the cross-disciplinary and multimedia *Future Pasts* project (2016-2019) deepens this early engagement with recovering cultural histories associated with places and landscapes therein, and on mapping the overlapping layers of colonial and post-colonial displacement and erasure (see https://www.futurepasts.net/, and Chapters 3 and 4).



Map 1. Boundaries of current tourism concessions, surrounding communal area conservancies and state protected areas in southern Kunene Region, west Namibia. Source: Jeff Muntifering, 2 October 2019.

In her early work, Sullivan worked across disciplinary boundaries, including ecology and anthropology, in an effort to democratise environmental and historical knowledges of dryland west Namibia. Thus, during the 1990s and early 2000s Sullivan's work built on ecological, ethnographic, and historical research, including ecological surveys and multivariate analyses of woody and herbaceous vegetation datasets and was indicative of her interdisciplinary background and approach to understanding socio-ecological dynamics (see Sullivan 1998, 1999b, 2000b). In doing so, she unearthed conceptual values, coloniality and political interests implicit in dominant ecological thinking, illustrating, for example, how these came to inform a hegemonic desertification discourse within environmental and conservation management praxis in Namibia (Sullivan 1996b, p. 5). Moreover, she interrogated this discourse on empirical grounds, showing how this gave rise to both specific (and colonial) imaginaries of drylands and negative and essentialist conceptions of African land-use practices and knowledges, including those in the Damaraland Communal Land Area (see for instance, Sullivan 1996b, 1998, 1999b, 2000b, 2002b, 2003, 2005a; Sullivan and Rohde 2002).

Sullivan's early work was thus explicitly concerned with how particular historical and environmental (scientific) discourses become reified as 'truth', drawing on a Foucauldian analysis to understand this power/knowledge nexus, and making explicit contested approaches to knowledge building in natural and social science fields of research and their political implications (Sullivan 2000b, 2005a; Sullivan and Homewood 2017[2003]). Her work during this time pursued a theme that was set to characterise her research in subsequent years, i.e., examining how extreme climatic contexts, such as drylands, become prone to ideas of crisis (such as with the desertification discourse) and hence to overlapping international conventions, policies, designations and state interventions (for example, Sullivan *et al*. 2016; Sullivan and Homewood 2017[2003]).

Drawing on field research starting from 1999 onwards, Dieckmann's scholarship (Dieckmann 2001, 2003, 2007a-c, 2009, 2011, 2020, 2021a), and especially her book (Dieckmann 2007a), focuses on the history of colonial land dispossession of Khoekhoegowab-speaking Hai‖om linked to both the history of nature conservation, i.e., the creation and establishment of the Etosha National Park (formerly Game Reserve No. 2), and that of settler agriculture within southern Kunene region (especially the Outjo District). In a combined historical analysis of colonial archival material, oral history, and personal memory accounts, and through multiple fieldtrips to Etosha between 2000 and 2006, much of Dieckmann's early work thus examines the various and interconnected factors which combined to lead to the eventual forced removal of Hai‖om from the Etosha National Park (ENP) during the 1950s and to them being left without any legal claim to land. This work eventually also saw Dieckmann become involved from 2001 onwards in a cultural landscape mapping project – the *Xoms |Omis* Project (Etosha Heritage Project) – which aimed at recovering Hai‖om cultural heritage and settlement histories embedded within the Etosha landscapes (see, Dieckmann 2007f, 2012, Dieckmann 2021a, p. 97). Dieckmann's later work, including her 2007 book (Dieckmann 2007a), looks more closely at some of the consequences and the aftermath of these histories of colonial dispossession, especially in terms of livelihoods, land-claims, identity politics and marginalisation (see for example, Dieckmann 2007b-d, 2011, 2020, and Chapter 3 below). Hence, research for her PhD and book and for subsequent publications also took place in the urban centre of Outjo and on commercial and resettlement farms surrounding Etosha.

In analysing the factors which eventually led to Hai‖om becoming a "landless underclass", Dieckmann (2007a-b) critically examines how the colonial state and science (specifically the field of ethnology) conceptualised and constructed ethnic categories and difference within a racial, essentialist and civilising ideology. In particular, she shows how intersecting ethnic and racial classifications were politically mobilised by the state and other powerful actors to systematically justify the dispossession of Hai‖om and how these regimes of signification and their dynamics changed between German and South African colonial rule. In addition, Dieckmann's early work closely examines the role of 'nature' conservation in the (colonial) history of land and settlement in Etosha-Kunene, including how the mapping of changing ideas and paradigms of 'nature' conservation shaped histories of dispossession and the re-imagining and refiguring of African landscapes (see for instance, Dieckmann 2001, 2003, 2007a, 2009).

Informed by and parallel to this research, Dieckmann's later work details the history of settler and commercial agriculture in the Outjo District south of the Etosha Pan, from the onset of colonialism until Namibia's independence in 1990 (see, Dieckmann 2007a, d-e; Bolten and Dieckmann 2011;

Dieckmann 2013). Dieckmann critically explores the settlement histories, historical land-uses and significantly changing agricultural strategies of these settler farmers during the 20th century, showing how they shifted between diversification and specialisation strategies, depending on interconnected and changing political, environmental and economic factors (Dieckmann 2007d, 2013). Moreover, in this work, Dieckmann illustrates the key role that the colonial and later apartheid state played in the establishment of commercial and settler agriculture and private property regimes, together with the configuration of colonial labour conditions and relations (see Dieckmann 2007a, 2013, p. 273).

Sullivan's and Dieckmann's work speaks to each other in showing how Etosha-Kunene's colonial history, including that of 'nature' conservation, is not only one of dispossession and displacement, but also of a progressive inscription of hegemonic and 'Western' ways of imagining, seeing, valuing, and knowing 'nature', specifically African landscapes and dryland ecologies (see, for example, Sullivan 1996b, 2005a; Dieckmann 2001, 2007a, 2009; Martin *et al.* 2013; Sullivan *et al.* 2016). Reading across their work, the authors foreground the still close and largely unquestioned interrelationships between formal science, race, colonialism, and 'nature' conservation. In combination these dimensions have promoted an authoritative role for scientific and colonial discourses in justifying largely centralised state interventions regarding how land and ecology should be known, conserved, valued, and used.

In detailing histories of settler colonialism and 'nature' conservation, Dieckmann's and Sullivan's work is complementary in providing insight into the processes whereby Khoekhoegowab-speaking groups, over the decades, lost claims and access to their ancestral land-areas and were forced in many instances into farm labour or less fertile land-areas, or, like the Hai‖om, to become a landless underclass (see for instance Sullivan 2019a, p. 24, 2022). Histories of dispossession are echoed further west and across central Namibia, and especially (but not only) in the landscapes that for a short period were incorporated into Game Reserve No. 2 (from 1958-1970) but where multiple families retain collective memories of living sites, grave sites, and valued resources (Sullivan 1996a, 1998, 2017a-b, 2019a; Sullivan *et al.* 2019; Sullivan and Ganuses 2020, 2021a).

Building on this analysis, Sullivan's and Dieckmann's work closely interlinks in revising hegemonic and colonial discourses of historical land-relations in Etosha-Kunene's drylands. In particular, their work deconstructs essentialist discourses tying together ethnicity, race, and modes of production, to challenge static and culturally-deterministic divisions between 'pastoral' and 'hunter-gatherer' societies in understanding histories of land-use and land-relations and cultural difference (Sullivan 1998, 2001a, 2019a; Dieckmann 2007a). Both authors also examine how the negotiation and establishment of settler colonialism and rule was underpinned by changing conceptions of land and land-relations. Hence, their work shows how colonial rule was accompanied by processes of boundary-making, discourses, codifications, and cartographic practices which led to historical erasure and 'othering' of indigenous land-relations and institutions, and the mapping of new regimes of ownership and exclusion (for instance, Sullivan 1998, 1999a, 2000a, 2001a, 2005a, 2019a; Dieckmann 2003, 2007a and e, 2013, 2021a; Sullivan *et al.* 2019b; Sullivan and Ganuses 2020, 2021a).

As noted, much of Sullivan's early work challenged a set of interconnected biases and (colonial) environmental discourses. In doing so her work resonates directly with Dieckmann's in exploring

how Etosha-Kunene's Khoekhoegowab-speaking groups were situated at the lowest rung of a colonially imposed evolutionary and racial hierarchies, and how this shaped and continues to shape their shifting position within colonial and post-colonial political and cultural economies and access to official discourses, land and resources (Sullivan 1998, 2001a, 2019a, 2022; Sullivan and Ganuses 2020). Read in conjunction, Sullivan's and Dieckmann's work powerfully complements each other in illustrating how Etosha-Kunene's different Khoekhoegowab-speaking groups, overlapping in historical, socio-economic, cultural, and geographical entanglements, were eventually enfolded in divergent regimes of colonial signification and classification, and how this differentially impacted their access to land and resources and marginality. In addition, both Dieckmann's and Sullivan's work speaks to each other in tracing the contingencies of colonial ethnic ascriptions in contemporary Namibia, in the ongoing structural marginalisation and exclusion of particular groups and their histories, perspectives, and knowledges, and in post-colonial identity politics in struggles over land and resources (see, for instance, Sullivan 1998, 1999a, 2005a; Dieckmann 2007a-b; Sullivan and Ganuses 2020, 2021a; also see Chapter 3 and 4 for more on this).

In disentangling the complex ways in which colonialism institutionalised a direct relationship between ethnic and racial ascriptions and access to land and resources that entrenched relations of structural marginalisation, the work of Dieckmann and Sullivan emphasises how local actors exerted agency and ingenuity, despite highly unequal power relations. In other words, local actors tactically navigated, resisted, refashioned, and co-shaped these historical developments; and hence these colonial histories need to be read as dialectical and relational processes rather than uni-directional changes (see, for instance, Sullivan 2001a; Dieckmann 2007a, p. 6, 2007b). This focus on local agency and on a more nuanced and dialectical reading of the colonial encounter and of coloniality in Etosha-Kunene is a theme which weaves through most of their publications.

Looking at the histories of conservation and environmental management within Etosha-Kunene, Sullivan's and Dieckmann's work meets with the work of Lendelvo (see, for instance, Lendelvo and Nakanyala 2013; Mfune *et al.* 2013). For example, both Sullivan and Lendelvo examine the history and evolution of natural resource management paradigms in the context of Namibia, including Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). In particular, both of them note that ideas of participation and devolved ownership were initially formulated within specific colonial and apartheid state and tenure regimes, with all three authors interrogating the contingencies of such colonial era legislative frameworks in contemporary conservation and land policies (as elaborated in see Chapter 4).

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Chapter 3 builds on the connections established in Chapter 2 to examine a theme encountered across the work of all three researchers, that of ***Changing and contested land-relations and tenure in Etosha-Kunene.*** Specifically, the work of all three authors examines how people and groups in Etosha-Kunene are re-negotiating access to land and tenure relations in the face of intersecting post-independence reforms and changes in land administration over the course of the last 25 years. Given Namibia's colonial histories, post-independence land reform remains a controversial, complex, emotional and urgent topic, and is an ongoing process (Sullivan 1996a; Dieckmann 2011). In working with this topic, the work of all three authors is situated at the interface of policy and science,

engaging both with national policy and public debate. Read in conjunction, their work challenges centralised and standardised policy thinking, arguing for the need to pay attention to, and create opportunities for learning from, locally-rooted and existing cultural land-relations, diverse tenure institutions, and occluded and layered social histories. Additionally, and as explored throughout this report, their work argues for recognising land not only as an economic good but as also imbued with "deep cultural and social meaning" (Lendelvo *et al.* 2020a, p. 37). Hence, they argue for a more nuanced, integrated, culturally-informed and historically-contingent perspective in debating land.

In addition, with their research situated in different geographic locations across Etosha-Kunene, and also elsewhere in Namibia, their work in combination weaves a larger overview of the multiple, shifting and overlapping systems of tenure and ownership shaping access and competing claims to land and resources, and the different strategies deployed to do so, especially by marginalised and indigenous groups. This mutually shared research interest led to all three authors recently publishing chapters in a locally edited volume *'Neither Here Nor There': Indigeneity, Marginalisation and Land Rights in Post-Independence Namibia* (Odendaal and Werner 2020): see Dieckmann (2020), Lendelvo *et al.* (2020a), Nghitevelekwa *et al.* (2020) and Sullivan and Ganuses (2020).

As mentioned above, both Sullivan's and Dieckmann's research is characterised by an engagement with more occluded histories and practices of settlement and land, including of land-use and relations. In doing so, both authors draw on on-site oral history and cultural landscape mapping methodologies in their earlier and later work (Sullivan 1996a, 1998, 1999a, 2000a, 2002a, 2017a-b, 2019a, 2022; Dieckmann 2007a and f, 2009, 2012, 2021a-b; Peter *et al.* 2009; Sullivan *et al.* 2019b; Sullivan and Ganuses 2020, 2021a). This work has been, and continues to be, key in shaping their understandings of how formally conserved lands across Etosha-Kunene are contested and are interwoven with multiple and overlapping claims and pasts, as well as in their conceptions and understandings of culturally-inflected land-relations. Such positioning underpins their historical revisionist work (as detailed in Chapter 2 and discussed throughout this report), as well as their wider engagements with changing legal and policy landscapes in post-independent Namibia.

Through these research methodologies, social and cultural histories, memories, perspectives and indigenous forms of knowing are accessed and mapped through "collaborative journeying", or what anthropologist Anna Tsing refers to as "historical retracing" (as reviewed in Sullivan 2017a, 2019a; Sullivan and Ganuses 2021). This methodology understands that memories, relations, and the past are embedded in landscapes and places. Returning to these places through collaborative journeying stimulates acts of remembering, performance and retelling and has the potential to disrupt official archives of place-names, cartographies and landscape histories (see, for instance, Sullivan *et al.* 2016, and Dieckmann 2021b) – see Image 1.

Image 1. 'Historical retracing' methodologies.

The late Nathan ǂÛina Taurob (R), Christophine Daumû Tauros (centre) and the late Michael |Amigu Ganaseb (L) enact the practice of *tsē-khom* to greet and gift their ancestors and anonymous spirits of the dead, looking across the |Giribes plains towards their home area of Purros in north-west Namibia. Photo: Sian Sullivan 1995.

'Historical retracing' in Etosha: Tsinab, close to Halali in Etosha National Park. Photo: Harald Sterly 2002.

Dieckmann has drawn on this methodological approach throughout her research on the social and political history of Etosha (for instance, Dieckmann 2001, 2007a and f, 2012) and more explicitly in her work with the cultural landscape mapping *Xoms |Omis Project* (see https://www.xoms-omis.org/). This project saw the digital archiving and organisation of material relating to categories of places, bushfood documentation, social organisation, and ways of life in former times, historical and kinship data (family trees), and life lines (Dieckmann 2021a, p. 100). The researchers and cartographers involved in the project also produced various maps and posters and Dieckmann wrote a tour guide book and a children's book (see Dieckmann 2007f, 2012, 2021, p. 101) – see Image 2. These maps and outputs were not developed for the purpose of claiming land, but to "document the inhabitancy and way of life of Hai‖om in the Etosha area" (Dieckmann 2021a, p. 101) and to sketch the culturally deep connection of Hai‖om to the land which is now included in the ENP. Although this project was not driven by land claims, it did take place in parallel with, and as a precursor to, the ongoing struggles by some Hai‖om groups to gain state recognition for long-term access-rights to and custodianship over some places within ENP, and to benefit from the ENP's success (for more on this see Dieckmann 2020).

Image 2. Poster produced within the Xoms |Omis Project. Design: Strata 360 © Xoms |Omis Project.

Although informing Sullivan's earlier work (1999a, 2003, 2019a, 2022), on-site oral history and cultural landscape mapping was again taken-up by her in earnest in the recent *Futures Pasts* project (see, https://www.futurepasts.net/). This project foregrounded a transdisciplinary, collaborative and

multimedia approach including various online and co-publications, multiple films (see https://vimeo.com/futurepasts), digital mapping exercises and an exhibition with people from the research area in west Namibia (Sullivan *et al.* 2016, 2019a-b; Sullivan 2017a-b; https://www.futurepasts.net/exhibition). Through this "collaborative journeying" methodology, Sullivan shared journeys with especially Damara / ǂNūkhoe and ǁUbu elders during 2014, 2015 and 2019 in which the trajectories and former dwelling places were digitally mapped using GPS coordinates, including for areas now part of tourism concessions and the Skeleton Coast National Park – see Image 3. Stories, songs, music and genealogies connected to these places were performed, shared, recorded and mapped (Sullivan *et al.* 2016, 2019a-b; Sullivan 2017a, 2019b; Sullivan and Ganuses 2020, 2021a-b). Sullivan's recent co-publications (Sullivan and Ganuses 2020, 2021a-b) builds on this work to explore how histories and narratives of dispossession and marginalisation in west Namibia can be reclaimed and voiced through other modalities (see Chapter 5 for more on this).

Image 3. Cousins Noag Mûgagara Ganaseb (L) and Franz |Haen ǁHoëb (R) revisit places in the westward reaches of the Hoanib River where they used to live.

Here, Noag and Franz are close to the former dwelling place of ǀOeb, now the site of an eco-tourism lodge called Hoanib Camp, located on the south side of the bend in the Hoanib River just to the right of centre in this image. Photo: Sian Sullivan, November 2015, composite made by Mike Hannis using aerial images from Directorate of Survey and Mapping, Windhoek.

As noted, as well as her engagement with occluded histories of dispossession, Dieckmann's later work follows the struggles of Hai||om (and the San in general) to access land and livelihoods in post-independent Namibia (see Dieckmann 2001, 2003, 2007a-c, 2011, 2018, 2020; Dieckmann *et al.* 2014). Post-independence, the Hai||om, together with many other San groups, were left without any legal title to land, with many finding themselves living in peri-urban and urban areas, on commercial farms as generational farm labourers or in communal areas under the land administration of other groups (Dieckmann 2009, p. 357, 2018). In the last thirty years, several attempts have been made to address the marginalisation of the San in general, including Hai||om, which many see as crucially linked to the question of land. Dieckmann's prior work thus looks both at the question of contested land in formally constituted conservation landscapes, including analysing legal and symbolic land-claims in ENP, and the process whereby several resettlement farms were established in the last decade and in the Etosha surrounds specifically to resettle Hai||om (see, Dieckmann 2001, 2003, 2007a-b, 2020).

Although Sullivan's earlier work primarily focuses on local resource access and use and environmental management in west and north-western parts of the Etosha-Kunene research area, much of this work also implicitly and explicitly deals with changing and contested land-relations, tenure and rural development (see for instance, Sullivan 1996a, 2000c). In one of her first pieces of work in 1996 Sullivan was commissioned by the Multi-Disciplinary Research Centre of the University of Namibia to research how former surveyed farms in the north-west that were leased and/or settled by settler farmers in the 1950s had been 'communalised' in practice through their allocation in the 1970s for settlement by qualifying Damara / ǂNūkhoen (Sullivan 1996a). This resettlement process was part of establishing the Damaraland 'homeland' (following recommendations of the 1964 Odendaal Report) – now the Damaraland Communal Land Area. This report specifically aimed to inform processes around land redistribution associated with post-independence land reform, especially the then still nascent state resettlement programme, as well as debates on agricultural and tenure reform in Namibia's 'communal lands' (*ibid*.). Importantly, it showed how people and families exercised agency in negotiating the resettlement process, co-produced tenure institutions and drew on cultural resources to foster sustainable livelihoods in less productive semi-arid land areas, and from a position of structural marginalisation.

As noted above, two of Dieckmann's (2011, 2020) publications also focus on the establishment of group-resettlement farms close to Etosha, for the purpose of resettling landless Hai||om from the late 2000s onwards. This work not only analyses the history and dynamics of the resettlement process, but also the evolution of the relevant and intersecting land reform legislative and policy frameworks governing resettlement in Namibia, and specifically the resettlement of structurally marginalised groups. In addition, Dieckmann maps out the complex stakeholder interests and power imbalances which shaped and continue to shape the process (*ibid*.). Dieckmann's work can thus be read in relation to Sullivan's earlier work on how a significant and historical resettlement process played out in practice (Sullivan 1996a). Moreover, it speaks directly to Lendelvo's later research on the economic viability of emerging commercial farmers and current subsistence realities under the resettlement programme, and especially in relation to the codification of land-rights and ownership (Lendelvo *et al.* 2020a). Read together their work provides valuable insight into the challenges, shortcomings, and potential of state resettlement to redress the inequalities of the past and address present social and economic developmental needs. Moreover, their work shows how access to land

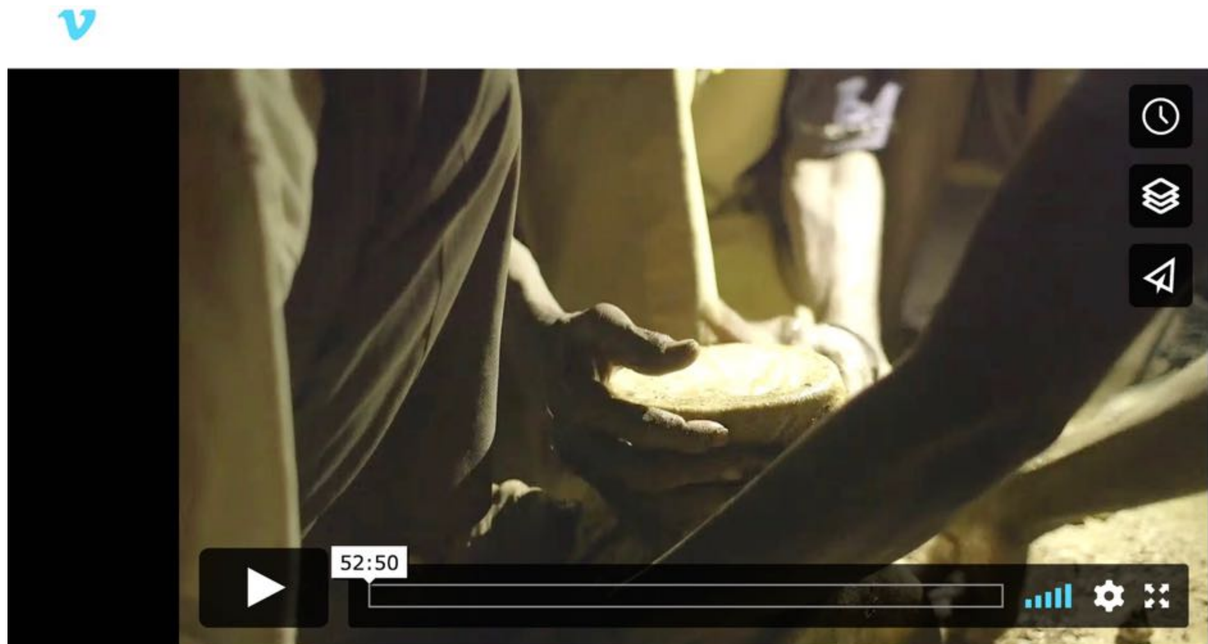
alone is not enough to ensure sustainable livelihoods in Etosha-Kunene's drylands. Rather, this access needs to be accompanied with the necessary state-support, infrastructure, institutional development, lease agreements and access to markets, knowledge, and resources.

In addressing struggles to access land and livelihoods, including land claims in formal conservation lands, Dieckmann's work (see 2007a-b) also explores the politics of ethnicity and indigeneity within such contestations and the extent to which representations, identity and access to resources are interrelated within post-colonial Namibia. Her work details how these struggles were, and continue to be, informed by the global movement of Indigenous land rights and recognition, and how this in turn, has driven local processes of ethnicisation and group identity-formation among Hai‖om (Dieckmann 2007a-b, 2020). At the same time, she shows how these processes of ethnicisation have to be situated historically in relation their marginality and relation to struggles for political recognition and representation within a post-colonial state. In this regard, Dieckmann's book (2007a, pp. 4-8) provides a useful and thorough theoretical discussion and overview of the concept of ethnicity and specifically in relation to Namibia's post-colonial historicity. Taking a constructivist point of view, her book looks at the various historical processes, imaginations, appropriations, contestations, and ongoing fashioning which has characterised the relational negotiation and enactment of Hai‖om ethnicity, identity and belonging (*ibid*., p. 21).

This analysis connects with Sullivan's (2001a-b, 2002a, 2003) earlier work which likewise explores the political mobilisation of ethnicity and indigeneity in contesting both global and local inequalities, and as a means to access resources and recognition. Sullivan's early and later work (see Sullivan 2001a, 2019a; Sullivan and Ganuses 2020, 2021a) directly engages with Dieckmann in generating a fresh perspective on the cultural politics and historical factors at play in why some groups, such as the San and the Hai‖om, have managed to gain international and national recognition as being Indigenous or as 'first peoples', while others such as Damara ǂNūkhoen and ‖Ubun have not, considering the impact this has had and continues to have in contributing to marginality.

As noted earlier, Sullivan's research also details competing and overlapping claims to land within the western part of the Etosha-Kunene research area, not only between different groups (Sullivan 2001a, 2002a, 2003), but also the between state's formally constituted conservation and tourism concession areas and those whose ancestral settlement and social histories are entangled with these areas (see Sullivan 2019a, 2022, and as explored in her later work and co-publications, for instance, Sullivan *et al.* 2019a, and Sullivan and Ganuses 2020, 2021a). For example, Sullivan's work documents how during the first decades after independence communal area conservancies were used and mobilised as a tool to claim land (Sullivan 2002a, 2003, 2019a, 2022). In addition, the *Future Pasts* project, as noted above, aimed to reinsert multivocality within understandings of west Namibia's conservation landscapes, including through a number of co-publications, maps, films and performances with Damara / ǂNūkhoen persons and elders, and through music and story-telling (see for instance, Sullivan 2017a, 2019a-c, Sullivan and Ganuses 2020; also the film *The Music Returns to Kai-as* online at https://vimeo.com/486865709 – see Image 4).

Image 4. Screenshot for the 2019 film The Music Returns to Kai-as: see https://vimeo.com/486865709.



Much of Dieckmann's work also traces the relationship between changing land tenure systems, economic trends, and livelihoods in Etosha-Kunene, specifically the impact of post-independent land and political reforms on the commercial and still predominantly settler owned farming sector, including in terms of ownership and the diversification of economic practices, and on the capacity of Hai||om to foster sustainable livelihoods (more on this in Chapter 4) (Dieckmann 2007a and d, 2013). Her work thus reflects on the perspectives of 'white' commercial farmers within the changing socio-political context of independent Namibia and on land reform as a major political and economic issue (Dieckmann 2013, p.256). Dieckmann's combined work on Hai||om land claims and resettlement process, and the history of commercial and settler agriculture in Etosha-Kunene thus also inserts much needed multivocality into the debate on land and from different positions of power, while providing historical insight into the role of the state and the challenges of establishing commercial farming enterprises in dryland Etosha-Kunene. This theme of tracing the relationship between changing tenure systems, access to land and livelihoods, resonates with the work of Sullivan and Lendelvo (as further explored in Chapter 4).

Moreover, the work of all three authors connects in debating the ongoing making and negotiation of Namibia's communal lands and tenure and the role of 'customary' authorities in the administration of land. As noted earlier, much of Sullivan's early work during the late 1990s and early 2000s examines the 1970s making of the 'Damaraland Homeland', and also deconstructs some of the hegemonic development discourses informing the state development trajectories of 'communal' lands in Namibia. In particular, her work deconstructs the coloniality still prevalent in top-down views of 'communal' farmers and farming as inherently environmentally destructive, unproductive, and unsustainable, as well as the implications of this perception for debates on land and agricultural

reform (Sullivan 1996b, 1998, 1999b). In addition, her work throughout the late 1990s and 2000s, questions the ongoing lack of formal policy recognition of culturally-informed institutions and mobile land-relations – especially within the ongoing push to formalise and codify communal land-rights and to decentralise environmental management according to bounded and static socio-spatial units and blueprint institutional set-ups (for instance, Sullivan 1996b, 1998, 1999a, Sullivan 2002a, 2005a, 2019a, 2022: as further discussed in Chapter 4).

In a later and recent joint publication, Lendelvo (see Nghitevelekwa *et al.* 2020) joins Sullivan in debating the incorporation of mobile land-relations and land-use practices in communal land reform and management policy, and specifically in relation to securing tenure and land rights for San people and groups living within communal lands. This also builds on Dieckmann's body of work, including a number of research reports, which addresses the socio-economic, marginalised and landless status of the San in Namibia (for instance, Dieckmann *et al.* 2014; Dieckmann 2018). It also connects with both Dieckmann's and Sullivan's work in examining the allocation of land access and rights within communal areas and group resettlement farms under the current post-independent structures of Traditional Authorities, and in relation to politically marginalised groups.

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Chapter 4 moves into mapping the contributions by the authors to the theme of ***Innovation in conservation and environmental management: between global discourses, policy, and practice***. Broadly speaking this chapter discusses contributions from all three authors to understanding the rise of the biodiversity conservation discourse (as opposed to 'nature conservation'). It also discusses the rise of a Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) paradigm in Namibia from the early 1990s onwards in contexts characterised by overlapping and diverse knowledge and resource-use practices enacted across complex biocultural landscapes. In particular, Chapter 4 details the close links between Sullivan's and Lendelvo's work on resource use and management, and on the evolution and implementation of the CBNRM programme and paradigm. It explores how Lendelvo's publications on ENP complement the work of Dieckmann in sketching a larger regional and economic overview of Etosha-Kunene's changing conservation and tourism landscapes. Additionally, this chapter examines how the work of all three authors converges in weaving together perspectives and analytical frameworks for engaging with Etosha-Kunene's Indigenous, marginalised, and diverse knowledge practices and for sustainable environmental and resource management (see Sullivan 1998, 1999a, 2000a-b, 2002a, 2005a; Dieckmann 2007a and f, 2012; Peter *et al.* 2009; Embashu *et al.* 2015; Lendelvo *et al.* 2015, 2018).

In focusing on the mapping of environmental discourses, Chapter 4 also details Sullivan's later work on, and critique of, the rise of 'neoliberal conservation' and the 'green economy', analysing the ongoing enfolding of Etosha-Kunene's 'natures' within a globalising modernity (see Sullivan 2005b, 2006, 2009, 2010, 2011a, 2013a, 2017a, 2019a; Igoe *et al.* 2010). This work, including Sullivan's later work on understandings of sustainability in west Namibia (Sullivan *et al.* 2016; Sullivan 2018), speaks to the other two authors' engagement with larger debates on conservation, climate change and environmental sustainability, including the complex interdependencies between sustainable livelihoods and local cultural and social values (for instance Dieckmann 2007a, 2018; Dieckmann *et al.* 2013; Lendelvo and Nakanyala 2013; Lendelvo *et al*. 2018). To conclude, this chapter weaves

together the work of all three authors as they explore the interrelations between local, national and international interests, knowledges, and institutions in shaping conservation and environmental management within Etosha-Kunene (Sullivan 2003, p. 71).

Parallel to her work on deconstructing the equilibrium model of ecology, Sullivan's early work focuses on practices of collective resource-use and management within the Damaraland Communal Land Area, southern Kunene Region (Sullivan 1996a, 1998), and how people here manage, know and value drylands (Sullivan 1999a, 2000a, 2002b, 2005a; Sullivan and Homewood 2004). Sullivan's (1998) doctoral dissertation, as well as later work, specifically explores the importance of gathered resources in Damara / ǂNūkhoen and ǁUbun environmental, economic, and cultural relations – incorporating collection of over 400 herbarium voucher specimens housed in the National Herbarium of Namibia to support ethnobotanical research (Sullivan 1998, 1999a, 2000a, 2005a; Craven and Sullivan 2002). In doing so, her work challenges a set of biases and assumptions, including those reified in prior colonial ethnographies. For one, she challenges the then negative assumption that Damara herders in north-western Namibia no longer practice gathering and if they did, it was purely utilitarian and to offset experiences of poverty (Sullivan 1998, 1999a, 2005a). Moreover, and linked to this, she addresses the widely held assumption that culturally informed resource management institutions and Indigenous forms of knowing and land-relations have completely broken down "due to the exigencies of colonial rule and apartheid administration during the twentieth century" (Sullivan 2000a, p. 145, also see Sullivan 1998, 1999a, 2000a, 2005a). Lastly, her work revised ethnographic assumptions regarding the "patriarchal pastoralist", recovering feminised and women-dominated resource domains (see for instance, Sullivan 2000a).

Supporting Sullivan's work on gathering, Dieckmann's publications, including the publications produced through the *Xoms /Omis* project, also recover local resource use histories and practices within Etosha-Kunene, including that of gathering and hunting. Her work, similar to Sullivan's, illustrated how gathering is still taking place among many San groups, including the Haiǁom, and how this practice is not purely utilitarian, but embedded within cultural values, memory, social relations, and emotional registers (see Dieckmann 2007a-b, 2012, 2018, 2021a; Peter *et al*. 2009; Dieckmann *et al.* 2013, 2014). In addition, her publications, including one which deals specifically with the histories of hunting within the ENP (Peter *et al.* 2009 – see Image 2 and Map 2), illustrates the complex cultural and people-environment relations within which such land-use and livelihood practices were and continue to be embedded (also see Dieckmann 2009). This theme is strongly echoed throughout Sullivan's work, and in both Dieckmann's and Sullivan's ongoing efforts to deepen recognition of such cultural landscapes in places which carry high international conservation value. In taking a critical look at 'wild' or 'natural' landscapes, their work aims to make visible alternative and culturally-informed conservation values (more on this below and in Chapter 5).

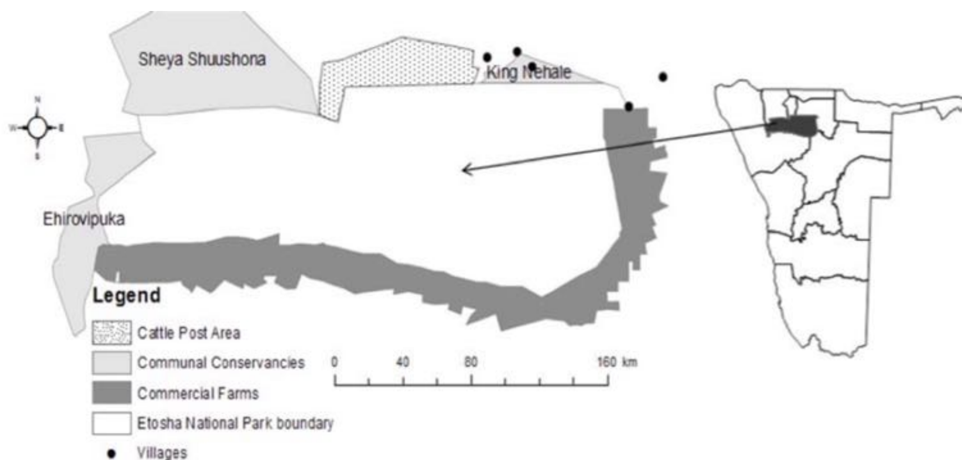
Map 2: Extract of a map on Hai||om mobility and prey animals, © Xoms |Omis.

Likewise, and although not exclusively focusing on Etosha-Kunene, Lendelvo's publications recover the diversity and importance of local resource use and management practices, especially in relation to Indigenous ecological knowledge and understandings of biodiversity (see Embashu *et al.* 2015; Lendelvo *et al.* 2015). Moreover, her work closely intersects with and speaks directly to Sullivan's and Dieckmann's publications in critically assessing the role of Indigenous knowledges and institutions in conservation praxis and environmental and resource management within Etosha-Kunene and from a gendered analytical framework (as elaborated on below).

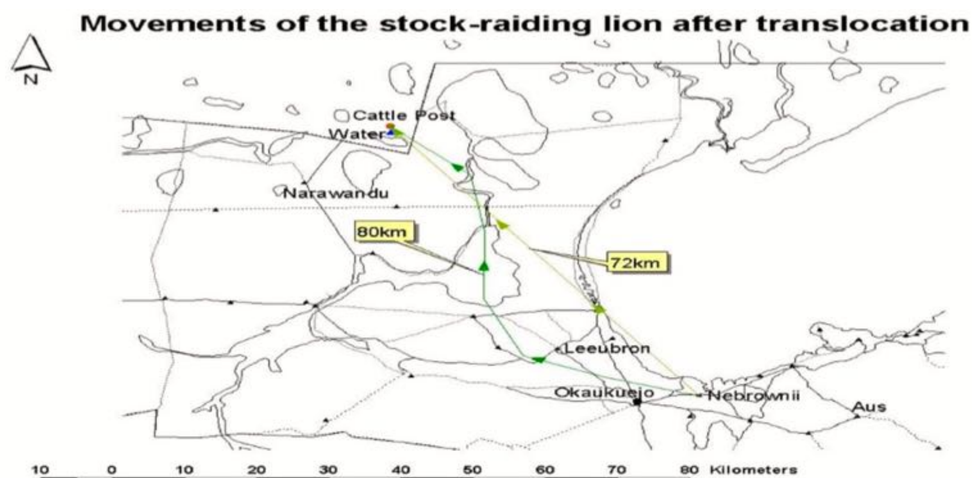
In exploring the themes outlined above, Sullivan's early work critically unpacks changing paradigms of 'nature' conservation in west Namibia, specifically the rise of the CBNRM paradigm and community conservation (Sullivan 1999a, 2000a, 2002a, 2003, 2005a-b, 2006, 2019a; Sullivan and Homewood 2004; Igoe *et al.* 2010). Theoretically, Sullivan draws on a feminist political ecology, historical revisionist, and critical realist approach to engage with and critique new conservation paradigms in relation to their embeddedness within resilient colonial and modernist knowledge constructs and neoliberal ideologies (for instance Sullivan 2005a-b, 2006, 2018). She argues both for strengthening ethnographic detail and scientific data in deconstructing dogma and hegemony regarding people-environment relationships and trajectories (Sullivan 2005a). For example, Sullivan analyses the CBNRM discourse and practice in west Namibia on the grounds of its spatialising praxis and the codification of lands (see Sullivan 2019a, 2022), its "communalising rhetoric" and "economising framework", as well as its ideological underpinnings (Sullivan 2000a, 2002a, pp. 160–162, 2003, 2005a-b, 2006, 2019a and b). In so doing, Sullivan notes a damaging lack of engagement with Indigenous knowledge or "folk ecology", cultural values and practices, gendered resource

domains, and historical and cultural land-relations (see references above, especially, Sullivan 1999a, 2000a, 2019a, 2022). Here Sullivan and Lendelvo's work builds strongly on each other and in taking a critical but also generative look at Namibia's CBNRM programme.

As noted in Chapter 3, Lendelvo's later work (Lendelvo *et al.* 2020a; Nghitevelekwa *et al.* 2020) engages with questions of tenure and land-reform. This research builds on almost a decade of prior interdisciplinary work on resource use and management in Namibia, including through the lens of ecological, socio-economic, sociological and gender analysis research. In particular, Lendelvo's research has addressed and analysed the implementation of the CBNRM programme and in relation to changing and sustainable livelihoods (Lendelvo and Nakanyala 2013), wildlife and ecological dynamics and diversity (Rispel and Lendelvo 2016; Lendelvo *et al.* 2019), local gender and power relations and the politics of participation (Mogotsi *et al.* 2016), human wildlife conflict (HWC) and Indigenous knowledge (Mfune *et al.* 2013; Lendelvo *et al.* 2015), and climate change vulnerability and impacts (Lendelvo *et al.* 2018). Moreover, her work has more broadly looked at recovering Indigenous knowledge in fostering sustainable rural livelihoods (Embashu *et al.* 2015), as well as studying tourist satisfaction in the ENP (Kimaro *et al.* 2015) and HWC along the borders of the ENP (Mfune *et al.* 2013) – see Maps 3 and 4.



Map 3. Etosha National Park and surrounding land use designations. Source: Mfune *et al*. 2013, p. 6.



Map 4. Movements of a stock-raiding lion (*Leo panthera*) after translocation, central Etosha National Park. Source: Mfune *et al*. 2013, p. 17.

Reading across Sullivan's and Lendelvo's work on CBNRM there are clear parallels and connections in their analysis of the programme's communalising rhetoric, and in unpacking the roles of gender, cultural heterogeneity, marginality, and power. Moreover, their work similarly makes visible feminised and woman-dominated resource use and management domains and their incorporation (or lack thereof) into the CBNRM programme and policy (see for instance, Sullivan 2000a; Embashu *et al.* 2015; Mogotsi *et al.* 2016). Reading their work in conjunction offers insight into the long-term economic, ecological, and social benefits and costs of the CBNRM programme, including gaps between the official narrative of success which surrounds CBNRM, and realities on the ground (Sullivan 2002a; Koot *et al*. 2020). This close intersection between their research led them to co-author a recent publication on the impacts of COVID-19 and state-enforced lockdowns and regulations on the CBNRM programme (Lendelvo *et al.* 2020a). In addition, Lendelvo's engagement with the question of marginality and minority groups in resource and land management in two of her publications (see Mogotso *et al.* 2016; Nghitevelekwa *et al.* 2020) resonates deeply with much of the work of both Sullivan and Dieckmann in interrogating the power relations structuring the practices and politics of access under different tenure and resource-management regimes.

In Sullivan's later work she begins to analyse the 'green economy' and neoliberal strategies more explicitly for 'green' and global environmental governance, through a cross-cultural engagement that leans into her Namibia research and draws on the fields of environmental anthropology, philosophy, and political ecology. In doing so, Sullivan's work during the mid-2000s began to shift more explicitly into trying to understand and theorise people-environment relations beyond the confines of the modernist 'Western' ideas of "nature" and globalising neoliberal epistemes (see for instance, Sullivan 2006, 2010, 2011a). This theme is explored in detail in Chapter 5 and relation to Dieckmann's work.

In addition, Lendelvo's and Dieckmann's work connects in their analyses of sustainable livelihoods and climate vulnerability. For instance, Dieckmann, in conjunction with others, has published two seminal research reports on the San in Namibia and especially in relation to their livelihoods and food security (Dieckmann *et al.* 2014; Dieckmann 2018), and her book (Dieckmann 2007a) also provides a critical analyses of Hai‖om's shifting vulnerability and resilience in the face of larger political, environmental and economic transformations and historical marginalisation. Both Dieckmann and Lendelvo address climate change vulnerability and adaptation within Etosha-Kunene (see Dieckmann *et al.* 2013; Lendelvo *et al.* 2018).

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Chapter 5 on ***Knowing Etosha-Kunene's post-colonial "natures": relationality, ontology, and biocultural ethics*** primarily addresses connections between the work of Sullivan and Dieckmann in exploring and theorising Indigenous and post-colonial people-environment relations. In doing so it considers their engagements with relationality, animist ontologies/ecologies, and alternative research methodologies, including the intersections between cultural landscape mapping and digital humanities. As alluded to above, much of Sullivan's body of work examines how global environmental discourses reify colonial patterns of power due to their rootedness in modernist and patriarchal ideologies and knowledge practices. At the same time, her work looks at how these knowledge practices have and continue to play a key part in rationalising global capitalist and

imperial expansion and exploitation, pointing to past and current trends to re-constitute biodiverse 'natures' as marketable and speculative financial(ised) products (Sullivan 2006, 2009, 2010, 2011b, 2013a-c; Igoe *et al.* 2010). At the heart of her engagement with these processes and knowledge/power structures has been, and continues to be, the question of what alternative 'truths', knowledge practices and ways of being are occluded, devalued, and silenced by these conventionally modern and strongly capitalist approaches to people-environment relations (for instance, Sullivan 2005a-a, 2006, 2010, 2011a, 2016a, 2017a, 2019a, 2022; Sullivan and Low 2014). In trying to answer this question, Sullivan draws on her situated research experience in west Namibia to reinsert and reactivate "different and resistant realities and practices" (Sullivan 2010, p. 128) and to decolonise the orders of knowledge which sustain modernity and its systemic violences (Sullivan 2013b, p. 61). Moreover, her work engages with different philosophical currents, such as that of phenomenology and embodiment, and with new thinking on animism, relationality, ontology, and ecology (see for instance, Sullivan 2016a-b). Sullivan thus aims to generate multiplicity through making visible other forms of knowing and being which might exist at modernity's "ontological edges" (Sullivan 2016a), yet which continues to haunt the modernising and globalising moment (also see Sullivan *et al.* 2016).

Although explored in her prior work, the *Future Pasts* project (2016-2019), allowed for a deeper engagement with these divergent strands shaping people-environment relations in west Namibia, and specifically in relation to understandings and practices of sustainability (Sullivan *et al.* 2016). This project thus aimed to critically and collaboratively map the diversity of pasts, knowledges and practices which animate ideas and trajectories of the environment and of the future, including the futures embodied by discourses on global sustainability. As a cross- and trans-disciplinary humanities project, it drew on oral histories, participant observation, discourse analysis, archival research, biophysical data, recordings and filmed material and a range of other engagements to access such diversity. In particular, this project worked theoretically at the nexus between "market-based green performativities", cultural and landscapes histories, discourses, values and practices, and ecocultural ethics (Sullivan *et al.* 2016, p. 1). It was especially interested in "enactments and embodied knowledges" which "'haunt' the present, even as they are masked by currently hegemonic trajectories of economic development amidst contexts of environmental crisis", and in acknowledging the range of cultural, performative and aesthetic registers through which socio-environmental knowledge may be transferred and mediated, including through songs, dances, poetic stories, and memories (for more on this project see Sullivan *et al.* 2016, and https://www.futurepasts.net/).

As explored in Chapter 3, this project engaged extensively with cultural landscape mapping and on-site oral history methodological techniques, producing several maps, including mapping remembered and significant places, historical references, and the embeddedness of music in the landscapes (available online at https://www.futurepasts.net/maps-1). In addition to the various maps, this *Future Pasts* project organised an exhibition and various blogs, working papers and publications which excavated divergent and multiple perspectives on the interrelations between place, landscape, music, memory, healing, change and mining within west Namibia's topographies (see for instance, https://www.futurepasts.net/exhibition) – see Image 5. These conversations were and are meant to flesh out the "culturally-inflected understandings of human/nature relations and entanglements" which animate west Namibia and bring into dialogue alternative visions, versions,

and understandings of ‘environmental change’ and ‘sustainability’ (Sullivan *et al.* 2016, pp. 3-4). It thus aimed to both generate and engage with the multiplicity of knowledge claims and values regarding land, places, and natures (*ibid*., p. 19).

Image 5. Banner for the exhibition Future Pasts: Landscape, Memory and Music in West Namibia, curated online, in Gallery 44AD, Bath, UK (2017) and at COSDEF Community Arts Venue, Swakopmund, Namibia (2019).
See https://www.futurepasts.net/exhibition.

It is here that Sullivan’s work flows into and connects deeply with Dieckmann’s work, with both authors contributing to a recent edited volume on cultural landscapes and cartographic explorations with Indigenous people, including on how to map affective geographies and relational ontologies (Dieckmann 2021c). Although grappling with alternative people-environment relationships throughout her research with Hai||om and especially through her long-term engagements with the *Xoms /Omis* project (see Dieckmann 2009; Peter *et al.* 2009), recent theoretical engagements with new thinking on ontology, animism and relationality has led Dieckmann to revise her prior work and her own conceptual bias and ‘Western’ epistemic positioning (see Dieckmann 2021a-b). Moreover, her recent publications reflect on, and analyse, cultural landscape mapping as a cartographic and counter-mapping tool for engaging with Indigenous forms of knowing and being (*ibid*.). Here there are also close intersections with Sullivan work, as discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, with both authors grappling with how relational and animist ontologies can be accessed, translated, embodied, and known.

Read in conjunction, their work offers novel insights and new perspectives into the multivocality of Etosha-Kunene’s ‘natures’ and ‘cultures’, while exploring the deeply intertwined and co-constitutive domains of ecology and culture and the cross-cultural knowledge politics of defining, naming, and relating between these domains. Lastly, this chapter concludes with some reflections primarily from Sullivan’s work on the implications of engaging with relational and animist ontologies for questions of environmental ethics and justice in the context of Etosha-Kunene, but also globally (Sullivan 2006, 2010, 2016a, 2017a, 2019a; Martin *et al.* 2013; Sullivan and Low 2014; Hannis and Sullivan 2018c).

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This report closes with a brief conclusion, affirming the need for future research agendas to be firmly rooted in local needs, voices, and diversity.

2. Colonialism, science and the state in the historical making of Etosha-Kunene

This chapter weaves together the work of Dieckmann and Sullivan in detailing some of the parallel and overlapping historical processes of the colonial socio-spatial re-organisation of Etosha-Kunene. It looks at some of the complex histories of colonial dispossession and layers of displacement, including those fuelled by the negotiation of settler colonialism and agriculture, and the simultaneous establishment of so-called 'game' and 'native' reserves, and later 'ethnic' homelands, by the colonial and apartheid state. In doing so, both authors address how these processes shaped historical ownership, land and resource-use and access patterns, and changing land-relations in Etosha-Kunene.

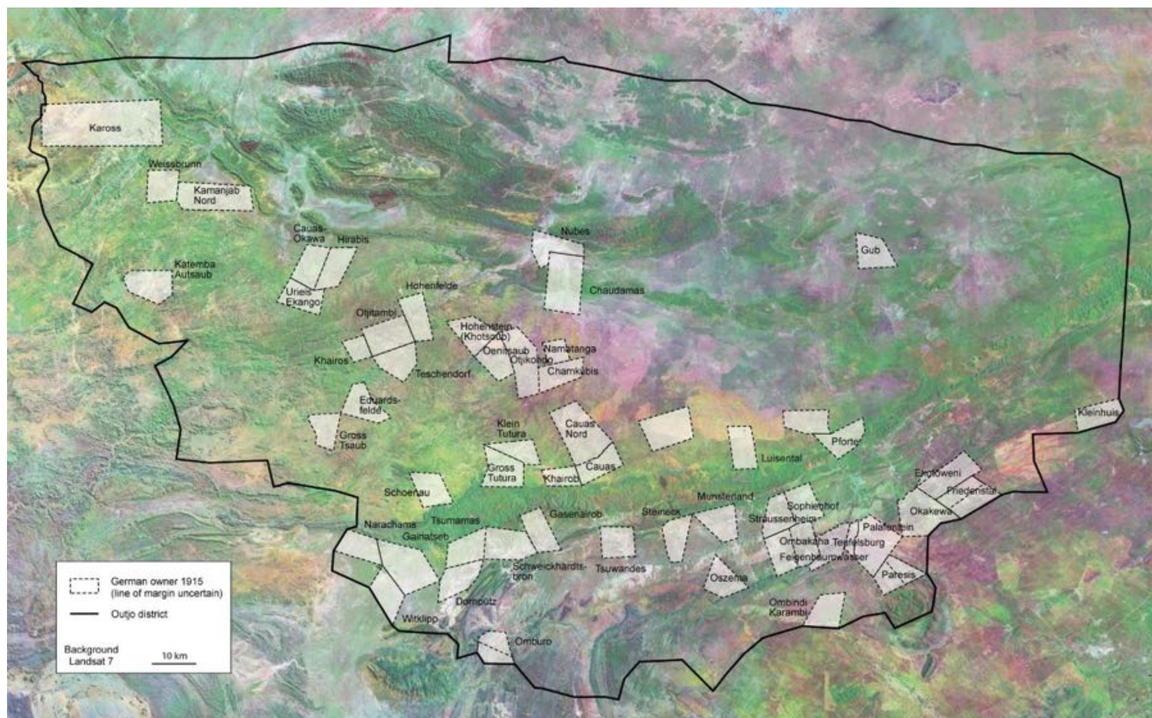
The chapter looks at the contributions of Dieckmann and Sullivan in examining the historical and colonial discourses and ideologies which co-produced Etosha-Kunene's 'cultures' and 'natures' over the years and at the intersection of colonial science, the state, situated encounters and shifting political economies and ecologies. It looks at the critical role that ethnicity and ethnic ascriptions played in negotiating colonial rule and colonialism, including how such ascriptions were spatialised, institutionalised, and re-fashioned, and how these ascriptions contributed to marginalising and dispossessing Indigenous peoples in Etosha-Kunene, and specifically different Khoekhoegowab-speaking groups. As illustrated in this chapter, their work is closely related in revising taken for granted 'truths' on historical land-relations and changing modes of production in dryland Etosha-Kunene. The last two sections of the chapter examine how Sullivan's and Dieckmann's work, read in conjunction, shows how colonial histories re-inscribed Etosha-Kunene's dryland 'natures' and landscapes, both materially and discursively, and the key role that 'nature' conservation, scientific ecology and the state played in this process. In engaging with the (colonial) history of nature conservation and resource management, their work also overlaps with some of Lendelvo's publications, as detailed below.

Colonial socio-spatial reorganisation: dispossession, settler agriculture and conservation

Much of Dieckmann's work on settler colonialism and the colonial history of settlement in Etosha-Kunene looks at how, during the first decades of colonial rule, the German colonial encounter was enacted and negotiated at what is now Kunene Region's shifting southern border, where land was appropriated for and by 'white' settlers and 'game reserves' (see, Dieckmann 2007a and e, 2013). From 1894 onwards, expansive German colonisation took root and in 1896 Outjo, situated in what is now the southern Kunene Region, was founded as a military post and declared one of the first districts in the colony, its administrative reach following the Grootberg Uprising led by Swartbooi and Topnaar Nama of Fransfontein and Sesfontein (Rizzo 2012) including Kaokoveld (now northern Kunene Region). In 1901 nine farms were reported in the district, occupied by 39 settlers of mixed origin, including from Germany, the Transvaal, the Cape, and England (Dieckmann 2007a, p. 162). In 1902, 3,000 cattle in Outjo were recorded as settler owned and by 1903, Outjo was one of six districts being steadily surveyed and appropriated for 'white' settler agriculture (Dieckmann 2013, p. 266).

At the same time, and as detailed by Dieckmann, in 1902 concerns to control the commercial hunting economies in Etosha-Kunene and diminishing wildlife populations motivated the colonial government to table considerations for creating 'game reserves'. Eventually, in 1907 the notorious Etosha Pan, its surrounds, and the area stretching north-west into what was known as 'Kaokofeld', were declared as Game Reserve No. 2, encompassing over 93 240km^2. Within the boundaries of this Reserve hunting of certain wildlife was prohibited and traffic movements controlled – a process enabled by existing police posts established during the rinderpest epidemic of 1896-1897. As wildlife was fast becoming scarce and was a crucial economic resource for the colony, the creation of the reserve was primarily driven by economic reasons and by the need to control the lucrative hunting economy (Dieckmann 2001, pp. 128–129, 2003, pp. 42–43, 2007c, p. 124).

This ongoing colonial making of 'Südwestafrika' (SWA) was met both with conflict and resistance, culminating in the ultimately genocidal colonial war of 1904-1908 which radically shifted the balance of power. In 1907, together with the ongoing settler appropriation of land, new laws and ordinances were introduced to regulate the lives and mobility of Africans through a complete and perfect system of control. Ordinances passed by the German Authorities in 1905 and 1907 permitted the "confiscation of property of the insurgent groups" (Sullivan 1996b, p. 14 quoting the Odendaal Report 1964, p. 67). Moreover, the 'pass law' was introduced requiring that all Africans (above the age of seven) register with the authorities and were handed out a metal badge serving as a pass and a service book. The order for the control of 'natives' stipulated that Africans had no right to title for fixed property, cattle, or horses without consent from the governor. A third law, relating to labour contracts, laid down that all Africans without "visible means of support" should be employed (Dieckmann 2007e, p. 73). These laws were accompanied by accelerated European and 'white' settlement, the demarcation of clearly delineated farms, and imported ideals of private property (Dieckmann 2007a-b, 2013, p. 258) – see Map 5.



Map 5. Farms occupied in the Outjo District in 1915, according to Kruger n.d. Source: Bolten and Dieckmann 2011, p. 171; ©Ute Dieckmann, Andreas Bolten.

As Dieckmann's (2007e, 2013) work shows, state support played a key role in the establishment of a settler agricultural economy in Etosha-Kunene and across Namibia. The German colonial administration provided money, technical information and support, temporary housing, and loans to settlers. In 1913 the Land Bank was established to further support the issuing of such loans, usually to be repaid after six years (Dieckmann 2013, p. 272). Thus, between 1909 and 1913 the colonial administration introduced a more systematic settlement policy, with the number of white settlers, for example in the Outjo district, almost doubling (Dieckmann 2007e, p. 162).

With the onset of World War 1 and the 1915 invasion of the German Südwestafrika by South African and Union troops, military rule was established until 1920 during which time Namibia was under martial law. Colonial settlement was put on hold and legislation was liberalised to some degree so that some Africans could claim back formerly lost land and territories (Dieckmann 2007e). However, with the post-war establishment of the League of Nations mandated territory in 1921, an imported body of new laws was introduced and began to regulate the flow of labour and African mobilities once again (Dieckmann 2013, p. 259). This included several new proclamations, the encapsulation of Africans into so-called 'native reserves' and strict regulation of movement of both people, livestock, and goods across these boundaries (Sullivan 1996a, pp. 14-15). From the 1920s onwards, the newly established South African colonial administration undertook a rapid programme of settlement for white South African citizens (Dieckmann 2007e). As discussed in Sullivan's work (Sullivan 2019a, p. 15, also 1996a), these processes were underpinned by the ongoing "surveying and registering of the territory's natural riches and appropriating these through European settlement and industry", especially in the southern and central parts of the territory.

The ongoing establishment of colonial rule and settlement, under both the German and South African rule, was thus underpinned by the making of a particular "spatial regime" (Miescher 2012). Encompassing south and central Namibia, the 'Police Zone' was meant to delineate the part of the territory reserved for 'white' settlement, with its northern boundary, known as the 'Red Line', separated the 'Police Zone' from the 'northern Native territories'. This eventually, and over the years, also led to the creation of several livestock-free 'buffer zones', from which people and their livestock were coercively cleared and forcibly removed (Sullivan 2017b; Sullivan *et al*. 2019b). The historical trajectories of the different 'native reserves' were also contingent upon whether these fell within or in the vicinity of the 'Police Zone', or rather formed part of the northern 'Native Territories' – with different systems of land and colonial administration between these two areas, as well as within the areas of colonial indirect rule institutionalised north of the 'Red Line'. As in other parts of SWA, Etosha-Kunene's ethnicities and ethnic categories were used as an organising principle in creating the 'native reserves' and 'northern Native territories' – categories which were, over the years, reified through the colonial administration's practices, state-sanctioned ethnology, the institutionalisation of indirect rule and chieftaincies, and later the creation of 'ethnic' homelands (see for instance Dieckmann 2007a, for a detailed discussion on ethnicity and colonialism).

In western Namibia, and as summarised in Sullivan (1998, pp. 35-37), the First Schedule Reserves (1923) and the named groups to which they were allocated were Okombahe (|Â‡gommes) (Damara), Fransfontein (Damara, with Nama and Herero) and Sesfontein (Topnaar and Swaartbooi Nama, Damara as the majority, with Herero, Himba and Tjimba). Later the Kaokoland (Himba, Herero, Tjimba) Native Reserve was established in what is now northern Kunene, bordered in the

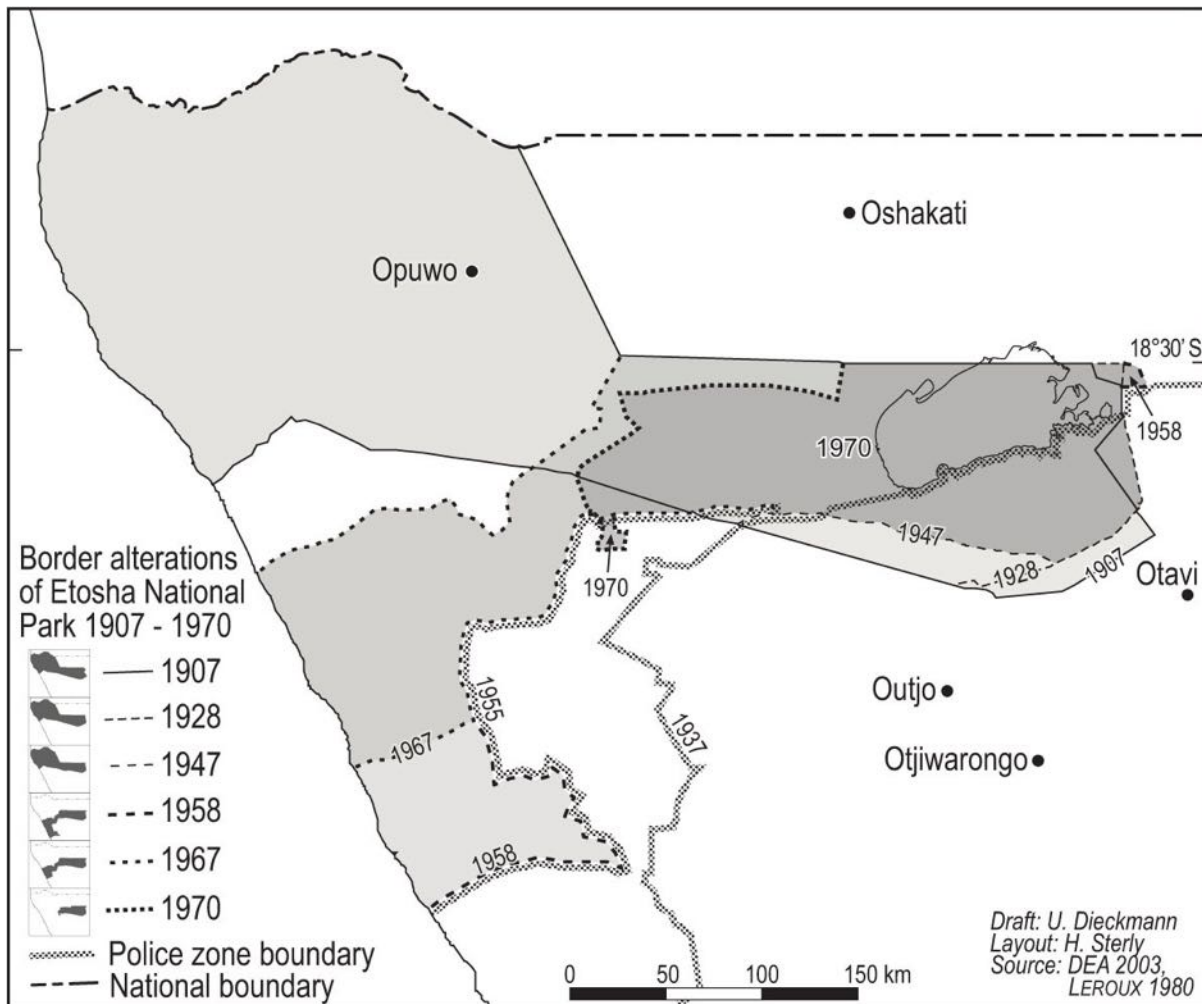
north by Portuguese Angola and the perennial Kunene River. The Second Schedule Reserves (1925) created for the same groups were Otjohorongo (Herero), Okombahe (Damara in the majority, with Herero), Otjimbingwe (Herero and Damara), and Aukeigas (Damara) west of Windhoek. Sullivan details in her later work how, as for other autochthonous Namibians in the central and southern parts of the territory, colonial "[r]eserve establishment and control intersected with specific displacements that tended to amplify Damara/ǂNūkhoen marginalisation to support land and resource management strategies associated with providing land and grazing to settler farmers, as well as clearing land for nature conservation and/or to control the spread of livestock diseases" (Sullivan and Ganuses 2020, p. 306, 2021a; also see Sullivan *et al.* 2016; Sullivan 2019a).

Sullivan explores how Africans, including Damara/ǂNūkhoen, then designated as "Berg Damara", were repeatedly and forcibly moved out of the western areas between the Hoanib and Ugab Rivers due to the establishment of livestock-free zones ostensibly for the control of livestock diseases (Sullivan and Ganuses 2020, 2021a, p. 155). The inability to police this remote area, however, also meant that people tended to move back as soon as the colonial police left. Such clearance processes are vividly remembered by elderly informants in the present (for more on this, see Sullivan *et al.* 2019a-b, Sullivan and Ganuses 2020, 2021a). Moreover, these displacements and the encapsulation of people into a handful of reserves built on prior layers of displacement, including those generated by cattle raiding and conflicts during the mid to late 1800s, causing many Damara/ǂNūkhoen to flee into mountainous areas (Sullivan and Ganuses 2020, 2021a).

As Dieckmann (2013, p. 259) details, the colonial administration was set on fostering a certain class of settlers in SWA. Although the incoming settlers claiming land further south and during the 1920s initially consisted of poor white South Africans, the 1926 Advisory Council of the Land Settlement Programme moved to prohibit the entrance of poor whites. From the 1930s preference was given to those white settlers within the territory and the resettlement of the Angola Boers in 1928 (Dieckmann 2007e, p. 162). Additionally, the ongoing expansion and development of this settler farming and agricultural economy meant the employment of a considerable number of farm workers, including several shepherds and herders as not all farmers could afford fencing camps early on – with the colonial policies detailed above translating into a steady supply of cheap labour (Dieckmann 2013, p. 273).

With the onset of apartheid rule in 1948 policy towards the former 'native reserves' changed. Based on recommendations made by the Odendaal Commission of 1964, 17 African 'native reserves' were integrated and incorporated into the production of ten ethnic 'homelands' (Werner 1993, p. 146, 2018, p. 2). The 'Odendaal Report' recommended the creation of 'homelands' in which distinctive and 'endangered' cultures could be preserved and nurtured and in which the apartheid ideal of 'separate development' and regional governance could be realised (Silvester *et al*. 1998, p. 19). North-western Namibia and the now Kunene Region were parcelled into two 'homelands' which, following the Communal Land Reform Act of 2002, remain as Communal Land Areas. The former Kaokoland 'native reserve' was mapped as the 'Kaokoland Homeland', now the Kaokoland Communal Land Area. The former Sesfontein, Fransfontein and Okambahe 'native reserves' were combined with former and newly purchased settler farms to create the 'Damaraland Homeland' in the south and central parts of Kunene Region region and northern Erongo Region, now the Damaraland Communal Land Area (Sullivan 1996a, 1998).

Although land appropriation and allocation were put on hold after the Second World War in Outjo District, more land was eventually made available to settlers soon after (Dieckmann 2013, p. 260). Additionally, a southern strip of Etosha Game Reserve was cut off in 1947 (see Map 6) and portioned into farms in order to make land available for war veterans (Dieckmann 2007e, p. 162). The progressive settlement of the district was finally completed around 1960 with the entire Outjo district being divided into farming units. These farms, many of which were of considerable size, eventually became small systems in themselves with very little regulation from the state in terms of the farmers' treatment of the workers, often becoming "microcosms of Apartheid" (for more on this see Dieckmann 2007a, p. 204, 2013, p. 274). For one, the concept and institution of *baasskap* were crucial for understanding social relations on farms and entailed the concentration of patriarchal power in a single *baas* (boss), who then exercised such power through a form of paternalism rooted in racial-evolutionary attitudes and corporeal punishment (*ibid*.). Settler farmers often relied on and continuously co-produced ethnic stereotypes and racial ideologies to justify their treatment of farm workers and in determining which workers were suitable for specific tasks (*ibid*., p. 275). Thus, these encounters were often coloured by interests in which the "African subjects were thought of primarily in terms of their labour potential" (Dieckmann 2007a, p. 98).



Map 6: Etosha's changing boundaries.
Note that in 1958 following Ordinance 18, the north-west area of Game Reserve no. 2 north of the Sesfontein Native Reserve, in fact remained designated as Game Reserve no. 2, simultaneously with its designation as Kaokoveld 'Native Reserve' (see Miescher 2012, pp. 162, 170).

As both Dieckmann and Sullivan have illustrated, changing nature conservation policy and practice also played a key role in these larger processes of colonial dispossession, including forcing many to become a landless underclass and thus into exploitative labour conditions. From 1917 onwards the Reserve's borders were reintroduced. The already existing police posts at Namutoni and Okaujuejo regulated both livestock and people's movement between northern, south and central Namibia (Dieckmann 2001, pp. 129–130, 2003, p. 49, 2007c). While creating the various 'native reserves', the South African colonial administration, like the colonial powers before, had a rather lax and tolerant attitude towards Hai‖om occupancy and land-use practices within the bounds of the then Game Reserve No. 2 (Dieckmann 2007d). However, as detailed by Dieckmann (2001, 2003, 2007a and c), during the 1940s several factors combined to lead up to the forced removal of Hai‖om from the Game Reserve. This included the tightening of legislations and the introduction of new rules regarding hunting and livestock ownership within the Game Reserve, the overall 'Bushmen' policy in the colony, changing conservation ideologies, and the spread of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD). Larger shifts in legislation such as the Vagrancy Proclamation in 1927 and the Arms and Ammunition Proclamation included bows and arrows under firearms – with both these legislations criminalising hunting and more mobile land-use practices (Dieckmann 2001, p. 136, 2003, pp. 56–57).

Additionally, the size of the Game Reserve was reduced to free more farmland for settlers, while discussions with regards to creating a 'Bushmen Reserve' and whether Hai‖om qualified as 'pure Bushmen' were also under way (Dieckmann 2007c, p. 124, more on this in next subsection). In 1958, the eastern part of Game Reserve No. 2 around Etosha Pan became the Etosha Game Park, a process supported by more patrols and the eventual fencing of the park, which made it more and more difficult for Hai‖om and others to enter and access the park (Dieckmann 2003, p. 72) – see Map 6.

The southern border of Etosha Game Park was fenced first, primarily with the expansion of settler farming from 1955 to 1960 and the eventual erection of a Veterinary Cordon Fence (VCF) along the former 'Red Line' during the 1960s. In 1967, the eastern area of Etosha Game Park (around Etosha Pan) was given the status of a national park, with fencing completed in 1973 (Dieckmann 2020, pp. 97–98). During this time, the size of what was Game Reserve no. 2 was reduced from 93 240km^2 to the 22 270km^2 of Etosha National Park. Despite these new border making processes, a system making provision for emergency grazing rights within Etosha for settler farmers from the surrounding areas was still in place up until the 1960s (Lendelvo *et al.* 2015, p. 223).

These 1950s conservation and settler-related upheavals were not only limited to Etosha. In the broader study area, they also affected people in the west of southern Kunene who were evicted and constrained to live either in the north in the Hoanib settlements around Sesfontein, or southwards towards the Ugab River / Okombahe (Sullivan 2017a, 2019a; Sullivan and Ganuses 2020, pp. 306-315, 2021a, p. 155). As summarised by Sullivan and Ganuses (2020, pp. 309-311, 2021a and references therein), the documented presence of Khoekhoegowab-speaking Damara / ǂNūkhoen, ‖Ubun and Nama families in these areas of the north-west, was impacted by several layers of land reorganisation, with clearances for conservation and tourism purposes part of these processes (also see Sullivan 2019a, pp. 16-17). For example, affecting Namibia's western areas was the progressive de-proclamation and clearance of the Aukeigas (!Ao‖Aexas) Damara 'native reserve' west of Windhoek in the course of establishing Daan Viljoen Game Park for recreational use by Windhoek's white inhabitants. As summarised in Sullivan and Ganuses (2020, p. 307 and references therein),

Damara / ǂNūkhoen were relocated to the Okombahe Reserve on the Ugab in 1938 and 1941 with more uprooted in 1948 from the former Aukeigas Reserve and displaced to Okakarara in the east (also see Sullivan 2019c, p. 19, 2022). |Khomanin Damara / ǂNūkhoen were further evicted from Aukeigas and relocated several hundred kilometres away to the farm Sores-Sores (Sorris-Sorris) on the Ugab (!Uǂgab) River in the 1950s, purchased by the administration to enlarge the Okombahe Reserve. This was a significantly more marginal area in terms of rainfall and productivity, and many of the promises for state assistance remained unmet (Sullivan 1996b, p. 15 after Odendaal Report 1964, p. 69; Sullivan and Ganuses 2020, pp. 307-308). In addition, in the 1950s relief grazing and farm tenancies were made available in this north-western area for Afrikaans livestock farmers, who were thereby able to gain from the prior clearances of local peoples (Sullivan and Ganuses 2021a, p. 156). In the 1950s, a large area of land south of Sesfontein which would later be reallocated as part of the communal area of 'Damaraland', was one of the last areas to be surveyed and settled. This later settlement was due to its vulnerability to drought and its peripheral location regarding more established agricultural areas (Rohde 1993, p. 29).

According to Kambatuku (1996) it appears that most surveyed farms south of Sesfontein were not settled until 1954. Farms in the area were initially made available to settler farmers through the issuing of monthly grazing licenses. Farmers would state their preference for several farms on their application and the Land Board would approve one of these to which the licensee had to move within six days of receiving notice of this approval. Qualifying licensees were required to be making a living from farming only, and their farming practices were regularly monitored as the basis on which they could retain their license (see Sullivan 1996a, p. 17). These newly surveyed farms overlapped with former Damara / ǂNūkhoen living places (*ǁanǁhuib*): the settlement of Soaub for example is located in what became Farm Rooiplaat, now incorporated into the Palmwag Tourism Concession and the site of Desert Rhino Camp – a luxury tourism camp run by Wilderness Safaris (Sullivan and Ganuses 2021a, p. 156).

Eventually, a total of 223 previously white-owned farms, covering an area of 1,872,794ha, were included in 'Damaraland' in the north-west of the country, each farm varying from 4,000 to 25,000 hectares in size, with an average of approximately 8,500has (Sullivan 1996a, p. 19, following the Odendaal Report 1964, pp. 89-93) By the mid-1960s, many of the settler farmers had already vacated these farms (Kambatuku 1996, p. 3), partly due to the declining viability of commercial farming in a situation so dependent on fluctuations of the South African economy (also see, Rohde 1993, p. 31). Farms were valued for the Odendaal Plan by an Evaluation Committee and purchased (for more, see Kambatuku 1996, p. 3). In 1964 and 1965, for example, a total of 70 farms, comprising some 698,908ha, were valued in Damaraland from which 60 offers were accepted by the farmers, the Administrator being called to interject and negotiate in instances where offers were not accepted (for more on this see Sullivan 1996a, p. 19 and Kambatuku 1996, p. 3). This process also resulted in land prices soaring as farmers took out options on land elsewhere in the country. For example, archival records indicate that the farms Rietkuil and Driekrone [in the Aba-Huab River area] were both purchased by the government for greatly more than their original value, enabling at least one of the owners to purchase a farm elsewhere, in this case, Sommerau in the Gibeon District (Sullivan 1996a, p. 17 drawing on Kambatuku 1996). Regarding the resettlement of Damara / ǂNūkhoen to the Damaraland 'homeland' in the early 1970s, Sullivan (1996a, pp. 19-20) writes:

> … [i]n the early 1970s, the purchased Damaraland farms were eventually made available to the Bantu Commission for redistribution to Damara farmers for communal use in their new ‘homeland’. Considering that most of these farms had been settled in response to extremely generous terms offered by the South African Administration and were then purchased at land values which included improvements, it is likely that their previous white owners benefited substantially from the arrangement.

This observation also supports Dieckmann’s (2007a, p. 163) work which illustrates the importance of state assistance in the dynamic of colonial settlement which did “not progress continuously but rather transpired in surges, dependent on natural conditions, the expansion of the necessary infrastructure but most of all on political developments”.

From the 1950s onwards, several diamond mines were also established in the northern Namib, at Möwe Bay, Terrace Bay, Toscanini and Saurusa, making this territory a “restricted access area” while at the same time offering new employment opportunities in the mines thereby established (Sullivan 2019a; Sullivan and Ganuses 2021a, pp. 156-157). These are remembered processes that displaced especially ǁUbun people living and moving in this far-westerly area (Sullivan 2021). For the creation of the ‘Kaokoland Homeland’ in 1970, the southern border of the former ‘Kaokoland Reserve’ was moved southwards to the Hoanib River, although the former Sesfontein Reserve remained with the Damaraland ‘Homeland’. The settlement of Warmquelle (east of Sesfontein) became part of Opuwo District and the Kaokoland or ‘Himba/Herero’ ‘homeland’. This led to the displacement of Khoekhoegowab-speaking peoples and Damara groups further south to Khowarib [Kowareb]. From 1970 to independence in 1990, ‘Damaraland’ reconnected Khoekhoegowab-speakers in the Okombahe Reserve on the Ugab River with the Sesfontein and Fransfontein Reserves to the north of the veterinary fence that spans the country from east to west (Rohde 1993; Sullivan 1996b). The Okombahe Reserve eventually became one of 12 wards in an expanded Damara ‘homeland’, which was expanded in a piecemeal manner after 1947. Damara / ǂNūkhoen and ǁUbun are also known to have used and dwelled in areas of west Namibia lying between these reserves (Sullivan *et al*. 2019a-b; Sullivan and Ganuses 2020 and references therein).

Although the colonial processes of displacement and dispossession outlined above were characterised by much control and violence, as Dieckmann (2007a, p. 338) illustrates in her book it was also filled with a multitude of instances of resistance, avoidance, and negotiation – with Etosha-Kunene’s peoples likewise deploying various strategies and tactics to subvert the imposition of colonial and apartheid rule.

Ethnicity, coloniality and land in Etosha-Kunene

Both Dieckmann’s and Sullivan’s work critically examines the politics of ethnicity in addressing historical layers of land reorganisation, use and relations, and dispossession in Namibia (for example, Sullivan 2000a, 2001a, 2002a, 2003; Dieckmann 2007a-b; Sullivan and Ganuses 2020). Ethnicity played a key role in the colonial socio-spatial re-organisation of Etosha-Kunene. In creating the ‘homelands’, ethnicity was essentialised and ‘ethnic’ categories were used by the colonial and apartheid state to justify an ideology of racial discrimination and various forms of violence, control, dispossession, and segregation. As Dieckmann (2007a, pp. 7, 165) points out, “the agents of

colonialism had a vivid interest in organising the world they wanted to control" and the attempt to control space was an integral part of this. Moreover, within the apartheid ideology, ethnic ascriptions became one of the most important characteristics in defining access to specific resources, including land (Dieckmann 2007a, p. 11), and thereby "were raised to judico-political entities" (Fuller 1993, p. 83, quoted in Sullivan 2000a, p. 147). Within the colonial state-science apparatus, state ethnology and anthropology and their "constructions and affirmations of difference have played their own part in supporting wider relations of paternalism, discrimination and violence" (Sullivan 2001a, p. 179), often providing scientific legitimisation for apartheid ideology.

Sullivan's and Dieckmann's work intersects in examining how Khoekhoegowab-speaking peoples were "placed on the lowest rung of colonial racial hierarchies by multiple early writers, and often written about in strongly derogatory terms" (Sullivan and Ganuses 2020, p. 322; also Sullivan 1998, 1999a, 2000a). In doing so their work, and especially Dieckmann's (2007a) book, critically unpacks the root of these colonial racial hierarchies to examine the multitude of implications of and lasting legacies for those who were classified as such. In particular, Dieckmann's book details the "processes of construction, reconstruction and valuation of ethnic categorisation" and "the relationship of ethnic categorisation – representation produced by others – and the colonial politics and practice with regard to the life of the people designated" (Dieckmann 2007a, p. 3).

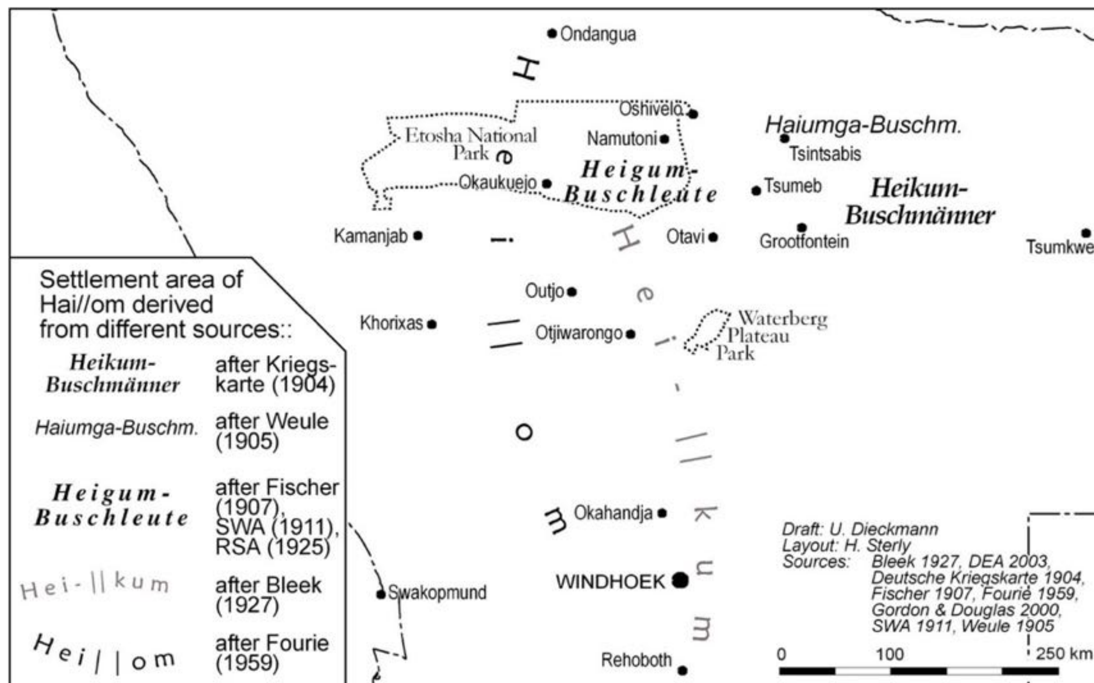
Moreover, both Dieckmann and Sullivan interrogate how these discourses shaped and still shape a "deep-rooted prejudice that in many contexts continues to occlude and demote [Khoekhoegowab-speaking groups'] perspectives, agency, and concerns" (Sullivan and Ganuses 2020, p. 322), and fosters structural realities of marginalisation and exclusion. In addressing these dynamics, both Dieckmann and Sullivan are conscious of the dialectics of the colonial encounter and identity construction. Thus, despite the asymmetrical power relations involved, both authors emphasise and explore the agency of local actors in refashioning, negotiating, imagining, appropriating and constructing ethnic ascriptions and marginal identities within changing colonial and post-colonial political economies. Moreover, although the people that later became known as Damara and Hai‖om stayed in the same area and permanently during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, they were eventually enfolded in divergent regimes of signification and historical processes of exclusion and incorporation into the colonial system (Dieckmann 2007a, pp. 45-46).

Much of Dieckmann's (2007a, p. 6) book examines how the Hai‖om ethnic label emerged and was constructed as a "problematic concept" within colonial systems of classification (also see Dieckmann 2001, 2003). Although regarded and treated as a subcategory of 'Bushmen', their linguistic proximity to Damara and Nama meant that they were never seen as 'pure' Bushmen. Rather, over time 'Hai‖om' emerged as a "liminal category" (*ibid*., p. 6). Dieckmann further illustrates how this liminality played an important role both in the initial lack of concern on the part of the colonial administration over the presence of Hai‖om in Game Reserve No. 2, as well as their later forced removal and landless status. In trying to contextualise this history, Dieckmann (2007a) takes a critical look at the power/knowledge complexes which fostered this liminality over time and within which the categories of both 'Hai‖om' and 'Bushmen' took on layers of signification and ambiguity.

She first of all details the role that the 19th century European and Western scientific study of human origins and development played in this process; in particular, how social pseudo-Darwinist ideas

shaped how early missionaries, traders, travellers, settlers and administrators in the 19th and early 20th century imagined, made sense of, and represented the colonial encounter, including accounts of Hai‖om (Dieckmann 2007a). Within this knowledge framework, all humankind was understood as having a single origin, with societies progressing parallel through set stages. This gave rise to the hegemonic and racist model of human cultural development based on three stages: savagery, barbarism, and civilisation (*ibid*., pp. 36-38). Consequently, some races were seen as superior while other societies were construed as remnants of earlier stages of humankind and even "regarded as representations of the threshold from animality to human kind" (*ibid*.). Additionally, development was increasingly explained through recourse to the biological differences between people and societies – with such theories providing the basis for a racist ideology (*ibid*., p. 36).

Consequently, early encounters and accounts of Hai‖om were coloured by certain colonial sensibilities, all sharing some underlying assumptions: that Hai‖om (and other San and Khoekhoegowab-speaking peoples) were situated at the lowest rung of human evolution, just above animals (Dieckmann 2003, p. 45). As a result, these peoples were not regarded as subjects, but rather as 'primitive' objects and part of the 'wild' and 'natural' landscape. While this situation justified discrimination, racism, and prosecution, in other circumstances – such as with Game Reserve No. 2 – it resulted in the administration allowing for and even encouraging Hai‖om to remain – as part of an imagined and conserved 'wilderness' of 'old' Africa (Dieckmann 2001, pp. 129–130). Nevertheless, and as Dieckmann (2007a, p. 38) points out, these social evolutionist ideas were not "a coherent system of knowledge" but ideas that travelled and "were appropriated to suit different interests", as well as changing over time as the political sentiments and the colony's economic needs shifted. The onset of the German colonial period meant that an extensive amount of anthropological and administrative historical material was produced as the "37olonialization of the territory went hand in hand with the systematic examination of the social and natural environment" (Dieckmann 2007a, p. 53). With this material, the "racist component of Bushmen research" became more outspoken and prominent, supported by the popularity of physical anthropology and the search for "racial purity" (*ibid*., pp. 39, 53-54). This context fuelled various exploitative research practices and a whole enterprise of human remains and bone collection. During this time, Hai‖om were increasingly regarded as a mixture of 'Hottentot' [Nama] and 'Bushmen' and often classified as 'bastards' (ibid., pp. 56-59). Dieckmann notes that the name "Hai‖om" (or a term resembling this at least) first emerged at the end of the 19th century referring to people who were residing scattered among other groups in northern-central Namibia – see Map 7.



Map 7: Settlement area of Hai‖om according to various sources. Source: Dieckmann 2007a, p. 36.

Apart from the "scientific approach to the Bushmen", these changing significations were also co-constructed through the colonial encounter with settlers, state administrators and other actors (Dieckmann 2007a, p. 97). For instance, during the late 19th and early 20th century "any individuals who were mobile, uncooperative and troublesome tended to be labelled as Bushmen" (*ibid*., p. 39). Eventually subsuming diverse groups under one category became problematic giving rise to a "tripartite division" of "wild", "semi-wild" and "tame" "Bushmen" in the first half of the 20th century (*ibid*., p. 340). Within this context, Hai‖om existence and living conditions in Game Reserve No. 2 became more precarious. During the mid-20th century, there were still up to about 40 Hai‖om settlements within the boundary of the park and many kept livestock and engaged in seasonal hunting and gathering (*ibid*., pp. 148-156). It was noted that the limited fencing of the Reserve and surrounding farms, as well as limited patrols due to the immense size of the farms, also allowed for more mobile land-use practices within the police zone and when needed – for instance in times of drought. This ability to survive from the veld and their livestock prolonged the process of incorporation into the colonial system and provided options for sustaining livelihoods (*ibid*., pp. 166-167).

With the onset of apartheid rule and growing pressure from the settler communities, however, these circumstances began to shift. The political and academic spheres became more closely intertwined and increasingly science was used to justify political ideology (Dieckmann 2007a, p. 169). Government ethnologists drew on essentialist ideas of culture as a key concept to explain difference, including ideas of contact as detrimental to cultural authenticity and purity, with such representations reifying constructions of Africans as the "ethnic Other" and the "ethnic class Other". This provided scientific justifications for enforcing ideas of 'separate development' and the ethnic 'homeland' policy (*ibid*., pp. 101-108). Moreover, it also drove the questioning of the 'pure' status of Hai‖om by both academics and administrative officers (Dieckmann 2001, p. 135). Hai‖om were regarded as atypical Bushmen, as racial and cultural hybrids who did not conform to then-popular

image of the Bushmen as the antithesis of civilisation, and as 'pure' and 'pristine' people who are closer to nature – a vision which was now highly romanticised (Dieckmann 2007a, pp. 171-173). The administration thus relied on "crude racial concepts" based on biological determinism and distinguished between 'wild', 'tame' and 'domesticated' Bushmen, with such categorisations – which were "analogous to typologies of animals" – often arbitrarily applied to suit different agendas (Dieckmann 2001, p. 131, 2003, p. 50).

At the same time, "the problem of taking control over the Bushmen, followed by the idea of creating a Bushmen reserve, existed from the beginning of the colonial period, sometimes higher on the agenda than in other years" (Dieckmann 2003, p. 64). These discussions were, on the one hand, driven by concerns for 'preserving' the 'pure' Bushmen as cultural icons of an imagined and shared primordial past, and, on the other hand, by concerns about so-called vagrancy, stock theft and possible resistance. After World War II these discussions gained prominence once again, primarily driven by the settler farmer's lobby whose concerns were for livestock theft and freeing up more available and cheaper farm labour (*ibid*., p. 63). Apart from an official policy of handing out food supplies to create relations of trust and dependency, the administration also eventually launched a Commission for the Preservation of Bushmen in 1949. Headed by PA Schoeman, the famous writer and ethnologist involved in formulating the apartheid doctrine, this Commission ultimately concluded that all Hai‖om were to leave the Game Reserve and move either to the north or south to settler farms to look for work. Dieckmann notes that the general opinion that Hai‖om were not 'real Bushmen' was certainly among the factors influencing this recommendation as the final report of the commission mentioned that the process of assimilation had proceeded too far among Hai‖om (and Khxoe, another group categorised as 'Bushmen') and that it would therefore not be worthwhile to 'preserve' either (Dieckmann 2003, p. 62). As Dieckmann (2001, p. 137) states, the irony is that:

> …the necessity of integrating the Hai‖om in the economic systems, which did not stop at the borders of Etosha, almost inevitably led to their assimilation. This implied, without doubt, an alienation from an exclusively foraging way of life, and this in turn finally produced the opinion that the Hai‖om were not worth 'preserving'.

The eventual expulsion from the reserve was gradual. Hai‖om were not allocated any land in the homeland areas and where possible, still moved between the colonially imposed borders and restrictions to access resources, livelihoods, and their ancestral home-places. Some Hai‖om remained in the park and still partook in traditional performances for the tourists up until the 1960s, and in 1984 up to 244 Hai‖om still resided in the park as employees and their families (Dieckmann 2003, p. 73). Yet these families also had no rights to land within the park and most Hai‖om at this point formed part of, and were being incorporated into, a population of "landless generational farm labourers" (Dieckmann 2020, p. 98). The forced removal of Hai‖om was part of a larger process of colonial socio-spatial reorganisation and dispossession. The material needs of the colony and ongoing colonial land appropriation played an important role at the start. Later, changing concepts of nature conservation and 'Bushmenness' had a great impact on Hai‖om (Dieckmann 2001, p. 143). In other words, the "eviction is just one point in a long story of subjugation, dispossession and disempowerment that was not reversed with the independence of Namibia in 1990" (Dieckmann 2003, p. 81). Nevertheless, in examining the negotiation of this history of dispossession in her book, Dieckmann (2007a, p. 97) argues that the 'oppressed' and the 'colonised' drew on complex and everyday strategies of resistance during this time. These included shifting between alliance or

complicity, accommodation, or incorporation (adapting to new circumstances and making use of new opportunities), withdrawal or disappearance (mobility), offences (stock thefts), and non-compliance (refusal to be obedient workers) and revenge. In these complex and nuanced encounters, ethnic identities and power relations were refigured, as much as in the official documents and scientific publications.

Furthermore, much of Dieckmann's research and publications have illustrated that, despite the blanket term 'San', Namibian San consists of several ethnic groups with distinct languages. Rather, the terms 'Bushmen' and 'San' are both external terms which have a complex and problematic history and were imposed by outsiders – mainly European and settler colonists and other African groups – to refer to certain groups and persons who, primarily, practiced a more hunting-gathering and semi-nomadic lifestyle and who now are generally understood and commonly acknowledged as Namibia's 'first people' or 'first inhabitants' (Dieckmann *et al.* 2014). The in-migration of Bantu-speaking and pastoral and agro-pastoral groups into Namibia around 500 years ago meant the significant relocation of such groups, a process which accelerated with the arrival of German colonialists and the later onset of South African and settler colonialism (Dieckmann 2007f). Nevertheless, San groups based in Etosha and the Kalahari practiced hunting and gathering as a viable strategy well into the 20th century, with Game Reserve No. 2 being one of the last refuges for such practices (Dieckmann *et al.* 2014, p. 104, also see Dieckmann 2021, p. 96).

At the same time, Dieckmann (2007a, p. 47) shows how Hai‖om played a central role in the early establishment of the colonial state. This was largely due to their geographic locatedness in Etosha and their role in copper mining and trading. They traded copper in return for salt, corn, and tobacco, which means that they were incorporated into the wider colonial system early on, while still being able to engage in hunting and gathering. Yet, with time and especially after the onset of South African colonial rule and growing appropriation of land around Etosha, African mobilities were increasingly curbed and controlled. This led to a considerable degree of noncompliance, rejection and resistance from the various groups designated as 'Bushmen'. In response, a discourse of the 'Bushmen plague' took root and draconian measures of imprisonment and violence were introduced, imposed by police patrols and vigilantism on side of settler farmers (*ibid*., pp. 87, 94). Eventually, these ethnic stereotypes and ascriptions had a large number of consequences for Hai‖om, including fuelling the establishment of legislation which restricted their mobility, being paid less as labourers due to racial and ethnic stereotypes, being considered 'incapable' of adapting to modern life and thus opportunities such as education were withheld, and at the same time considered too 'impure' to be preserved and thus not deserving of a 'homeland' (Dieckmann 2007a, p. 340).

Much of Sullivan's early work also draws on historical revision to unpack how engagements with and understandings of 'Damara' land-use practices, institutions and knowledges were shaped by particular colonial biases and often derogatory assumptions (see, for instance Sullivan 1996b, 1998, 1999a, 2000a, 2001a-b, 2002a, 2005a). In addition, and similarly to the work of Dieckmann, Sullivan's later work, especially within the context of the *Future Pasts* project and her joint publications with Welhemina Suro Ganuses (see Sullivan *et al.* 2019b, Sullivan and Ganuses 2020, 2021a-b), explores the often erased social histories of Damara / ǂNūkhoen, affirming their long histories of association with Etosha-Kunene landscapes. They argue that such erasure can be traced

historically to how Khoekhoegowab-speaking groups were culturally situated and represented within the colonial archives, imagination, and discourses – including how the ascribed ethnonyms changed and shifted as outsiders tried to map Etosha-Kunene's cultural heterogeneity, often according to highly simplified and essentialised categories (see Sullivan and Ganuses 2021, p. 145).

As detailed in Sullivan *et al.* (2019b; also Sullivan 2019c, p. 13; Sullivan and Ganuses 2020, 2021, pp. 147-152), initially 'Dama' was a name given by Nama and Namaqua pastoral groups for darker-skinned people. However, in the historical literature the term 'Damara', especially as the colonial officials, travellers and missionaries used it, tended to refer to various cattle pastoralists known as 'Herero'. Despite this shifting and confusing terminology, Sullivan *et al*. (2019b, pp. 293-294) illustrate that in reading the colonial archive together with current on-site oral history practices, the people later designated as 'Damara' were noted and recorded various times during the 1800s across many parts of central and west Namibia, often by the terms "Hill Damara" or "Berg Dama" (also see Sullivan and Ganuses 2020, 2021a, pp. 145-152). During this time Topnaar and later Swartbooi Oorlam Nama lineages moved and settled in large parts of west Namibia, with Oorlam Nama from Cape Colony and Herero pastoralists from the north competing for pastures and trade routes in central and north-west parts of the territory: these mobilities causing ǂNūkhoen to retreat further into mountainous terrain, and/or into patron-client or servitude relations (*ibid*., pp. 302-306).

The historical erasure of particular cultural histories thus also took place through "historically constitutive processes whereby pressure on land through expansionary cattle pastoralism pushed Khoekhoegowab-speaking Damara / ǂNūkhoen further into mountainous areas that became their refuge and stronghold" and subsequent processes of colonial dispossession which severely constrained their access to previous ancestral land-areas (Sullivan 2019a, p. 13). Sullivan's work, like Dieckmann's, thus illustrates how the term 'Damara' that became reified during the apartheid era, is a blanket term referring to many different, and differently named, land-based lineages and groups, with ǁUbun, like Haiǁom, often seen as or referred to as "Nama" or "Bushmen" (Sullivan and Ganuses 2021a, p. 145). This situation can be partly traced to how their histories are entangled with the various Topnaar and Nama peoples which migrated and returned to north-west Namibia in the late 1800s (see, *ibid*., p. 146; Sullivan 2021). Moreover, and as shown below, Sullivan's work, like Dieckmann's, examines how colonial ethnic ascriptions, and their significations, were entangled with essentialist ideologies regarding modes of production and land-relations in Etosha-Kunene's dryland ecologies.

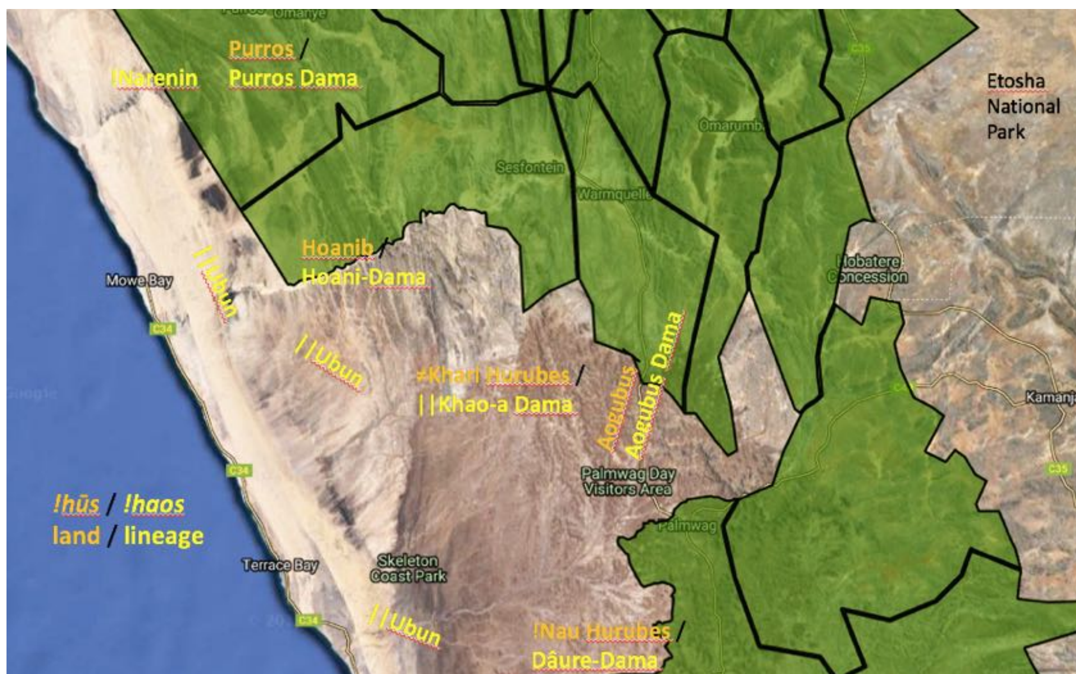
Revising historical land-relations and modes of production

Both Dieckmann's and Sullivan's work explores how the establishment of settler colonialism introduced new notions of property and tenure which contrasted drastically with prior engagements with the land, inscribing landscapes in new ways, historically, culturally, and economically (as further explored in recent work: see Dieckmann 2009, 2021; Sullivan and Ganuses 2021a; Sullivan 2022). In addition, their work emphasises how Etosha-Kunene's dryland ecologies co-produced these changing land-relations, modes of production, and political and cultural economies.

Like much of Namibia, Etosha-Kunene can be characterised as arid to semi-arid drylands. As Sullivan and Homewood (2004, p. 120) explain, dryland ecologies are characterised by limited soil moisture

and nutrients which give rise to primarily ephemeral grasslands and shrublands. The unpredictability of rainfall in these ecologies affects productivity and resource availability and is critical to understanding historical and contemporary socio-ecological dynamics. For one, "the more arid and infertile the land, and the more seasonally and annually variable its productivity and ensuing use, the more likely it is that the area and its resources will be under communal control rather than individual tenure" (*ibid*., p. 132). Yet, as Sullivan's, Dieckmann's and Lendelvo's work illustrate, tenure – understood as rights over land and how these should be allocated within societies – can include a range of rights and resources (Lendelvo *et al.* 2020a, p. 38). Moreover, processes of colonial land dispossession were often justified through various intersecting colonial discourses and beliefs which undercut recognition of existing tenure institutions and the range of culturally-informed rights to both land and resources in Etosha-Kunene.

According to Dieckmann (2007e, p. 162) during the early 20th century, the surveying of more than 67 farms and the allotment of land for incoming settlers in southern Kunene was justified as the land was perceived as "empty of 'natives'". This "interpretation of 'the empty land' might be explained by the significant differences between the land tenure and land-use practices of the inhabitants and the immigrants' ideas of private land ownership" (*ibid*.). Yet, this sense of "empty" land might also have been due to the colonial repression of previous years of uprisings and their suppression and the large-scale migrations and dispossessions this generated (Sullivan *et al*. 2022[2021]). Despite this colonial construction of "empty" land, both Sullivan's and Dieckmann's work illustrate how, during pre-colonial times and the 19th and early 20th century, Etosha-Kunene remained inhabited by varied pastoral and hunting-gathering groups made up of small, interrelated and kin-based lineages, who were mobile and regularly trekked to access shifting and seasonal pastures, water flows, veld foods and migrating wildlife; while simultaneously regulating such mobilities within place and land-based lineages and kin and socio-political networks (Sullivan and Ganuses 2021a, p. 147) – see Map 8.



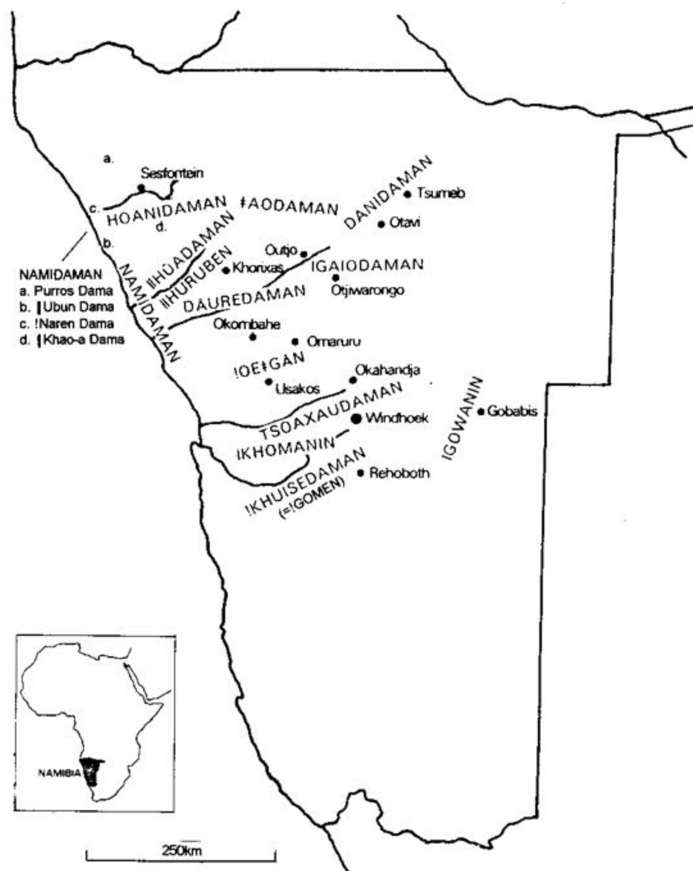
Map 8. Named land areas (sing. *!hūs*) as dynamically known in recent generations by Khoekhoegowab-speaking Damara/ǂNūkhoe and ǁUbu inhabitants of conservancies in southern Kunene.
The green-shaded areas are conservancies, Etosha National Park and Skeleton Coast National Park are to the right and left of the map respectively. Source: Sullivan and Ganuses 2020, p. 229.

Moreover, both Sullivan and Dieckmann show how, over the years, these land-relations were perceived and/or constructed to be “nomadic”, this perception being translated as indicating a lack of ownership over land and resources. This “essential nomadism” framework (Dieckmann 2007a, p. 16) was based, for example, on the “erroneous belief that the San [amongst others], due to their mobile lifestyle, never ‘owned’ land per se” (Dieckmann *et al*. 2014, p. 439). Such beliefs extended to other Khoehoegowab-speaking groups in Etosha-Kunene and not only disavowed Indigenous land ownership and belonging, but also the institutions and knowledge which rooted and enacted such ownership. Both Sullivan’s and Dieckmann’s work challenges these colonial discourses in which these societies were perceived as “roaming” around, without attachment to and/or ownership over specific resources and land-areas (Sullivan and Homewood 2004; Dieckmann 2007a, p. 50; Sullivan and Ganuses 2021a).

Dieckmann’s work, for instance, shows how, during the 19th and early 20th century, Hai‖om, together with other San groups, dwelled in large parts of Namibia, mostly in small, flexible, and dispersed groups in land-areas with sufficient natural resources and relied predominantly on hunting and gathering (Dieckmann *et al.* 2014, see Map 2). Between a few hundred to a thousand Hai‖om lived in and around Etosha Pan, with extended families and groups forming co-residential units primarily centred around permanent water-hole places and moving seasonally for gathering and hunting, with different land-areas belonging to different groups (Dieckmann 2001, p. 130). Dieckmann (2003, p. 46) recounts how during the German colonial period, it was the place-based headmen who were responsible for peace and order and for allocating access-rights to resources. In her later publications, Dieckmann (2021a, p. 108) emphasises how Hai‖om “used to group ‘clusters’ of people according to geographical areas they were living in”, with the people named after the physical characteristics of the land or specific plants important to them. Thus, personal and collective identities belonging to the land and family groups were headed, as noted above, by family elders, who could be considered to be custodians or stewards of such land areas (*ibid*., p. 109). The boundaries of specific areas were sometimes marked with beacons such as rocks put in trees and they were well known by those residing in the area, including the rules which had to be followed when entering the territory of another group (*ibid*., p. 110). These Khoekhoegowab-speaking Hai‖om and other groups were also “enmeshed in trade networks and socio-political relations with surrounding groups” (Dieckmann 2003, p. 42). However, outsiders often ignored these customary land rights and land-use patterns because they were perceived as different to pastoral and agro-pastoral engagements with the land (Dieckmann *et al*., 2014, p. 439).

Sullivan’s research likewise demonstrates that there was a dynamic relationship between Damara / ǂNūkhoe lineages (*!haoti*) and specific land areas (*!hūs*) in southern Kunene, with over 34 existing across Namibia (Sullivan 2001a, 2019a; Sullivan and Low 2014; Sullivan *et al.* 2019b; Sullivan and Ganuses 2020, 2021a, p. 161) – see Map 9. Thus, there was a diversity of dynamic and more-or-less autonomous lineages associated with different land areas (Sullivan 2019a, p. 24; Sullivan and Ganuses 2020, 2021a). These lineage-based groups moved semi-nomadically and autonomously from place to place, negotiating access to other land-areas during times of need or drought, and establishing claims to places through for instance settlement, land-use practices, gravesites, place names, songs and oral history (for more detail on this see, for example, Sullivan and Ganuses 2021a, pp. 162-174). These named land-areas as they have been dynamically known in recent generations are mapped and described in recent publications (see Sullivan 2019a; Sullivan and Ganuses 2020,

2021a, p. 164). In the past, however, many such groups were forced to trek or migrate elsewhere during times of war and unrest and many more were permanently uprooted and lost access to previously owned land-areas – as was the case during the late 19th century and with the onset of colonial rule and settler colonialism. In sum, historical processes detailed in the first section of this chapter strongly "affected the land embodying the territories *(!hus*)" (Sullivan 2019a, p. 18). These histories remain marginalised and occluded, being unrecognised in official maps and narratives (for more on this see Chapters 3 and 5 and the *Future Pasts* project).



Map 9. Approximate locations of major Damara / ǂNūkhoe lineages (*!haoti*, "clans") in the recent past.
Sources: Haacke and Boois (1991, p. 51), supplemented with information in ǁGaroëb (1991) and oral history field research in north-west Namibia.

Moreover, Sullivan's and Dieckmann's work challenges not only the "essential nomadism" framework, but also the simplistic, evolutionist and static representations of historical modes of production in drylands, including culturally-deterministic models (see, for instance, Sullivan and Ganuses 2021a, p. 157 for a recent engagement on this). As Sullivan (2001a) points out, the distinction between foragers and pastoralists is constructed, but has political effects. She argues that the dryland ecological dynamics required and supported people to regularly and opportunistically shift between, or combine, different modes of production – including seasonal agriculture – while also engaging in trade and exchange with neighbouring groups and navigating times of drought, conflict and war (Sullivan 1998, Dieckmann 2007a). Thus, in idealised terms "pastoral/nomadic living affirms, manages and responds to the variable productivity of drylands through maintaining

heterogeneity and diversity in socio-economic practices" (Sullivan and Homewood 2017[2003], p. 132).

For example, Dieckmann's (2003, p. 52) early work analyses the consolidating of the Etosha National Park as something of a refuge for Hai||om during these early years of an expanding colonial system in which farms were steadily allocated to settlers and cheap labour and seasonal employment was in high demand, the official policy offering two options for Hai||om of the wider region: employment on the farms or living within the boundaries of the reserve. During the 1920s and the 1930s, hunting by Hai||om in the park was not regarded as a problem, and some Hai||om also possessed livestock exchanged with Oshiwambo groups in the north (Dieckmann 2007c, p. 125). Hence, "the first four decades after the establishment of the game reserve entailed an economic diversification for the Etosha Hai||om" (*ibid*., pp. 125-126, also see Dieckmann 2020, p. 97). In Etosha, salt and ostrich eggs were regularly traded and exchanged for mahangu or tobacco with other groups, and relations with neighbouring groups were not always peaceful. People also deployed different economic strategies including engaging in opportunities for seasonal and/or regular employment, such as the construction of roads in Game Reserve No. 2 (Dieckmann 2007c, p. 124). These strategies were partly connected "to their earlier lifestyle, and partly to the changing circumstances, new opportunities and limitations arising from the creation and administration of the Game Reserve" (Dieckmann 2001, p. 133, 2003, pp. 46, 52, 2007a). Thus, the past remembered by Hai||om with whom Dieckmann worked was already a time in which groups were not exclusively living from hunting and gathering (Peter *et al.* 2009, p. 105). Moreover, "Hai||om themselves were not a united group, and relationships to the colonial administration varied significantly, certainly dependent upon which way the people were affected by the colonial state geographically or individually" – which meant that certain groups or persons also selectively engaged with the colonial system early on as trackers, hunters, or traders (Dieckmann 2003, p. 48).

As the work of Sullivan (2000a) has emphasised, such shifts and diversity in modes of production were often misrepresented and misunderstood due to colonial discourses and their embeddedness within evolutionist paradigms as well as patriarchal ideologies. Groups designated as "Damara" and "Bushmen" were historically classified as "culturally hunter gatherers". Moreover, hunting and especially gathering practices tended to be viewed as primitive and backwards during the early to the mid-20th century and by colonial and missionary ethnographers (see Sullivan and Homewood 2004). Such perceptions not only occluded and undermined 'Damara' and 'San' knowledge and expertise but also erased other modes of production engaged in by these groups, such as herding and trading. Academia, and anthropology, in particular, played a major role in essentialising social categories by merging cultural characteristics, languages, and modes of subsistence into essentialised ethnic categories (Sullivan 2001a).

Sullivan's later work also emphasises how modes of production and material and cultural economies in west Namibia shifted with historical encounters with cattle pastoralists, and mercantile and capitalist economies, fuelled by various in-migration events, including the later negotiation of settler colonialism (Sullivan and Ganuses 2021a, p. 143). This continually generated different combinations of "hunting-herding-harvesting" as people incorporated different economic strategies and new symbolic and material cultures (*ibid*., p. 144). For example, Sullivan and Ganuses (2021a, p. 152) illustrate how, in reading the colonial archive, it becomes strongly evident that the "diverse

combinations of livelihood practices" and intricate trade networks enacted by those labelled as "Berg Damara", included growing and trading tobacco, copper smelting, and harvesting and trading plants for food and medicine.

An additional factor erasing histories of such diverse combinations of livelihood practices was the imposition of patriarchal ideologies and colonial structures in Etosha-Kunene. For instance, as Sullivan (2000a, pp. 146–148, 2005a) discussed in her earlier work, during the colonial period an ethnographic myth of a "'traditional' male locus of decision-making power" was constructed, including through the specific consolidation and institutionalisation of a "'traditional' system of male hereditary headmen" by the German and South African administrations, as "a means of enhancing control over Indigenous populations" (*ibid*.). These ethnographic assumptions and shifts in power configurations eventually fed into ideas of unchanging modes of subsistence in west Namibia, erasing more feminised resource domains (see Sullivan 1998, 2000a, 2005a).

These colonial material-discursive practices should also be situated in relation to histories of settler colonialism and land appropriation within Etosha-Kunene, with constructions of African land-use histories always taking place in relation to colonial and settler narratives of belonging and land. As noted above, Dieckmann's research examined cultural land-relations and changing modes of production which underlaid the historical negotiation of settler agriculture in Etosha-Kunene. When the first settlers arrived in the Outjo district there was a sense of being pioneers in an 'unforgiving wilderness' and of converting it into "a productive garden of settler nationhood" (Dieckmann 2013, p. 269). Despite such imperatives, however, it was a major challenge to develop the farm infrastructure and housing from the ground-up, and to navigate farming in the semi-arid, sparsely populated and what was then mostly alien environment to most incoming settlers (Dieckmann 2007d, p. 166). Consequently, during the early decades of the 20th century, most settlers lived in impoverished shelters, investing time rather in securing protection for their livestock from prey animals, weather conditions and disease, and finding reliable water sources and seasonal pastures (Dieckmann 2013, p. 270). Environmental challenges, including localised rainfall, drought, and the lack of phosphate in the soil meant that the settlers regularly trekked elsewhere or attempted to secure land-access in parts where unsurveyed land remained (Dieckmann 2013, p. 271). Thus, during the early years, settlement was flexible and informal and mirrored the mobile land-use practices of the Indigenous pastoral societies (also Sullivan 1996a). Most farms were unfenced and allocated rather under grazing licences before being sold by the government. Such conditions made regular trekking unproblematic, although still a high-risk endeavour (*ibid*., p. 261, Dieckmann 2007d). However, despite the socio-environmental realities on the ground, the colonial and later apartheid state was set on importing private property ideals. The more flexible land-relations thus began to shift – at least on paper – with more farms surveyed and allotted in Outjo district.

With this process "the colonisers imported ideals of private land ownership and agriculture, which had evolved in the European context, namely the notion of demarcated farms with well-defined borders and incontestable individual proprietors" (Dieckmann 2007e, p. 162, 2013, p. 258, as exemplified in Map 5 (Outjo 1915). These "static cartographies" conflicted drastically with existing mobile land-relations in large parts of the territory where shared access and use were the norm, rather than occupation (Silvester *et al.* 1998, p. 20). With the introduction of drilling machines, much energy and resources went into the drilling of boreholes, installing wind pumps and dams, fencing

off camps, and thus creating more permanent dwellings (Dieckmann 2013). The imposition of private tenure was thus also accompanied by the introduction of capitalist production ideals, both of which led to a rapid conceptual shift in understanding of land (see Sullivan 2019a, p. 15, 2022). Nevertheless, in practice settlers continued to negotiate access on neighbouring or other farms during times of drought. According to Sullivan (1996a after Kambatuku 1996) for farms settled or used for reserve grazing in west Outjo District and from the 1950s onwards, archive records also indicate that the constraints of the terrain were such that farmers negotiated with each other on an ongoing basis to move with their livestock to access grazing elsewhere, despite the large sizes of their farms. Moreover, most farmers, like other Etosha-Kunene inhabitants, relied heavily on a degree of economic diversification (Dieckmann 2013, p. 275, 2007c, p. 168). This included small-scale horticulture, experimentation with cash crops, mixed stock farming, and dairying. Growing global demand for karakul pelts during the early 20th century, and the karakul sheep's resilience to drought and adaptability, meant that karakul sheep were imported and many farmers in Outjo district reverted to karakul farming as a key economic strategy until a much later switch to beef production (Dieckmann 2007d-e, 2013). However, adapting to the environment meant that the farmers had to cope with a range of political and environmental hazards and the state regularly intervened to buffer the impacts of such hazards, including droughts (Dieckmann 2007d, p. 167).

The colonial administration provided generous conditions for loans and land advances, emergency relief and support during times of drought, shared technical knowledge, initiated large vaccination and animal disease campaigns, and later provided an array of additional support, including subsidies to construct dams, boreholes and fences (Dieckmann 2007d, p. 167, 2013, pp. 272–273). Such support was also political in that the state had a vested interest in keeping settler farmers afloat but also sedentary and 'settled' to ensure the expansion of the colony's 'white' population and to reflect a particular imperial, evolutionist and racialised ideal of 'civilisation' (*ibid*., p. 273). In addition, this was accompanied by what Sullivan has noted as an "over-coding" of the land, with extensive cadastral mapping and surveying (see Sullivan 2019a, pp. 15-16, 2022).

Combined with this expansion of settler colonialism and privatisation of land were discourses that othered African mobile land engagements. Sullivan's work for instance emphasises that the common property regimes of mobile African pastoral societies, together with hunting and gathering societies, were frequently wrongly classified as open access when they were in fact maintained through socially legitimate norms and institutions (see, Sullivan and Homewood 2004, 2017[2003]). For instance, within 'Western' scientific discourses, African pastoral societies have frequently been marginalised and misrepresented because of the different practices and the freedoms these societies represent, especially concerning the rationality of the hegemonic state, colonial science and capitalist economies (Sullivan and Homewood 2017[2003], p. 132). As a result, until the 1970s, widespread views and imaginaries of pastoral nomads and drylands, which included northern and western areas of the Etosha-Kunene research area, were those of widespread poverty, environmental fragility and degradation, conflict, and banditry – with local modes of production and values framed as contributing to this fragility and degradation. This had important consequences for (colonial) state policy and practice within such regions and for the governing and knowing of drylands (*ibid*.).

Moreover, land-use practices such as hunting and gathering were again overlooked in these pastoral societies due to patriarchal and evolutionist ideologies (Sullivan 2000a, 2005, see Chapter 4 for further discussion). In the 1980s and 1990s post-colonial and post-modernist critiques situated such negative and essentialist views in historical context, illustrating the power relation and underlying assumptions driving representations (Sullivan and Homewood 2017[2003], p. 115; also Sullivan 1996b, 1999b, 2000b; Sullivan and Rohde 2002). Such critique unpacked the state-centric and modern administrative rationality which attempts to enfold such societies and environments in a "broader hegemonic process of social and spatial rationalization" to see mobile populations and livestock as threatening to state control (*ibid*., p. 132). These studies thus historicize land-use patterns and modes of production in drylands, especially concerning histories of settler colonialism and administration, nature and wildlife conservation, and hunting and gathering societies.

The (colonial) history of 'nature' conservation and resource management

As mentioned earlier, land-relations in Etosha-Kunene were not only refigured through the negotiation of settler colonialism. 'Nature conservation' also played a major role – including in creating historical and socio-material entanglements between the Etosha surrounds and north-west Namibia's now Kunene Region. Both Dieckmann's and Sullivan's work engages with this theme not only from the perspective of how the establishment of formally-constituted conservation displaced people, but also how this process was accompanied by the mapping of 'Western' epistemic frameworks and ways of constituting, valuing, and seeing 'nature', and the accompanying racialisation of Etosha-Kunene's landscapes.

Much of northern Kunene and west Namibia today is imagined as pristine wilderness and inhabited by 'traditional' Himba or Damara pastoralists – an image embodied by its 'Arid Eden' tourism route (inspired by Owen-Smith's 2010 memoir *An Arid Eden*). As Sullivan *et al*. (2016, p. 12) illustrate, however, these areas have long been inhabited by diverse African societies "entangled with wide-ranging networks of trade and exchange", including products such as ivory, and ostrich feathers, cattle and copper. Furthermore, current mining, tourism, and national and local land designations embed this region with various global and regional flows, exchanges, values, and future visions, constituting it a "globalised" African landscape more than a remote wilderness (*ibid*., p. 13, also see Hannis and Sullivan 2018b). Likewise, most tourists visiting Namibia's now "flagship park" – the ENP – tend to perceive the site as "virgin natural environment" (Dieckmann 2009, p. 354, 2021a, p. 96). These ways of seeing the space as 'Edenic' African wilderness mirror colonial "expressions of a similar perspective on tropical savanna landscapes" which have been passed down and reproduced over time (Dieckmann 2009, p. 355). Thus, despite its "long history of human-nature interaction" (Dieckmann 2007c, p. 124), ENP today is popularly seen, imagined and conserved as an ahistorical, "untouched and timeless wilderness" (Dieckmann 2009, p. 357).

Yet, far from being untouched wilderness, such spaces form a key part of a "particular historical narrative of European imperialism and capitalism", deeply embedded in wider political and social histories, and now "a commodity of the present" (Dieckmann 2009, p. 373; Martin *et al.* 2013). The historical contexts shaping the imaginaries above lend themselves to revisionist scholarship that interrogates how 'received wisdoms' may be mobilised to further marginalise those already

subjugated through historical circumstances. This kind of political ecology engagement with empowered environmental discourses underlies the *Etosha-Kunene Histories* project, and also informs Sullivan's and Dieckmann's prior work. These discourses do not only enfold so-called 'natural' parks or 'protected' areas but have also shaped and continue to shape all of Etosha-Kunene's interconnected landscapes.

Dieckmann's (2020, p. 98) work, for instance, has detailed how new paradigms of 'nature' conservation, including the increasing interest in tourism, played an important role in the eventual eviction of Hai‖om from ENP (also see Dieckmann 2001, 2003, 2007a, 2021a, p. 96). By the 1950s, "the "national park ideal" had emerged as the underlying concept" for the further development of the previous Game Reserve No. 2. This ideal also encompassed 'wilderness areas' such as the Palmwag and Etendeka Tourism Concessions in the west, often perceived as satellite areas of ENP although not originally created as such. The national park concept emerged during the 20th century (first in the US) and was built around the idea that people should not live in the protected area, nor consume its resources (Dieckmann 2003, p. 39). However, many areas in southern Africa where parks were eventually established were rich in wildlife, yet more arid, not suitable for cultivation, and thus predominantly "niches for (former) hunter and gatherer groups" (*ibid*. p. 39). Conservation thus became yet another tool in which land was appropriated and cordoned off, and through which especially African hunting, gathering and pastoral land-use practices became prohibited and excluded. As an imported idea, the "national park" ideal was primarily rooted in colonial constructions and imaginaries of 'African wilderness' and an invented dichotomy between 'nature' and 'culture' (Dieckmann 2001, p. 127).

Both Sullivan's and Dieckmann's work emphasise how such dualisms were fostered and institutionalised in Enlightenment Europe within a modernist and Cartesian-inspired episteme – one which gradually crystallised a categorical and ontological division between matter (the body) and the mind, and culture and nature, binaries which were also hierarchised according to particular (racialised and gendered) humans and (Western) societies (Sullivan 2016a, p. 157, also 2013b). Sullivan (2016b, p. 120) in her later work has detailed how this onto-epistemic framework built on "the Aristotelian position that 'Man' alone is a political animal, with nature-beyond-the-human rendered as politically mute" and which privileged processes of knowledge production rooted in "calculative rationality and positivist modes of verification". This hierarchisation of 'man' over 'nature' also violently included "women and non-Europeans as categories of human considered to be closer to the 'the body' and to 'nature'" and hence as inferior, incapable of self-determination and rationality and in some instances, humanity, and thus to be dominated, exploited and instrumentalised (*ibid*. p. 121). In the context of colonial Namibia, this framework was reflected in the prevalent racial-evolutionary views which informed the colonial gaze and encounters with the 'natives' as 'nature' (as discussed in the previous section, also Sullivan 2001b and Dieckmann 2007a).

Sullivan (2006a, p. 105) has argued that within this paradigm the 'environment' was imagined as objectively and desirably separate from society and as measurable and controllable. The more 'Edenic' the environment, the more valuable. In the African context 'Edenic' carried very specific connotations. European travellers' accounts and imaginaries of the African landscape were rarely without wild animals and were often constituted as landscapes serving as the backdrop for the performances of African animals and wildlife (Dieckmann 2009, p. 362). Although for settlers the

perception of the African landscape changed after their active engagement with the land, certain resilient and colonial imaginaries remained (*ibid*., p. 370). Such imaginaries perceived the landscapes as 'desert-like', 'empty' and as the backdrop for exotic wild animals. Moreover, from a colonial and Western perspective "Africa itself was transformed into a symbol of wilderness, nature, and rurality" against the civility and urbanity of imperial cities and Western countries (*ibid*., p. 370). Eventually, this invented "'wilderness' and 'otherness' of Africa" were "immortalised in the famous national parks and game reserves", driven by a belief that 'nature' can be preserved from the effects of humans and society "by legislatively creating a bounded space for nature controlled by a centralised bureaucratic authority" (Dieckmann 2009, p. 371).

With 'nature' and 'culture' to be physically separated, Hai‖om in the case of Etosha were not considered to be "pure" enough to count as "nature" and therefore, "nature" had to be purified from the Hai‖om" (Dieckmann 2020, p. 98, 2021a). After 1958, part of Game Reserve No. 2 became the Etosha Game Park and then ENP as the government's interest in tourism and conservation increased significantly, which meant that more resources were invested in controlling the space and its boundaries. By the 1970s and with the fencing of ENP the incorporation of Hai‖om into the colonial system was completed and their options for livelihoods severely curtailed. (Dieckmann 2007c, p. 127). Such approaches to conservation dominated the 20th century and became known as "fortress conservation", with national parks as an enduring legacy (also see Sullivan and Homewood 2004, p. 139). These parks progressively created the "illusion of being natural systems apart from, and not at all influenced by the political, social and cultural developments around them" (Dieckmann 2003, p. 39). Together with cordoning off land-areas for conservation purposes, 'nature' conservation's material-discursive practices engendered coloniality through imposition of a hegemonic order of knowledge rooted in a modernist episteme and particular (and gendered) ways of knowing and valuing both 'nature' and 'culture' (Sullivan 2000a, 2006). Additionally, coloniality was further engendered through fostering a strong material and symbolic relation between 'white' and settler rule and the moral and economic imperative of 'nature' conservation and ownership over 'natural' resources (Dieckmann 2001).

Stakeholder participation in natural resource management in Namibia has a later but also long history, starting in the 1960s (Mfune *et al.* 2013, p. 20). In the context of colonial Namibia, however, this meant participation within a context of racial and ethnic segregation and discrimination. Thus, during the colonial era and between 1947 and 1976 conservation mainly focused on protected areas, game reserves and dealing with wildlife on commercial farms, rather than on the former homelands and 'native' territories (*ibid*.). The **Nature Conservation Ordinance of 1967** enabled freehold farmers to hunt, sell, capture and relocate wildlife according to their economic interests, and gave them "legal rights to consumptively and otherwise utilize wildlife on their farms" (Lendelvo and Nakanyala 2013, p. 5). As Sullivan (2002a, p. 165) has shown, the concept of a "conservancy" evolved in the 1970s and in an apartheid structured SWA to consolidate exclusive rights over wildlife by neighbouring settler farmers in commercial areas, including through the employment of game guards (*ibid*.). In contrast, colonial state restrictions were imposed on farming, grazing, hunting and timber extraction and access within the former homelands and 'native' territories, with little consideration for the social and economic consequences (Lendelvo and Nakanyala 2013, p. 3). This model was thus rooted in centralised regulatory control and the exclusion of local people

(Dieckmann 2007a), including the criminalisation of local resource-use such as hunting (also see Sullivan and Homewood 2004, p. 140).

During the late 1970s and 1980s, a nascent community-based approach to conservation began to take root in pre-independent Namibia. This was driven by a growing concern for declining wildlife populations in former 'homelands' fuelled by: a severe drought in the early 1980s; elite hunting in a large hunting concession to the north of the Red Line, south of Sesfontein; and regional warfare which opened up more opportunities for illegal procurement of ivory and rhino horn and, through the provision of .303 rifles to pastoralists, placing more demand on wildlife as pastoralists struggled after large livestock losses (Lendelvo and Nakanyala 2013, p. 4). Translocations of dozens of black rhino out of areas that were to become part of the communal area of Damaraland also contributed to the depopulation of these animals in this area (see Sullivan *et al*. 2021). Community-based conservation approaches were institutionalised post-independence in the form of communal area "conservancies" (see Chapter 4). Despite these new notions of conservation, 'grandscale' visions of African modernity and national planning after independence were still embodied in the "coexistence of intensively used agricultural landscapes and pristine 'natural' landscapes" (Dieckmann 2009, p. 357). Yet whereas ideas of 'pristine wilderness' or 'natural' landscapes within ENP depend on myths which erase social histories, in north-western Namibia ideas of wilderness and 'primordial Africa' were also bolstered by the presence of the "nomadic" and "tribalised-Other" of Himba herders (see, for example, Bollig and Heinemann 2002). In these hegemonic imaginaries, and differently to Hai‖om and others, 'Himba' were not perceived to have lost their 'authenticity' due to assimilation.

The desertification discourse: knowing and governing Etosha-Kunene's drylands

Sullivan's interest in deconstructing hegemonic environmental imaginaries and discourses in post-colonial Etosha-Kunene started with her early work. In particular, Sullivan's (1996b, 1999b, 2000b) earlier work critically engaged with the 'undisputed fact' of desertification and human-driven degradation in the west and north-western Namibia – a 'fact' which, at that time and within a newly independent Namibia, was strongly informing wide-ranging and often centralised state interventions. On closer inspection, Sullivan notes that this 'fact' seemed to have become an accepted truth without any substantial empirical data. Rather she shows how this 'fact' was forged at the intersection of resilient colonial archives and ideologies, state science, and globalised ('western') environmental ideologies and imaginaries.

According to Sullivan (2002b, p. 256), already since the 1700s colonial imaginaries and descriptions of the north-western and western Namibia landscape tended to be dismal, static and driven by ideas of degradation. Such views were reified during the 20th century by colonial administrators, government ethnologists and consultancy reports during the 1970s (Sullivan 1996b, p. 1, 2000b, p. 17). During this time the primary cause of degradation was viewed to be the "irrational" and "unproductive" practices of African land-use. Hence, "traditional communal farming" was constructed as inevitably leading to environmental degradation (Sullivan 1998, 1999b). This discourse needs to be situated politically – i.e., it was key in justifying centralised land-use planning and control by the colonial state through policy interventions build on ideals of a set "carrying

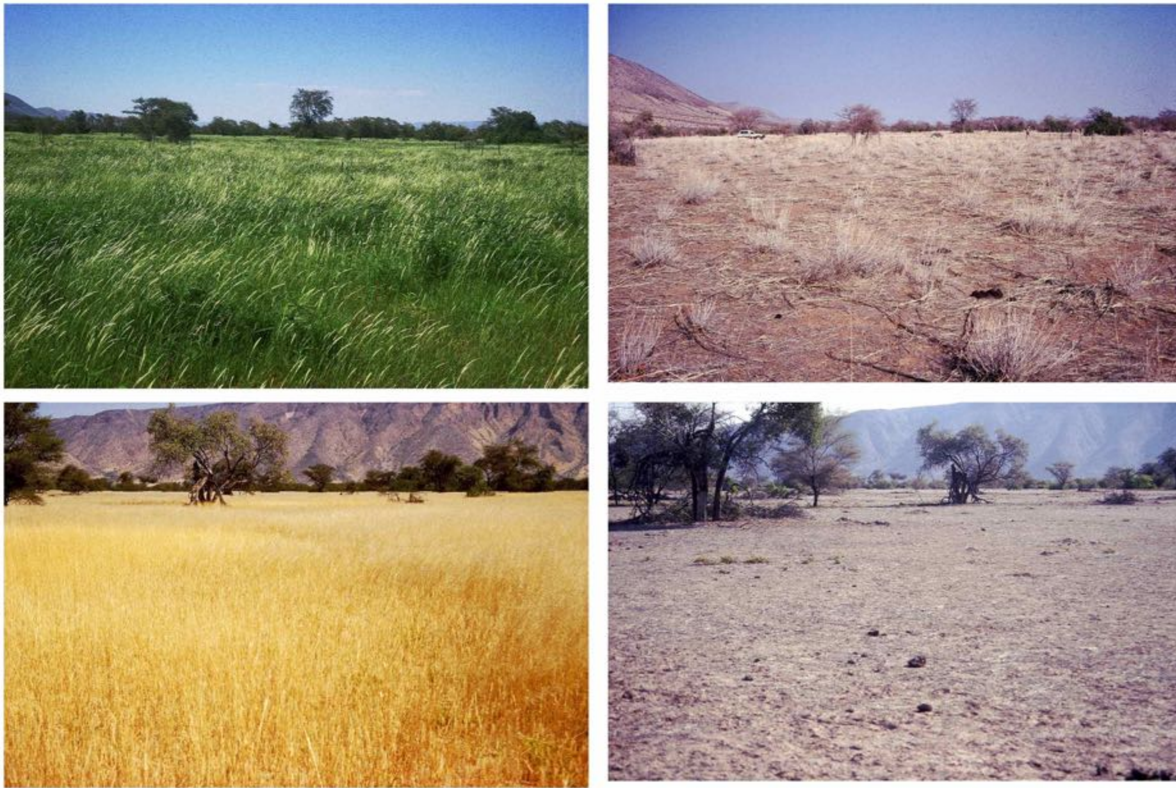
capacity", destocking and sedentary forms of land-use and settlement (Sullivan 1996b, p. 4, 1999b). Yet Sullivan also shows how this discourse of human-induced degradation, for a long time, was supported by an unquestioned scientific understanding of arid lands as easily disturbed and fragile (Sullivan 1996b, 1998, 1999b, 2000b).

Such views are far from neutral. Rather they are "rooted in northern ecological models and theories which emerged from "temperate-zone Enlightenment foundationalism" and a "Cartesian-Newtonian conception of a mechanistic nature" built on principles of equilibrium, gradual change, predictability and control (Sullivan 1996b, pp. 3–4, 1998, p. 287, 2000b, p. 17). As Sullivan and Homewood (2017[2003], p. 125) detail, scientific ecology as a discipline was also forged in a particular historical, cultural, and environmental context, i.e., of British capitalism and imperialism, and thus in relation to a particular colonial economy, and was often mobilised to promote an instrumental relationship with nature in support of territorial expansion. This historical context gave rise to a globalising modernity, with disciplinarity and distinct scientific models as a key part of shaping understandings of what it means to be modern.

According to Sullivan and Homewood (2017[2003], p. 126), "in modernity, a key assumption is that all 'systems', whether ecological, social or economic, have a natural and fundamental state or stable 'equilibrium'". Eventually known as the equilibrium ecological model, this dominant way of understanding ecology situated any perceived deflection from normal behaviour within ecologies as 'disturbance', rather than interpreting it "as an integral component of the system" (Sullivan 1998, p. 288). This understanding of ecology eventually became a "self-referential narrative which holds that degradation and 'desertification' are endemic in drylands, particularly those utilized by African livestock herders under communal forms of land tenure" (Sullivan and Rohde 2002, p. 1585). After independence in Namibia, these environmental discourses were uncritically reproduced through wide-spread declarations of degradation and imminent environmental catastrophe, with "the praxis of science" barely entering the discourse (Sullivan 2000b, p. 19). This uncritical reproduction of such discourses was also shaped by dominant environmental imaginaries and discourses situating "forests" as an ideal-type ecological system and trope, and partly born through the "transmission of a reactive, 'northern' environmentalist worldview, informed by concerns of pending ecological collapse" (Sullivan 2000b, pp. 26, 67, 2005a; also 1998 ch.2).

In response, and during the 1990s, growing empirical research argued that an equilibrium model should be critically revised. These studies illustrated that for the timescales relevant for pastoralist decision-making dryland ecologies are instead characterised by principles of non-equilibrium, non-linearity, unpredictability, continual change, and complexity (Sullivan 2000b, p. 17). Hence, biotic and abiotic phenomena are integrated with their dynamical behaviour, through flows and flux, and with change as the only consistency (Sullivan and Homewood 2017[2003], p. 126). Moreover, from a non-equilibrium perspective, ecosystem behaviour in drylands is strongly driven by the abiotic system – by rainfall patterns which are extremely variable, unpredictable and scattered (Sullivan 1996b, pp. 3–4, 1999b, Sullivan and Rohde 2002). In other words, in dryland contexts moisture and its variability across spatial and temporal scales is the primary factor for vegetal productivity (Sullivan 1996b, 2005a, p. 68) – with a wide range and frequency of variation understood as integral to ecological resilience (Sullivan 1996b, p. 4, 1999b, p. 272) – see Image 6.

Image 6. Fixed-point photos for two sites between Sesfontein and Kowareb in the Hoanib Valley, showing rainfall-driven variability in herbaceous productivity in 1995 (L) and 1996 (R). Photos: © Sian Sullivan.



Based on vegetation surveys conducted in north-western Namibia, Sullivan found that degradation was limited to localised settings, with aridity being the fundamental constraint on productivity (Sullivan 1996b, 1998, 1999b, p. 271; Sullivan and Konstant 1997). Hence, dryland systems may be considered "extremely robust under a range of dynamic abiotic and utilisation pressures" (Sullivan 1998, p. 287) with dynamic climate variability, rather than land-use, being the primary driver of change (Sullivan 2000b, p. 26, 2002b, p. 256). Sullivan thus argued that biophysical and ecological studies need to be interpreted in a context of a range of dynamics that a system may display under different spatial and temporal conditions (Sullivan 1999b, p. 272). The ensuing equilibrium/non-equilibrium debate also unsettled long-standing assumptions regarding the ecological and economic rationales behind mobile livestock production and mobile land-use practices – showing that these practices were part of an ecologically responsive and sustainable land-use strategy (Sullivan and Homewood 2017[2003], p. 116).

Despite the rise of non-equilibrium theory and principles, institutionally located biophysical research continued to take place within already biased perceptions of drylands (Sullivan 1999b, p. 257) which Sullivan argued occludes multiple other narratives. For one, it ignores the "historical circumstances and political processes shaping and constraining land-use by communal area inhabitants" in post-independent Namibia (Sullivan 2000b, p. 19). Secondly, it obscures "local narratives and knowledge concerning landscape and biophysical resources" (*ibid*.). And lastly, it justifies state-driven institutional development and imposition of resource-management models (*ibid*. p. 26), thereby extending neo-colonial hegemony (Sullivan 2002b). Thus, as Sullivan (2000b, p. 16) writes:

> Significantly in the context of a post-apartheid southern Africa, where the opportunity exists to formulate radical policy enabling self-determination in the pastoral use and management of existing and expanded communal rangelands, a pervasive discourse of 'desertification' driven by international environmentalist ideals justifies land policies based on increasing control and regulation rather than fostering flexibility in land-use.

In pursuing this argument, Sullivan and Homewood (2017[2003], p. 117) examine how these alternative ecological models continue to be side-lined and silenced in the face of a "powerful, colonizing and globalising culture of modernity". Underlying this culture of modernity have been notable trends or what they call "structuring norms", including 1) centralised state planning and ordering of spatial contexts, 2) instrumentalization, commodification and militarization of western technoscience, and 3) inflexible gendering of public and private domains. According to these authors, across Africa, drylands specifically have been subject to these structuring norms which, through "socio-political processes of purification", aimed at the elimination of sources of disorder and nomadism, including knowledges, people, spaces, and practices (*ibid*., p. 117). These processes, largely driven by the "power of state science, planning and regulation" continually try to reduce complex and diverse phenomena to bounded and reified categories through rationalist and positivist procedures of knowledge production (*ibid*., pp. 117-118).

Non-equilibrium thinking and nomadic practices in particular are considered problematic "because they are qualitatively and conceptually different" from the rationalities of state science (Sullivan and Homewood 2017[2003], p. 119). Yet the authors here recognise that these differing and dualistic perspectives may never be reconciled and can instead be considered binary and relational oppositions – each essential for the other's existence. They argue that neither of these assumed 'polarities' is neutral, but rather constitute ways of looking at reality that are ideological and political, engendering fundamentally different ways of imagining, evaluating and being-in-the-world and different ways of "realising power" (*ibid*., p. 120). For example, non-equilibrium approaches challenge the "knowability of ecological dynamics" creating problems for conservationists and the state that want to design policies based on predictability, and which often clear or enclose landscapes by excluding "local and historical specificities" (*ibid*., p. 131). These post-colonial environmental knowledge politics are further examined in Chapters 4 and 5.

3. Changing and contested land-relations and tenure in Etosha-Kunene

Much of the text above has clarified the various forms of historic marginalisation experienced by the peoples dwelling in the Etosha-Kunene research area. Land dispossession was one of the main outcomes of Etosha-Kunene's colonial history contributing to this marginalisation, socially, culturally, economically and politically (Dieckmann *et al.* 2014, p. 439). Together with analysing and engaging with the colonial histories of land re-organisation and dispossession in Etosha-Kunene, all three researchers' prior work closely informs each other and overlaps in considering how people and groups are re-negotiating land access and relations, changing tenure and livelihoods within the post-independent Namibian context.

The first section of this chapter introduces the intersection between Sullivan's and Dieckmann's early and later work on occluded histories of settlement and land, especially through the shared methodologies of cultural landscape and on-site oral history mapping. This is followed by the contributions of the authors to analysing the intersecting legal and policy mechanisms which have fuelled land reform in Etosha-Kunene and their evolution over the years. The subsequent section in this chapter specifically draws out the connections between the work of Dieckmann and Sullivan, which, read in conjunction, provide insight into the complexity of struggles for land and resource access, especially by historically marginalised groups, and through the political mobilisation of ethnicity and competing claims to indigeneity. In addition, this chapter deals more specifically with the different contributions from the authors in understanding how the overlapping and multiple systems of land and tenure in Etosha-Kunene were and are being re-made, contested and re-configured, including the material and the discursive making of the former 'homelands' into 'communal areas', legal and symbolic land claims in formal conservation areas, and the establishment of resettlement farms on former commercial and privately-owned land as part of the state's agenda for land redistribution.

Occluded histories of land and cultural land-relations

From the onset of their research in the 1990s and 2000s, and again in recent publications, both Dieckmann and Sullivan draw on a range of interdisciplinary research methodologies. These include cultural landscapes mapping and on-site oral history, which destabilise dominant landscape visions and make visible more occluded, multi-layered and marginalised histories of settlement and land (see Dieckmann 2003, and as detailed in Chapter 2). They thus share an interest in critical and interdisciplinary methodologies to engage with and access social settlement histories and cultural land-relations within the context of decades of colonial dispossession and displacement. This situated engagement with occluded pasts and local environmental narratives also drives their research on the implications and consequences of such histories, including the disruptions it caused in cultural, family, and individual identities and belonging, the intergenerational erasure of cultural and social memory and Indigenous knowledge systems and practices, and the loss of livelihoods and autonomy (see, for instance, Sullivan 2019a; Dieckmann 2020, 2021a; Sullivan and Ganuses 2020, 2021a).

Sullivan's early research (1996a, 1998, 1999a, 2003) found that numerous place-relations and land-use practices in her research area were not identifiable on official maps and/or recognised within official policy debates and archives. This fuelled her inquiry into on-site oral history to identify former dwelling places from which people in west Namibia were displaced during colonial rule and to explore how such memories imbue the land with layers of cultural significance and meaning, including ancestral land-relations (Sullivan 1998, also Sullivan and Ganuses 2021a, p. 169) – see Image 7. Moreover, her work on gathering and local resource-use practices explored how such practices and associated movements through place and landscape "constitutes an affirmation of relationship with the land" (Sullivan 1999a, p. 13). This was visible for instance in how "differential ancestral links to geographic areas" influences the direction and places people chose to collect gathered resources, living memories of such places and the various culturally recursive and resonant practices surrounding resource use, including knowledges, relations, songs, stories and dances (Sullivan 1998, p. 280, Sullivan 2019a; Sullivan and Ganuses 2021a, p. 162).

Image 7. The late Nathan ǂÛina Taurob in 1996 at the site of his former home at ǂNū-!arus, north-west of Sesfontein, Namibia. Photo: © Sian Sullivan.

Sullivan's later work, in the context of the *Future Pasts* and *Etosha-Kunene Histories* Projects, deepens her engagement with cultural landscapes mapping and on-site oral history research methodologies (Sullivan *et al.* 2016; Sullivan 2017a, 2021). These mapping projects made evident that the Damara / ǂNūkhoen and ǁUbun now have access to only a small part of their formerly occupied land areas, also making visible the layers of displacement experienced by these groups and families, including through the mapping of colonial and post-colonial administrative and conservation boundaries (Sullivan 2019a, p. 21; Sullivan and Ganuses 2021, p. 154). Through

recording these memories, this research aims to make visible the alterities haunting the present and past land appropriations; and to enable a process of (re)remembering to insert such pasts into public dialogue and imagination, especially with regards to debating conservation, land reform and indigeneity. In other words, such methodologies make visible historically and culturally embedded frictions and resistances which are often silenced in official discourses (also see, Sullivan 2017a). Lastly, this methodological approach informs Sullivan's ongoing concern with culturally inflected land-relations, including vernacular forms of socio-spatial organisation and relational conceptions of place (See Sullivan 2019a, p. 23, 2022).

As Dieckmann *et al*. (2014, p. 437) also state:

> Land and culture are closely interlinked. Culture manifests itself in many forms, one of which is the particular way of life that is associated with land and the use of natural resources to be found on that land.

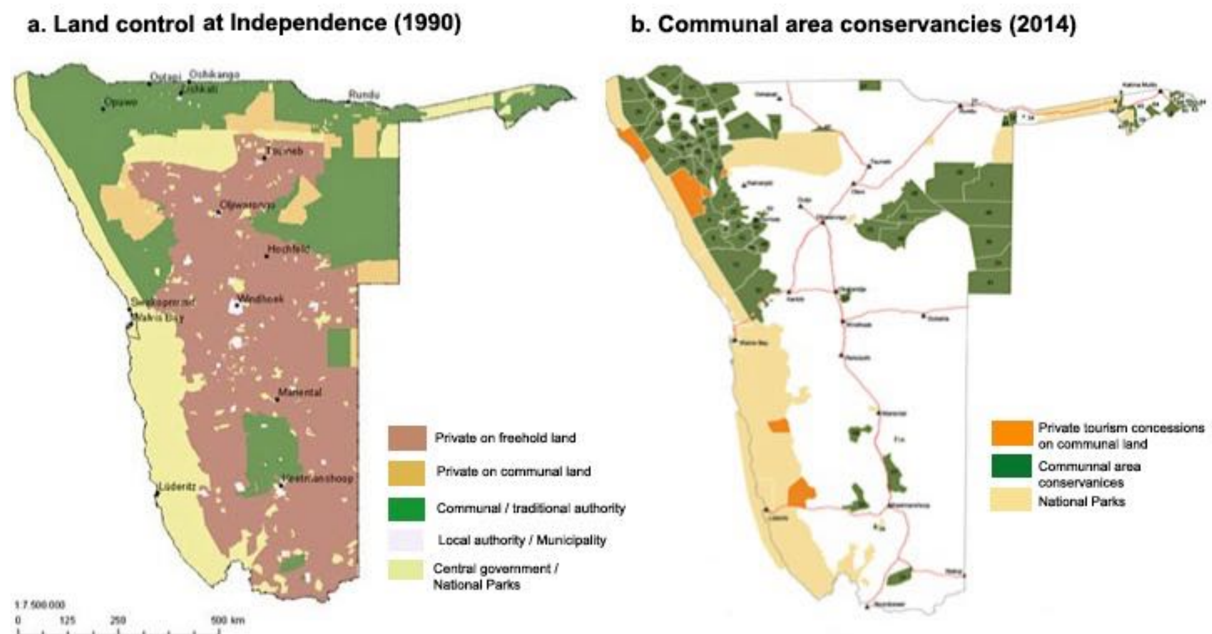
As detailed in the previous chapter, Dieckmann's work throughout the 2000s examined how Etosha was and continues to be a dwelling place for Hai‖om and the social histories embedded in the Etosha landscapes, including through weaving together both official archival histories with various "views from within" (Dieckmann 2003). In doing so, she emphasised the different perspectives and historical narratives which arose through such an approach and its value in the face of a history that, at that point, had not been consolidated into oral history traditions but rather consisted mostly of personal memories and reminisces (*ibid*., p. 71, 81). This was primarily due to the incremental manner in which the forced removals from the ENP took place (Dieckmann 2007a). Moreover, as Dieckmann (2009, p. 358) points out and as discussed in Chapter 2, there were also reasons why particular historical narratives of ENP were silenced, given the prominence of the national park ideal. Since 2001 Dieckmann was involved in the *Xoms |Omis* Project, a collaborative cultural landscape mapping project (see, for instance, Dieckmann 2007f, 2012, 2021a). During this research, she worked primarily with a group of elderly Hai‖om men who were born in Etosha at various settlements and had worked in Etosha and on farms in the Etosha surrounds after their eviction (see Dieckmann 2021a, p. 98, for a later critical reflection on this process). Together with these men, regular journeys were taken in ENP, visiting old places of meaning and hearing stories connected to these places, with the aim of revitalising knowledges, practices, and experiences (*ibid*., p. 98).

In a later publication, Dieckmann (2009, p. 367) reflects not only on different landscape conceptions, but also on the close interconnection between memory and place, and the different modalities through which the past becomes known and re-remembered. This work closely resonates with that of Sullivan (see https://www.futurepasts.net/memory), demonstrating the significance of these dimensions of landscape knowledge, use and occupation throughout the *Etosha-Kunene Histories* project area. Dieckmann (2009, p. 368) shows how moving through the landscape with Hai‖om who previously dwelled there, or whose families previously dwelled there, imprints on the land stories and memories as they are retold and reacted, with specific places serving as hubs for collective memory. Such landscape inscriptions also manifest materially via footpaths that "form a visible inscription of a network of social relations and of potential movement in the landscape" (*ibid*., p. 375). Nevertheless, such land-relations have also been "shaped and changed over time in the course of both practical and social appropriation of the land first and subsequent dispossession afterwards" (*ibid*., p. 374).

In engaging with cultural landscape methodologies, Dieckmann's and Sullivan's work thus also intersects in grappling with the interrelation between memory, place, and knowledge and with how occluded pasts and knowledge practices embedded within the landscape can be mapped, accessed, and translated (see Dieckman 2021a, 2021b; Sullivan and Ganuses 2021a). This is further explored in Chapter 5 and in relation to recent work by the authors, including an edited volume on these themes (see Dieckmann 2021c). In addition, their respective involvement with cultural landscapes mapping has foregrounded and made visible the multiple and overlapping claims to land and resources which characterise Etosha-Kunene landscapes.

Engaging post-independence land reform and decentralisation

Several legal and policy mechanisms have driven ongoing post-independent socio-spatial transformations, and the work of all three authors has engaged over the years with the formulation and evolution of these overlapping mechanisms. Given the legacies of colonialism, Etosha-Kunene is still characterised by what has been termed a "dualistic land tenure structure" (Werner 2015, p. 67) – shaped by two agricultural sub-sectors from the colonial era, that of communal and commercial agriculture, and racially-skewed land ownership patterns (Sullivan 1996a, 1998, 2018; Dieckmann 2011, p. 155; Hewitson and Sullivan 2021). While 43% of the land area falls under freehold title, 42% constituted so-called 'communal lands' or non-freehold – with the remaining land proclaimed state land (keeping in mind that all communal lands are legally in state guardianship) (Werner 2015, p. 67) – see Map 10. In contrast to freehold title, rights to land with the communal lands are allocated through 'customary' governance and legal systems, overseen by the state (Werner 2018, p. 2).



Map 10. Pattern of land control in Namibia.
a) showing areas under private and communal tenure (the pink and green coloured areas respectively) (adapted from ACACIA Project E1 2007 online http://www.uni-koeln.de/sfb389/e/e1/download/atlas_namibia/pics/land_history/control-over-land.jpg); b) showing the area administered in 2014 as communal area conservancies (in green). (NACSO, Windhoek, see http://www.nacso.org.na/conservancies).

Etosha National Park is bordered by freehold land in southern Kunene Region along its southern and south-eastern boundaries, whilst its northern, western, and north-eastern boundaries are communal land (Lendelvo *et al*. 2015, p. 223) – see Map 3. In contrast to the communal and 'communalised' land elsewhere in Kunene Region (Sullivan 1996a), most of the privatised commercial farms are still predominantly owned by settler farmers. Centred on the town of Outjo, this district eventually became divided by fences into more than 430 farming units, of which 78% are privately owned, 8% government-owned, and 14% owned by companies and corporate entities (Dieckmann 2013, pp. 256-257). In recent years some commercial farms were purchased by other Namibians and the government's land reform programme has also created several resettlement farms in southern Kunene, with this process governed by a set of key legislations.

Following the first Land Conference in 1991, the **Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act No.6 (ACLRA)** emerged as the most important legal tool to address land reform in Namibia (Dieckmann 2011, p. 157) and has since been amended seven times (also see Sullivan 1996b; Lendelvo *et al.* 2020, p. 40). Passed by Parliament in March 1995, it is primarily based on the "willing-buyer-willing-seller" principle. This principle emerged after initial proposals for "redistributing farms fenced for freehold tenure and commercial production by European farmers, to farmers from … communal areas", an eventuality for which Namibia has historic precedents through the Odendaal reforms "which included the incorporation of commercial farm-land into the communal areas of … Damaraland and ... Namaland" (Sullivan 1996a, p. 1). As set out in the preamble the purpose of the Act is to:

> Provide for the acquisition of agricultural land by the State for the purposes of land reform and for the allocation of such land to Namibian citizens who do not own or otherwise have the use of any agricultural land, and foremost to those Namibian citizens who have been socially disadvantaged by the past discriminatory laws or practices; to vest in the State a preferential right to purchase agricultural land for the purposes of the act; to regulate the acquisition of agricultural land by foreign nationals, to establish a Land tribunal and determine its jurisdiction; and to provide for matters connected therewith (Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act 1995, p. 2 quoted in Sullivan 1996b, p. 3; RoN 2003, quoted in Dieckmann 2011, p. 158).

The different categories of agricultural land available for possible acquisition and the process of acquisition are outlined in the Act. Section 38 of the Act also made provision for surveyed holdings for small-scale farming purposes (Commercial (Agricultural) Land Reform Act, 1995, p. 37, as summarised in Sullivan 1996a, p. 6). These holdings could be offered for lease with the option to purchase the farming unit after five years, with the condition that the land is used for farming purposes only and maintained as such. Thus, lessees can only embark on other ventures with state permission (Commercial (Agricultural) Land Act, 1995, pp. 42-43; Sullivan 1996a, p.6). However, by 2009 only three farms were expropriated in a country of more than 6,000 privately owned farms. In contrast, a total of 209 farms were acquired for resettlement by 2007 – with resettlement farms later becoming a key part of the land reform process (Dieckmann 2011, p. 155).

Nevertheless, as Dieckmann (2007d, p. 169) shows, this legislation did introduce new perceived risks for many commercial farmers which influenced their decision to sell or adjust their strategies. Moreover, these new legislations combined with changing labour laws and regulations, the general adjustment of the meat market to free-market constraints and prices, the rise of living costs and the lack of the level of state support received during the colonial period. For those who did not sell, this

meant again moving from being primarily beef producers during the 1980s to a degree of economic diversification, with a lot of farmers in the Outjo district having since incorporated tourism into their farm business, including trophy hunting farms and guest lodges, and/or charcoal production (also see Dieckmann and Muduva 2010 and Chapter 2 for the role of Nature Conservation Ordinance No.4 of 1975 in fostering rights over wildlife for landowners with freehold title).

The second policy to be released in terms of land reform was the **National Land Policy, 1998**. This policy set out to outline the national objectives for post-independent land reform, including the goal to address the problem of dispossession, discrimination, and inequitable distribution of land, with an explicit focus on the poor and poverty reduction (Dieckmann 2011, p. 158). At the same time, the policy set out the objective of land reform to be supportive of and to enhance environmentally-sustainable land and natural resource use. According to Dieckmann, although admirable, these different objectives were and still could be contradictory at times, given the reality of large numbers of landless and land-short people and Namibia's limited agricultural potential and arid climate (*ibid.*, pp. 158-159).

To inform and guide the proposed resettlement process the government then also drafted the **National Resettlement Policy 2001**. Dieckmann (2011, p. 160) notes that this policy is an integral part of the land reform process addressing the main target groups, the selection process, occupational rights, resettlement areas, and the types of resettlement. It sets out the procedure of purchasing and allocating land and providing settlers with necessary initial support such as infrastructure – which includes collaborating with other line ministries. Tying in with the other two legislative frameworks, it outlines objectives for addressing past imbalances, promoting self-sufficiency, growing the smaller-holder farmers, creating employment, alleviating pressure on communal land, and reintegrating citizens into society (*ibid*.). Such land, according to the legislation, should be made available to Namibian citizens who do not own or otherwise have the use of agricultural land and foremost to those Namibians citizens who have been socially, economically or educationally disadvantaged by past discriminatory laws and practices (Dieckmann 2011, p. 157, also see Lendelvo *et al.* 2020b, p. 40). As this categorisation of the target group was very broad and would fit more or less every poor person in Namibia, the government decided to set up a format for prioritising beneficiaries, the main target groups specified as members of the San community, ex-soldiers, displaced, destitute and landless Namibians, or people with disabilities (RoN 2001, pp. 3-4). Dieckmann's (2011, pp. 157-158) work has pointed out that, although well-intended, this legal mechanism was still not specific enough in defining who the beneficiaries should be, the selection process and the purpose of land reform, which in turn has somewhat hampered the process. Nevertheless, the resettlement policy provides for various types of resettlement, including individual and group holdings. Group resettlement is mostly used as a tool to resettle targeted marginalised communities and destitute persons, i.e. the poorest of the poor (Lendelvo *et al.* 2020b, p. 40, also see Dieckmann *et al.* 2014, p. 448). Regardless of the type of resettlement, resettlement land is handed over through a leasehold for 99 years, with the intention that this lease agreement can then be used as collateral to obtain loans from institutions to develop the land and agricultural activities (Dieckmann 2011, p. 161). In 2011, however, not a single lease agreement had been registered – with this being an ongoing process. Despite this situation, in 2019, 5,360 families were resettled on 3 194 775 hectares (Lendelvo *et al.* 2020, p. 40).

The **Communal Land Reform Act No.5 of 2002** was also released, building on a draft Communal Lands Bill that in 1995 indicated that land allocation and management in communal land areas will be vested in Regional Boards comprised of representatives of the Ministry, local authorities and traditional leaders, community members and government extension workers (Draft Communal Lands Bill, 1995, p. 4, reviewed in Sullivan 1996a). The **Traditional Authorities Act No. 25 of (1995) 2000** preceded the Communal Land Reform Act and provided a framework for recognising prior customary authorities for land administration within communal lands. As stipulated in this policy the main functions of the Traditional Authorities (TAs) would be to "to cooperate with and assist the GRN, to supervise and ensure the observance of customary law, to give support and advice, and disseminate information, and to promote the welfare and peace of rural communities" (Dieckmann 2020, p. 101). Moreover, TAs would play a key role in the allocation of access-rights to land and resources within communal lands, in conjunction with Regional Boards – now called Regional Land Boards.

Dieckmann (2020, p. 102) asserts that this Act in essence introduced a standardised blueprint institutional setup modelled on "the traditional system of Oshiwambo-speaking groups" and "characterised by a hierarchical authority structure with a single representative leader for a large group". This model does not necessarily work well for other leadership and tenure structures in the country's communal lands. For example, the traditional social organisation of Hai‖om in the past made no provision for a single leader and "levelling mechanisms were in place that countered the establishment of powerful authorities" (*ibid*., for more on this, see Dieckmann 2020). Nonetheless, the Act and related policies are being positively engaged with in many contexts as a means of consolidating and constituting cultural identities and customary law (see, for example, Hinz and Gairiseb 2013, 2016). As detailed in one of Lendelvo's joint publications, the Communal Land Reform Act eventually also introduced a blueprint model for the registration and statutory recognition of land rights on communal land to increase the legal security of land tenure. This Act, then, "defines customary land rights as rights to farming units, rights to residential units, and any form of customary tenure that may be recognised" (Nghitevelekwa *et al*. 2020, p. 223). Provision for the subdivision of communal land into alienated land holdings is made in various ways. First, for example, any person or group of persons holding recognised rights to communal land is "entitled to convert such holding into a leasehold tenure of one hundred years", providing this takes "into consideration local customary law" (Draft Communal Lands Bill 1995, p. 30; Sullivan 1996a, p. 7). Similarly, vacant communal land may be delineated and allotted as economic land units, subject to the approval of the Boards and Minister (for more detail on the initial Draft Bill, see Sullivan 1996a, p. 7).

Following the first National Land Conference in 1991, in a second land conference held in 2018 several challenges were noted, including a need for introspection. Furthermore, despite initial reluctance, a government commission was established to investigate the issue of ancestral land-rights for future dialogue and consideration. Based on the counter-mapping methodologies detailed in the previous section, Sullivan was involved in providing information to the Nami-Daman Traditional Authority in west Namibia for their submission to the Ancestral Land Commission (see Sullivan *et al.* 2019b, Sullivan and Ganuses 2021a, p. 161). As noted above, all three authors also contributed chapters to a national review of the circumstances of Indigenous and marginalised

peoples of Namibia, intended to support this Ancestral Land Commission (Dieckmann 2020; Lendelvo *et al*. 2020; Nghitevelekwa *et al*. 2020; Sullivan and Ganuses 2020).

Indigeneity and ethnicity in contesting land and resources

Both Sullivan's and Dieckmann's early and later work critically engages with the political mobilisation of ethnicity within post-colonial Namibia, especially concerning global discourses of indigeneity and rights and in competing group-based struggles over land and resources within changing legal and policy landscapes. In addition, their work interrelates in examining these processes with groups and persons whose identities and histories have been strongly shaped by their own sense and experiences of marginality (see, for instance, Sullivan 2001a, 2002a, 2003; Dieckmann 2007a-b, 2020; Sullivan and Ganuses 2020, 2021a).

As Dieckmann (2007a, pp. 4-5) discusses in her book, "ethnicity is not universally relevant as a principle of social organisation" yet given the context of post-apartheid Namibia, ethnicity has come to play a pivotal role in society, especially in struggles over resources and power. Simultaneously though, the "colonial experiences of apartheid led to strong anti-ethnic politics" by the government and at least during the first two decades after independence (*ibid*., p. 343). The government was especially wary and critical of NGOs or organisations dealing with any "culturalistic development effort" which were seen as a potential "vehicle for exclusivist ethnic politics" (Dieckmann 2007b, p. 286-287). Moreover, the government does not allow ethnicity (apart from the categorisation as San) any status in land policy, at least officially. Legally, matters of customary law are also subordinate to constitutional law, which ensures that resettlement beneficiaries cannot grant further access rights based on ethnic discrimination (Dieckmann 2011, pp. 285, 288). As the work of Sullivan has shown, such postcolonial and modernising endeavours to homogenise cultural-ethnic identities and differences have also characterised other developmental and administrative domains, including through the CBNRM programme (see for instance Sullivan 2002a, 2019a, p. 13).

Despite this official stance, there have been clear and ongoing contradictions. For example, the Traditional Authorities Act recognises cultural heritage and ethnic differences (Sullivan *et al.* 2019b, p. 320) as does Article 19 of the Constitution on the right to maintain, practise and promote language and culture (discussed in Sullivan and Ganuses 2021a, p. 180). Thus, the Traditional Authorities Act has been one mechanism through which ethnic and political identities are refashioned, and through which particular groups have claimed land or at least authority over the allocation of land rights in areas which fall under customary tenure and/or group resettlement farms. As Dieckmann (2020, p. 102) points out, and as mentioned above, however, the blueprint institutional setup of the act falls short of covering customary law and culture regarding the inherited 'authorities' of many marginalised groups in Namibia.

As Dieckmann (2007b, p. 268) also examines in her earlier research, with the opening of Namibia to the international community, new platforms emerged for claiming land rights beyond the national process (also see Sullivan 2001a for a discussion of how identity politics through these platforms may paradoxically foster inequality and marginalisation). The global Indigenous rights movement introduced the status of being Indigenous as an instrument to claim rights after centuries of

suppression, dispossession, and discrimination, creating instruments at the national level that "transform specific aspects of culture into valuable capital" (Dieckmann 2007b, p. 267). Donors and NGOs, especially those representing minority and San rights, became key brokers in this process (as also explored in Sullivan 2001a, p. 180). Within this context, ethnic identity became a highly valued 'cultural capital' (Dieckmann 2007a, p. 336). Yet as illustrated by Dieckmann (2007b, p. 266), given that attempts to politically mobilise cultural resources take place at a local level but within a global setting, this means that groups are dependent on external factors which reinforce the production and commercialisation of specific ethnic characteristics, often in line with essentialised notions of culture. Consequently, groups identifying as Indigenous were and continue to struggle to transform themselves into a "monolithic ethnos" – a process, which, in Namibia, runs the danger of reifying apartheid-era conceptions of difference (Sullivan 2001a; Dieckmann 2011, p. 287). At the same time, ethnic identity or cultural elements enacted to outsiders are not fixed, but rather in a process of being relationally constituted and performed (*ibid*., p. 280).

Following independence, 'Bushmen' and 'San' quickly became the archetype for first peoples in southern Africa. Whereas previously the stereotypical narrative of them as hunter-gatherers generally implied negative connotations, the values and cultural knowledge associated with these representations have been reversed in recent years to become an important cultural resource in crafting a particular self-imagery and collective 'San' identity and political mobilisation (Dieckmann 2007b, 2018). Dieckmann's earlier work (2007e, pp. 267-268, 2007a-b) in particular critically explores how Hai‖om were actively "taking part in this whole process in which a switch of individual identities of various San or Bushmen groups to a comprehensive southern Africa 'San' image is necessary to become part of the global Indigenous peoples' movement." This movement thus initiated local processes of ethnic mobilisation and creation, especially among those such as Hai‖om who did not have a pronounced ethnic identity during colonial times (see, Dieckmann 2007b, pp. 269-270); processes that also become intervened in and shaped by anthropologists, lawyers and other specialists in Indigenous rights (Sullivan 2001a).

Dieckmann details how this political and cultural mobilisation of 'San' ethnicity is moulded and negotiated to access resources and recognition through the global Indigenous people's rights movement, to establish a political and community representation amongst those with a shared history of landlessness and marginalisation, and in making symbolic and legal land claims on the Etosha National Park as a 'homeland' (Dieckmann 2007a-b, 2020). Yet her work is also concerned with understanding how international discourses and nationalisation processes co-constitute the formation of ethnicity in the post-colonial moment – for example, international donor demands and global ideas of 'indigeneity', 'community' and 'San' fostered and facilitated by NGOs and academics, and how these intersect with Namibia's Traditional Authorities Act and its blueprint requirements (see especially Dieckmann 2007b, pp. 285, 2020). For instance, among Hai‖om there were divergent ideas of what this hybrid and "neo-traditional" institution of TAs should look like, and the challenges in fostering a collective sense of cultural identity among groups and individuals, who were spread out between different communal areas, commercial farms, and urban settings (Dieckmann 2007b, pp. 280–281).

Sullivan's earlier work also looked at the rise of the Indigenous rights movement in Namibia (Sullivan 2001a). In doing so, she points to how this process lends itself to essentialising differences and

boundaries between different groups, especially Namibia's different Khoekhoegowab-speaking groups. More recent work by Sullivan, including co-publications, builds on these earlier publications to examine indigeneity in Etosha-Kunene. In particular, they examine the lack of recognition of Damara / ǂNūkhoen and ǁUbun as early inhabitants of Namibia's central and north-westerly landscapes and their exclusion from official representations of Namibia's Indigenous and marginalised peoples (Sullivan *et al.* 2019b; Sullivan and Ganuses 2020). This lack of recognition further contributes to their struggles to access resources, land, and political representation (Sullivan *et al.* 2019b, p. 286; ǁGaroes 2021). As mentioned earlier, and in line with re-constituting indigeneity, several collaborative mapping exercises were undertaken and digitised to archive long relationships between the Damara / ǂNūkhoen and ǁUbun and the west Namibian landscapes (see, for instance, Sullivan and Ganuses 2021a, p. 53).

Sullivan's (2002a, 2003) early work on CBNRM, also examines how longstanding tensions between 'Herero' and 'Damara' in the western part of the Etosha-Kunene research area become framed as ethnicised tensions within land and resource disputes. Sullivan illustrates how these tensions are generated first of all by the mapping of a conservancy within a place characterised by "overlapping claims to land by people with different ethnic identities and historical experiences of inhabiting the area" (Sullivan 2003, p. 72). Moreover, and as echoed in Dieckmann's work, Sullivan's (1998, 2002a, 2003) early work explores how ideas of "community" imported through the CBNRM programme obscure local power relations, histories, and other axes of difference, and how this, in turn, leads to a political mobilisation of ethnicity to access visibility, representation, and employment positions in relation to wider NGO and state institutional contexts. Sullivan (2002a, 2003) thus contextualises these struggles within a history of inequality in land distribution and the ongoing manner in which ethnic "identity directly influences access to official discourses regarding claims to land and institutional resources" (Sullivan 2001a, p. 180). Hence, many are under pressure to secure and defend their rights to land and grazing in a context of, for instance, regional trends of in-migration of "land-hungry pastoralists", new boundaries generated by conservancies, and limited availability of communal land (Sullivan 2003, p. 72).

As noted above, at the crux of this mobilisation of ethnicity and indigeneity is access to land and resources. For instance, during the first decade after independence, the state land reform programme did not benefit most San groups as it focused on converting the former 'homelands' into Communal Land Areas (Dieckmann *et al.* 2014). Moreover, as Dieckmann has illustrated for Namibian San who constitute about 2% of the national population, landlessness, marginalisation and poverty have and continue to be the common grounds of a shared San identity (Dieckmann *et al.* 2014). Hence, the adversity, discrimination and marginalisation experienced by Haiǁom in their daily lives in independent Namibia partially explains their attempts to build on and mobilise a Bushman or San identity as part and parcel of being Haiǁom, and as a key cultural and political resource. Dieckmann's (2007a, p. 4) work continually situates such struggles historically and within the larger political economy, asking: "how do people themselves construct or reconstruct their (ethnic) identity in reaction to the representations produced by more powerful others and in reaction to the experiences of colonial subjugation?" Her work thus explores the agency of individual actors in this process, including how persons are strategically negotiating this process, for example as "cultural brokers", and how this, in turn, is fuelling the formation of new identities, cultural consciousness, social inequalities, and elites among Haiǁom (see for instance Dieckmann 2007b, p. 283).

Writing in the late 2000s, Dieckmann noted that it remained to be seen how successful ethnicity and Indigenous self-determination tools will be in southern Africa. On a grass-roots level, she noted rather a diversification of strategies, with people also relying on, for instance, religious and education affiliations to navigate their own well-being within a society where such realisations are difficult (Dieckmann 2007b, p. 290). A decade later, there is a sense that indigeneity is but one tool among others through which to mobilise visibility and resources in a context of marginalisation and/or historical erasure.

In 2020, about 10,000 Hai‖om were living in the Kunene and Oshikoto regions of Namibia, with most continuing to suffer from high levels of marginalisation and poverty and with a high dependence on welfare support and the state (Dieckmann 2020, pp. 95–96). Hai‖om also feel discriminated against by other groups, especially concerning access to land, employment, and wages, with the experience of marginalisation having become “an integral part of a shared Hai‖om identity” (*ibid*., p. 96). Still, land remains at the core of Hai‖om attempts to organise politically and with a shared understanding that this is a “key factor in resolving their marginality” (Dieckmann 2007b, p. 279). Despite these ongoing struggles, and having voted for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007, the Namibian government remains reluctant to use the term Indigenous (Dieckmann 2018, p. 5; also see Dieckmann *et al.* 2014). However, since 2005 the government’s attitudes towards the San shifted to some degree with the recognition that there were developmental issues specific to them. In 2005 the San Development Programme was approved to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger with several development initiatives, among them the establishment of San resettlement projects (Dieckmann 2011, pp. 162–163). In recent years, the San Development Programme was changed to the Division of Marginalised Communities to move away from a focus on specific ethnic groups (*ibid*.). Rather, the government aims to “follow integrationist and assimilationist approaches to incorporate San [and other marginalised communities] into the ‘mainstream’ of society and economy, according to the states’ development agenda, which involves more agriculture and livestock rearing, small businesses, and formal industry” (Dieckmann 2018, p. 6).

Negotiating communal land reform and customary tenure

As noted in a recent joint publications by Lendelvo, “Namibia’s communal lands are home to diverse groups of land users from different social groups who follow differentiated customary tenure arrangements and land use patterns” (Nghitevelekwa *et al.* 2020, p. 216). As all three researchers have shown, however, it has been a challenge to incorporate and consider this diversity within debates on communal and agricultural land reform, and to adequately represent and account for more marginal, mobile and dryland land-use practices and culturally-informed resource management institutions (also see Chapter 4). This has partly been due to the push to standardise legislative frameworks, but also in some instances due to a lack of engagement with this diversity. Such a lack of engagement stems from past negative perceptions of ‘communal lands’ and their inhabitants and their ability to manage shared resources without centralised state intervention or privatised land holdings (Sullivan 1996a). Sullivan’s work especially, but also that of the two other authors, has thus aimed to illuminate the different land management options utilised by individuals and families in communal and group-based resettlement lands.

Building on previous fieldwork in west Namibia, in 1996 Sullivan was commissioned by the Multi-Disciplinary Research Centre at the University of Namibia for research to explore how the 'communalisation' of former commercial farmland re-allocated to 'Damaraland' had unfolded in practice, with a view to considering what might be learned from this experience for resettlement farms in post-independent Namibia. She carried out field research (semi-structured, detailed interviews) with household representatives already known to her at five farms on the Aba-Huab River, south-west of Khorixas, regarding the enactment of communal management of resources by a relocated population within an area where, superficially at least, the landscape geography had been radically affected by its division into commercial farming units (Sullivan 1996a). As noted in the previous chapter, movement by communal farmers to the new Damara 'homeland' began in the early 1970s, in the absence of either a 'traditional' land allocation system or any legislated regulation of settlement (Rohde 1994, p. 6). As explored in Sullivan's (1996b) report, it is generally considered that people were forcibly moved to these areas (Adams and Werner 1990, p. 93 Adams and Devitt 1992, p. 7) although little documentary evidence exists regarding this process (Rohde 1993, p. 19) – except for the situation of the Riemvasmakers: Khoekhoegowab-speakers from the Upington area of the Northern Cape in South Africa who were also relocated to the newly enlarged Damaraland 'homeland' (Sullivan 1996a, p. 19). The Odendaal Report (1964, p. 95 reviewed in Sullivan 1996b, p. 20) states that in cases where people had to move to their respective homelands, they would receive 'reasonable compensation' for the property they left behind. It appears from field evidence in Sullivan's (1996a, 1998) work that herders/farmers also actively sought out and applied for preferred farming areas. Such evidence indicates that farmers, many of whom were leaving positions as labourers on commercial farms, also perceived the movement to their new farming areas favourably as an opportunity to become relatively independent. Sullivan (1996b) thus argues that it is generally overlooked that Damara / ǂNūkhoe also participated actively in the process, evolving functioning systems of land, infrastructure, and livestock management within a geographic pattern of settlement, not of their creation.

Moreover, Sullivan's report shows how, despite the fenced layout of these former freehold farms, the ability to move in response to drought-induced shortages remained the most important herd management and land-use strategy in much of southern and central Kunene (Sullivan 1996a, p. 54). Herders kept their base farm and/or main homesteads, with pastoral mobility organised through "negotiation processes", primarily along with extended kin and other socio-political networks and within the constraints of the colonial and post-independent land ownership and administrative boundaries (*ibid*., p. 39-40). As Sullivan details in later publications, this mirrors pastoralist welfare across dryland Africa which is intimately tied up with "concepts and practices of exchange and reciprocity between and within 'groups'", with such practices being crucial for facilitating, activating and maintaining broader social networks which in turn increases the area over which one could access and utilize resources (Sullivan and Homewood 2004, pp. 134–135). Such negotiation processes tend to be flexible, with kin and social networks shaped by a dynamic and fuzzy logic (rather than being biologically deterministic) and with group boundaries often loosely defined (*ibid*., p. 135). In the case of the Damaraland Communal Land Area, "even when farmers have secure tenure to large land-holdings they choose to migrate in response to environmental conditions" (Sullivan 1996b, p. 54) – a land-use strategy that Dieckmann and Sullivan have demonstrated was historically practiced not only by communal farmers, but by most of the settler farmers on freehold

farms. In other words, the land use and tenure institutions emerge in response to both environmental and political realities and draw on long-standing socio-cultural institutions.

In contrast, and by the mid to late 1990s, dominant visions informing agricultural land reform were tied up with a view that considers titled farms necessary for development, as reviewed by Sullivan (1996a, p. 8). The basis for this perception is a belief that 'traditional' livestock production systems and tenure arrangements are mutually exclusive with improvements in productivity and the commercialisation of activities (Sullivan 1996a, p. 8). Thus, a codification of land tenure is considered necessary to facilitate the rationalisation of livestock management and to prevent overstocking, overgrazing and environmental degradation (see also Sullivan and Homewood 2017[2003], p. 147). During this time Sullivan (1996a, p. 8, 1998) argued that interrogating this vision and "myth" is important because it automatically sets the agenda and tone of possibilities for communal land reform. Thus, Sullivan (1996a, p. 8, 1998) comments that:

> … In the same way, dominant thinking within Namibia regarding what development means in the context of communal livestock farmers, can be expected to dictate the type of land tenure reform that is formulated in both the Commercial (Agricultural) Lands Reform Act, and the forthcoming Communal Lands Bill.

Hence, she argued that while the existing focus on the subdivision of land may be appropriate in situations where crop cultivation is the primary source of subsistence, evidence from both within Namibia and elsewhere in Africa suggests that it may be inappropriate for livestock production systems under arid or semi-arid conditions (Sullivan 1996a, p. 8; also Sullivan and Homewood 2004). Such views fail to consider the importance of rainfall-driven, rather than livestock-controlled, primary productivity (Sullivan 1996b; Sullivan and Rohde 2002). Thus, within dryland environments, security of tenure does not necessarily translate into security of livelihood, with resource disputes in such contexts concerning access rights to water, pastures and other resources (Sullivan 1996a). In addition, evidence from pastoral societies throughout Africa shows that the privatisation of communal land increases poverty and landlessness, widens the gap between rich and poor livestock owners, and contributes to environmental degradation. Sullivan (1996a, p. 10) thus observes that:

> The shape of future communal land tenure reform is dominated by centralised policy thinking based on the commercialisation of production activities, the standardisation of land and resource allocation procedures, and the division of both newly acquired commercial land and communal land into leased economic units. Analysis of land and resource management practices at local levels could usefully inform these perspectives by illuminating the different land management options utilised by individuals and families in communal lands, existing disparities in wealth within communal areas, and the realities of regional diversity. Following Biesele *et al* (1991:2), "the real challenge is to balance Namibia's new democratic ideology with ethno-economic realities".

Sullivan's PhD thesis (1998) and subsequent publications expand her research on these "ethno-economic" realities and local agencies in dryland west Namibia, detailing existing local resource-use and management practices within the study area and illustrating how these practices have shaped customary tenure institutions in ways that not only embody values of environmental sustainability, but also engender complex cultural and historical land-relations through memory, movement and practice (see, for instance, Sullivan 1999a, 2000a, 2005a). Importantly, her work explores how this

"relationship between the domestic use of natural resources and settlement and land-tenure history is complex and non-deterministic" (Sullivan 1998, p. 279, 2005a). In other words, local knowledge and institutions are not always lost or destroyed in the face of colonial dispossession or resettlement (more on this in Chapter 4).

Informing debates on land reform, much of Sullivan's work on gathered resources during the 1990s and early 2000s in west Namibia furthermore challenges assumptions of what constitutes customary tenure institutions. Thus, she shows how, similar to tenure characterising access rights to land and pastures, gathering land-use practices are organised through "complex conceptualisation of access and tenure rights" and are primarily socially defined-rights organised through kinship and inheritance rules (Sullivan and Homewood 2004, p. 133, also see Sullivan 1998, 1999a, 2005a). For example, Sullivan's work details then little known gathering practices in west Namibia's pastoral societies of harvesting grass seeds stored in harvester ant nests for food and the production of beer and liquor, and the harvesting of honey. In doing so, she shows how access was regulated through informally recognised rights: "harvester ant nests may be considered the property of those individuals, normally women, who first collected from them, and as such can be passed onto their daughters" (Sullivan 1999a, p. 13). In addition, informal individual ownership of beehives is also allocated to the man who finds the hive and marks it by placing a stone over the entrance (*ibid*.).

These informal and nested rights are often side-lined in official resource management and tenure policies as they involve mobile land-relations and access to spatially and temporally dispersed and extensively distributed resources, which conflict with a dominant tendency to formalise and codify land and resource rights according to bounded and measurable units (see, for instance, Sullivan 2019a, 2022). As discussed in Chapter 2, Dieckmann's research on historical land relations and modes of production in Etosha-Kunene complement this work by Sullivan in providing understanding and legitimation of customary tenure systems of those groups which practiced more hunting and gathering lifestyles and economies and who were, and to some extent still are, seen as not having exercised ownership over any land-areas. Together with Lendelvo (Nghitevelekwa *et al.* 2020, p. 228), their work foregrounds how processes of in-migration and the individualisation of land by agriculturalists and pastoralists and by the colonial and post-colonial state, marginalised and eroded mobile land-use practices and tenure institutions – as well as the land-claims of such groups. Their work aims to shift received wisdoms, including those in which such land-relations were not considered reasonable forms of socio-economic and spatial organisation (Dieckmann 2018, p. 59). As Lendelvo points out in a recent joint publication, however, the current push to register communal land rights and the way it is administered remains reflective of "a one-size-fits-all model of land rights registration [which] only works to the benefit of some land users, as the current model best fits their land use patterns" (Nghitevelekwa *et al.* 2020, p. 228).

All three authors also address the issue of political representation and marginalisation in the land reform process. Although Dieckmann's research is based primarily in the ENP, on resettlement and commercial farms and peri-urban and urban areas, her work highlights the complexities and pitfalls associated with what can be understood as customary tenure institutions. In particular, she examines the contested role of TAs in the group resettlement process and in allocating and managing land-access on resettlement farms (Dieckmann 2007b, 2011, 2020). Dieckmann's later work specifically looks at the implications of political fragmentation for development efforts and

land management (Dieckmann 2020, p. 102). Moreover, both Dieckmann's and Lendelvo's research touches upon the marginal position of San who find themselves living in communal lands and who, due to lack of political representation, are not adequately involved in land management decisions and processes (see Nghitevelekwa *et al.* 2020, p. 224).

Taken together, and as Sullivan and Homewood (2004) point out, their work shows that "customary tenure" systems encompass a wide range of overlapping rights. They can include private and individual rights to resources and land organised through families, lineages, class and ancestral land claims, as well as common property rights over shared resources such as pastures, with such rights normally governed through social norms and allocated by traditional or other local authorities. Furthermore, customary tenure can include open access and state-owned rights over resources and land and in one area there can be multiple and different types of rights "making up a diverse mosaic of different, site-specific ways of managing natural resources" (*ibid*., p.138).

Land claims in formal conservation areas

Both Dieckmann and Sullivan illustrate that formal conservation areas post-independence have not remained undisputed and have been contested through different avenues, including through legal and symbolic means, and through, for instance, counter and cultural mapping projects (as discussed earlier). For example, oral history accounts of ǂNūkhoe experiences of eviction during the making of the conservation zones south of Sesfontein and west of Windhoek are reported in Sullivan (2003, 2017a, 2019a) and Sullivan and Ganuses (2020, 2021a). In the *Future Pasts* project, cultural landscape research focused primarily on the Palmwag Tourism Concession, the Skeleton Coast National Park and communal area conservancies. Although these land connections have not taken the legal route, this work symbolically and materially re-inscribes pasts into formal conservation areas, destabilising the imaginary of 'wild' and ahistorical landscapes (Sullivan and Ganuses 2021a).

Sullivan's early and later work looked at how the CBNRM programme is inextricable from questions of land-access and competing land claims (see, for instance, Sullivan 1996a, 2002a, 2003, 2019a, 2022). CBNRM promotes new common property institutions alongside the existing fold of inherited institutions (Sullivan and Homewood 2004). Policies such as CBNRM thereby introduce new boundary-making and territorial boundaries on top of a pattern of land control set up during Namibia's colonial and apartheid history (see, for instance, Sullivan 2019a, p. 16). Although not linked to formal property rights, it involves rights over use and the sharing of benefits, creating bounded spatial units which are mapped and accessed only through formalised membership. In other words, the CBNRM model is based on "common property" or "customary tenure" arrangements – either through "strengthening existing or 'traditional' property arrangements, or by attempting to create new 'common property' tenure arrangements where it is considered that these have broken down" (Sullivan 2019a, p. 7).

As noted, the first decade of post-independent Namibia was characterised by an unclear policy setting, especially in terms of exclusionary rights to and control over communal land. Consequently, and as shown by Sullivan, CBNRM became a tool to try and secure such rights, with advocates for CBNRM central in the push for communal land reform. As Sullivan (1996a, p. 10) notes:

> …[s]ince the Land Conference, pressure to clarify land tenure in the communal areas has been expressed by those anxious to implement development or entrepreneurial activities but find it impossible to do so under the present ambiguous tenure situation. The Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET), for example, which aims to promote wildlife conservation through concepts of 'community ownership' of wildlife as valued resources, maintains that the lack of clear tenure arrangements is 'a disincentive to long-term planning and the sustainable use of resources' (Jones, 1993: ii, 42). Both the MET and the Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation would like to see clear 'land-use plans' emerging for the communal areas which prioritise types of land-use, including wildlife conservation, according to the productive potential assessed for different areas. …

Sullivan's work shows that in the initial formation of conservancies in north-western Namibia during the early 2000s the process was "appropriated locally as a forum for expressing and contesting claims to land", rather than as purely concerned with wildlife and conservation (Sullivan 2002a, p.162, also see Sullivan 2019a, p.19). This was primarily because conservancies were established in areas with overlapping claims to land caused in part by repeated and overlapping historical land clearances in west Namibia, as detailed in Chapter 2 (Sullivan 2003, p.72, 2017b, 2019a, 2022; Sullivan and Ganuses 2020, 2021a). Such histories, including histories of significant inequality in the distribution of rights to land, feed into the contemporary management and functioning of conservancies, leading to contestations over power, representation, and aspiration, as well as belonging and access (Sullivan 2003, 2019a, p.14, also see Chapter 4 for more on this).

Dieckmann's work in turn has followed the legal and symbolic claims by Hai‖om to the ENP over the last three decades (see Dieckmann 2001, 2003, 2007a-c, 2011, 2020). In doing so, Dieckmann (2009, p. 377) has shown how, as a demarcated space and one of the last historical refuge places during colonial times, the ENP became both politically and symbolically powerful in Hai‖om struggles for land and recognition. This is for several key reasons. For one, as a catchphrase and bounded space, Etosha is a powerful tool to draw international and national attention and recognition (Dieckmann 2007b, p. 282). Secondly, Etosha as 'homeland' serves internally as a unifying symbol through which to reimagine Hai‖om ethnic identity and social belonging, and around which other land claims can be justified and relationally addressed (*ibid*.). As noted earlier, Etosha landscapes remain significant as entangled with social histories and cultural memory.

Post-independence a collective sense of dispossession and historical consciousness began to take root as Hai‖om mobilised themselves politically. In 1997, a significant demonstration was organised at the gates of ENP, with claims being made to their ancestral land. These assertions of symbolic and socio-historical ties to the park destabilised the image of the park as a 'vast white place' – an isolated island – and asserted it rather as an area rich with cultural and historical heritage (Dieckmann 2007c, p. 127, also see Dieckmann 2001). Thus, with time Etosha became regarded as the 'homeland' (as in a place to call home) or ancestral land of the Hai‖om, and as the last area where they had been living a somewhat autonomous life. Etosha as 'homeland' was crucial for the revitalisation of Hai‖om identity, further fuelled by claims to indigeneity as discussed above (Dieckmann 2003, p. 79). The *Xoms |Omis* Project aimed to reveal the cultural heritage embedded in Etosha's landscapes and to include it in the official image and marketing of Etosha, including in the ENP's official management and narrative. However, Namibian Wildlife Resorts (NWR), being responsible for the tourism management in ENP, did not show much support for this process

(Dieckmann 2020, p. 116). Furthermore, for most of the time, internal struggles for representation among Hai‖om hampered further steps to be taken concerning Etosha (Dieckmann 2003, p. 79, 2007c, p. 142). Eventually, in 2015, Hai‖om launched a legal claim to the ENP and the Mangetti West areas (see details in Dieckmann 2020). These claims are ongoing and generated much visibility on the issue of Hai‖om landlessness and settlement histories. Namibia's post-independence government has now widely acknowledged that the ENP area was once part of Hai‖om ancestral land. However, ideas regarding how to address the issue differ and remain contested.

The government embarked on a process of establishing several resettlement farms in the area surrounding Etosha (see below), but for many Hai‖om this has not been a fully satisfactory solution for various reasons, including that many remained excluded from the land and places where they harbour ancestral links and where families fostered livelihoods for centuries. The group which eventually instigated a legal claim against ENP, is known as the Okaukuejo Hai‖om Community Group (Dieckmann 2020, p. 111). Dieckmann details the long process of negotiations with the government before any legal claim was launched, as well as claims of the Hai‖om group. They expressed that, having lived for generations as workers within the park, they had neither any spiritual connection to the land outside of park nor any experience of farming. They requested formal acknowledgement of ENP as Hai‖om ancestral lands, involvement in determining and shaping ENP's development trajectories, including the establishment of cultural heritage sites, and they requested the government to take affirmative action in addressing high levels of unemployment among youth in the park (Dieckmann 2020, p. 111).

As the government, and specifically the then Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET), did not respond or react to these requests, the group approached the Legal Assistance Centre (LAC) to take legal action. Consequently, the Etosha Hai‖om Association was established to promote the general welfare and secure for themselves and their descendants' tenure within or in connection with ENP (Dieckmann 2020, p. 112). Eventually, legal action was instigated, with the LAC seeking assistance from the Legal Resource Centre in South Africa. Dieckmann (2020, pp. 117-118) explained:

> Being aware of the intricacies of the Central Kalahari Court Case, which originally included 243 applicants, a number which reduced to 189 surviving applicants, and being aware of the problematic position of the officially recognised Hai‖om chief, and moreover being aware of the problem of representation within former hunter-gatherer groups, it was decided to first launch a class action application on behalf of the Hai‖om. Class action lawsuits are not at this stage an option in Namibian law, and the country's law would need to be developed to allow the applicants to pursue the legal action in a representative capacity on behalf of their community. Eight Hai‖om are the applicants in this action.

The application for class action was launched in 2015, heard in 2018 and dismissed by the High Court in 2019, the rationale of the dismissal being based on the Traditional Authorities Act 2002 (Dieckmann 2020, p. 118). An appeal to the Supreme Court was also dismissed in 2022, yet for different reasons to those given by the High Court. The legal team is currently weighing up further options for the case (Dieckmann/Odendaal, pers. comm.).

Realising resettlement in Etosha-Kunene

The work of both Dieckmann (2011, 2020) and Lendelvo (Lendelvo *et al.* 2020a) examines some of the challenges and outcomes of the state's resettlement programme in Etosha-Kunene. Still, this topic remains under-researched and can be considered a key research gap going forward. The Ministry of Land Reform and Resettlement (now the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform) facilitates the resettlement of land-poor and landless Namibians on state-acquired commercial farmland. This process is facilitated by the Land Reform Advisory Commission and decentralised regional resettlement committees (Lendelvo *et al.* 2020a, p. 40). Individual plots are earmarked for small-scale farming with a livestock capacity of no more than 150 large-stock units (LSU) or 800 small-stock units (SSU) (*ibid*., p. 41). As noted, the government has also embarked on group resettlement, which targets marginalised communities and destitute persons.

Group-resettling the Hai‖om

Two of Dieckmann's publications (2011, 2020) take an in-depth look at the resettlement process which characterised the establishment of the resettlement farms for Hai‖om in the Etosha surrounds. Analysing the various stakeholders involved, Dieckmann illustrates the complexities and challenges of the group resettlement programme and how initial failures can be traced back to the diverging interests and vague objectives which characterised the planning and implementation process – including a range of ideas, ambitions and hidden agendas connected to Hai‖om resettlement initiative itself (2011, pp. 172-173).

Plans to resettle Hai‖om already started before the centenary celebrations of the ENP in 2007, with the government realising that it could no longer ignore the historical realities of Hai‖om having lost their lands. The main initial target group were Hai‖om still residing inside the park (Dieckmann 2011). Another target group were Hai‖om residing in Oshivelo, a squatter town close to the eastern side of the park. High rates of domestic violence, alcoholism, prostitution and vandalism among Hai‖om also pushed the government to recognise that these socio-economic and psycho-social problems are linked to long histories of dispossession and displacement (Dieckmann 2011, p. 166, 2020, pp. 104–105). From 2007 onwards, the government initiated a resettlement programme and several farms were purchased in the vicinity of the park. Most people belonging to the two target groups initially resisted their relocation and the allocation of land was henceforth mediated through the state-recognised Hai‖om Traditional Authority.

Image 8. Hai‖om chief David ‖Khamuxab at the Etosha centenary in Namutoni 2007. Photo: © Ute Dieckmann.

The first farm purchased to resettle Hai‖om was Seringkop in 2008 in Kunene Region, close to the southern border of ENP. It signalled the first time in post-independence history in which a specific and targeted ethnic group received a resettlement farm (Dieckmann 2011, p. 165). In November 2008 farm Seringkop was officially handed over to be managed through a joint management approach. Subsequently, more farms close to the southern border of ENP were purchased for resettlement of Hai‖om (Dieckmann 2020, p. 105). By September 2012, 690 Hai‖om were living on seven resettlement farms. In 2013 the farms Ondera/Kumewa close to Oshivelo were also handed over. The overall aim of the project was the provision of land and socio-economic development opportunities for Hai‖om who were dispossessed by the creation of the ENP. The initial idea was the establishment of a conservancy-like institution (although on commercial land). With time, however, the conservancy idea was not implemented, and most farms became standard resettlement projects, with a focus on small-scale agriculture. Given the difficulty of establishing even such forms of agriculture in Kunene's semi-arid environment and with little capital, many of the beneficiaries ended up becoming "welfare recipients rather than self-sustainable agricultural producers" (Dieckmann 2020, p. 170). As Dieckmann carefully fleshes out, competing and conflicting interests meant that these resettlement projects were not well planned or implemented. For one, the size of the farms was insufficient to support livestock-based livelihoods for so many households (Dieckmann 2011, p. 184). Secondly, many of the stakeholders involved sought quick solutions, with the resettlement process focused on a symbolic compensation for lost land rather than on the provision and long-term support of sustainable livelihoods for the beneficiaries (*ibid*.).

Image 9. Housing at a Hai||om resettlement farm. Photo: © Ben Begbie-Clench.

In other words, little coordinated planning took place beyond the purchasing of the farms and the process of resettlement itself (Dieckmann 2020, p. 106). Livelihood strategies on most farms involved a strong reliance on pensions and food aid, and less than 15% of the households owned livestock. Expansion of farming activities was severely constrained by accessibility to services, limited access to water, uneven grazing, disease, and predation (*ibid*., p. 106). Income-generating activities were underdeveloped and livelihood sustainability was not adequately addressed (*ibid*., p. 108). Only in 2012, four years after the first resettlement, a Land Use Plan and Livelihood Support Strategy were released, commissioned by the Millennium Challenge Account – Namibia (MCA-N).

At first glance, Ondera, the farm purchased on the eastern side of Etosha, tells a better story. However here too there are severe challenges. Overpopulation is a problem and residents have expressed desires for individual plots rather than community cultivation projects. These constraints are worsened by irregular electricity and water supply (*ibid*., pp. 106-110).

Such livelihood conditions and insecurities were further constrained by the fact that land rights had in many cases not been formalised and access to the farms was managed by the TA (Dieckmann 2020, p. 108). The chief and councillors of the Hai||om Traditional Authority were accused of furthering their own interests and visions, given that they had the power to delegate access-rights and were the main persons mediating between the government and the resettled households (*ibid*., p. 180). According to Dieckmann (2020, p. 103), challenges concerning land-access and benefits in ENP, as well as disputes and internal antagonism on resettlement farms, "can be understood as a conflict between the traditional structures and processes of the Hai||om and those defined by the Traditional Authorities Act".

Existing literature and criticisms of the resettlement programme observe several shortcomings of this module of the land reform process, many of them also mentioned by Dieckmann and Lendelvo (Dieckmann 2011; Dieckmann *et al.* 2014; Lendelvo *et al*. 2020a). These issues are widely acknowledged, as the resolutions taken at the Second National Land Conference in 2018 indicate, among them the resolution to review, reform and harmonise all related legal instruments for accelerated and successful land redistribution.

Commercial farming on resettlement farms

A recent publication by Lendelvo *et al.* (2020a) illustrates that establishing successful commercial farming enterprises and sustainable livelihoods on resettlement farms has also proven to be challenging. As Lendelvo *et al.* (2020a) point out, commercial farming is a long-term business operation which involves high start-up costs and expenditure. Furthermore, Namibia's climatic conditions, poor grazing management, recurrent droughts, the limited size of the farming units, and a lack of access to markets and services make such operations difficult to manage. The authors also found that there is an urgent need for the land acquisition and allocation process, including the registration of leases, to be more carefully planned and synchronised. The slow pace at which land rights are being secured on resettlement farms prevents farmers from accessing credit and making investments in farming operations. This "runs counter to commercial farming philosophies and is likely to have undesired impacts in the future on the condition of farms" (*ibid*., p. 50).

This process has been hampered by a lack of internal coordination and resource constraints within and between the former Ministry of Land Reform (MLR), now Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform (MAWLR), directorates which are required for the "synchronised surveying, demarcation and valuation of allotments" (Lendelvo *et al.* 2020a, p.41). Once the lease agreement is registered with the Deeds Registry, the lessee is expected to pay rental fees to the government, while the registered titles provide secure land tenure and collateralisation to access financial aid or develop their farming enterprises (*ibid*., p. 42). Securing tenure can also contribute to reducing land-related disputes and provides incentives for environmental management. These constraints have meant that there have only been some farms which have become financially viable. Moreover, most of the farms which proved to be financially viable were operated by part-time farmers – in other words, they have additional income streams. In contrast, the authors found that unemployed women, the elderly, the youth and former farmworkers are among the weaker performing farmers given their lack of access to capital, together with the other challenges noted above (*ibid*., p. 45). In conclusion, Lendelvo *et al.* (2020a, p. 45) argue that emerging farmers will not be able to sustain profitable farming operations without some level of immediate and long-term state support which "strengthens the resilience of resettlement farmers and support their farming operations in the face of profound challenges" (*ibid*., p. 48).

As shown by both Dieckmann and Lendelvo *et al.*, it has been noted that state support is crucial to establishing sustainable and successful commercial farming enterprises under Namibia's semi-arid climatic conditions. As Dieckmann (2011) points out, there is a need for government to develop more differentiated approaches to meet the needs of diverse groupings, including those who need land for commercial agriculture and who need tenure security for subsistence farming purposes, and

to demystify land. As noted in the introduction, due to Namibia's colonial history of rapid and systematic appropriation, land is a complex and emotional subject. After independence, Namibia inherited a range of myths about land. The commercial agricultural sector specifically is the source of deep misunderstandings about land (Dieckmann 2011, p. 185). The central myth is that of the wealthy white farmer. This myth persists and erases the historical reality that despite the favourable conditions created for white farmers under previous state regimes, farmers still failed to stay afloat, struggled to survive and many quit over the years (as also discussed in Sullivan 1996a). The myth of the wealthy white farmer (although not completely misplaced) creates unrealistic expectations concerning the ownership of farms, including the misconception that this can be easily achieved without long-term state support (Dieckmann 2011, p. 185). Some of these shortcomings were also noted at the Second Land Conference in 2018, specifically that an upturn in productivity would require substantial financial and mentorship programmes and personal investments (Lendelvo *et al.* 2020b, p. 44). In other words, emerging farmers will not be able to sustain profitable farming operations without some level of support (*ibid*., p. 45).

4. Innovation in conservation and environmental management: between global discourses, policy, and local practices

As detailed in the previous two chapters, access to resources by different groups in Etosha-Kunene has been, and continues to be, shaped by their access to land, specifically productive land, and under changing colonial and post-colonial state regimes. This chapter considers the contributions of Sullivan, Lendelvo and Dieckmann to post-independence innovations in conservation praxis and environmental management within Etosha-Kunene. Their work in this respect deepens understanding of the changing and overlapping land-relations and the politics of access across Etosha-Kunene, while likewise examining the intertwined and co-constitutive domains of ecology and culture.

The work of the three authors complements each other in detailing the rise and evolution of biodiversity conservation (as a shift from 'nature' and/or 'wildlife' conservation), and Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) paradigms in Namibia; as well as the ongoing enfolding of Etosha-Kunene within intersecting global environmental discourses, including that of climate change, sustainability and the 'green economy'. In engaging with these global environmental discourses, all three authors do so from a perspective rooted first of all in Etosha-Kunene's diverse locally-situated practices and knowledges. Hence, this chapter weaves together contributions by the authors in understanding the diversity of local environmental narratives, values, practices, and knowledges. In so doing, their work explores some of the implications of mapping global environmental discourses onto Etosha-Kunene's diverse landscapes, including what this means for the power to determine and shape how 'natures' and the 'environment' in this context are and should be known, valued, used, conserved, and managed (also see Chapter 5).

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, Lendelvo's and Sullivan's work in particular overlaps in their engagement with community-based resource management, and communal area conservancies. Due to the location of their former dwelling areas, situated mainly on what is nowadays commercial land and the ENP, Hai||om did not initially benefit from the post-independence conservancy programme in communal areas (Dieckmann 2001, p. 141). Still, much of Dieckmann's work is concerned with shifting environmental narratives and contested management practices shaping the ENP, with this work linking closely with that of both Sullivan and Lendelvo. In addition, and as shown in this chapter, reading across the work of these authors furthers a set of key arguments: that culturally-informed institutions and Indigenous knowledges are resilient, despite histories of colonialism and dispossession; that the scientific production of the ecological knowledge underpinning conservation paradigms and values needs to be democratised to include multivocality, Indigenous knowledge and cultural landscapes; and that for the CBNRM model to be locally responsive, it needs to engage with already existing and historical land-relations and institutions, as well as factor in questions of gender, ethnicity, power, and ideology.

Biodiversity and community-based natural resource management

Alongside land reform, and following independence in 1990, it "became necessary to develop new concepts of nature conservation and tourism" which were more inclusive and participatory (Dieckmann 2001, p. 141). Consequently, the liberalising of the country in this post-apartheid moment encouraged Namibia's embrace of an ascendant community-based natural resource management paradigm and an invigorated emphasis on community-based conservation. Already during the 1970s and 1980s, conservationists began to develop new approaches to conservation rooted in intertwined relations between biodiversity conservation and livelihood activities and inspired by the established CAMPFIRE Programme in Zimbabwe (Sullivan 1999a, 2002a, 2022; also see Lendelvo and Nakanyala 2013, pp. 4-5).

Simultaneously, biodiversity as a concept rose to prominence in the 1980s, coined by conservation scientists and seen as essential for healthy and resilient ecosystems. As the concept of biodiversity expanded globally, new management practices, discourses and technologies developed as well as local protest and resistance to fortress conservation and displacement (Martin *et al.* 2013, p. 126). Following the 1992 UN conventions on Desertification and Biological Diversity, CBNRM and decentralisation gained increased traction as alternative management and policy approaches to conservation and development. Although rooted in local precedents, CBNRM is thus a globally constructed and historically contingent environmental discourse. Nevertheless, this paradigm found fertile uptake in the post-independence era in Namibia as it was seen as a tool to "reinstate African rights to land and resources in the wake of alienating policies of this century's imposed colonial and apartheid administrations" (Sullivan 1999a, p. 2). Moreover, it found popular state support after the Namibian Constitution dedicated itself to the sustainable use of environmental resources (via Article 95j) (Lendelvo and Nakanyala 2013, p. 4). The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which Namibia ratified in 1997, also argued for people-centred conservation and later inspired the Namibia Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2001-2010) (*ibid*., p. 7).

Key to the CBNRM paradigm was the idea that if a community receives sufficient economic benefits via the sustainable use of conserved natural resources they would self-organise to counter internal threats to overexploitation (Lendelvo and Nakanyala 2013, p. 4). One of the pillars of this programme in Namibia is the institution of communal area conservancies. Since 1996, communal area residents could gain some rights over wildlife and tourism in Namibia by applying for the establishment of conservancies (*ibid*., p. 6). Conservancies devolve user-rights and benefits derived from natural resources, especially wildlife, to the community level, given that a 'community' clearly defines its membership and spatial and territorial boundaries, and establishes management institutions as per national legislation and standardised design principles (Sullivan 1999a, 2002a, 2006; Lendelvo *et al.* 2020b).

The release of the Wildlife Management, Utilization and Tourism policy of 1995 also allowed the possibility for rural communities and conservancies to enter into business arrangements or joint-venture agreements, which would allow them to benefit from the larger tourism sector (Lendelvo and Nakanyala 2013). Conservancies have been touted as a tool to increase the income and well-being of rural communities, reduce their vulnerability, improve food security, and increase the sustainable use of the natural resources base in the area. Moreover, CBNRM is celebrated as a

departure from more colonial forms of conservation via protected areas from which people are excluded, and for its inclusive programme (including gender equality) and focus on local empowerment. In terms of environmental justice, it is seen as a solution which includes both distributive and procedural issues through an emphasis on rights to benefits and revenue-sharing, participation in decision-making and payment for ecosystem services (Sullivan 2005b, 2006, 2019a; Igoe *et al*. 2010).

By 2020, there were 86 registered communal area conservancies in Namibia (Lendelvo *et al.* 2020a, p. 3), the bulk of which are in north western and north eastern parts of the country which are the regions richest in wildlife species – see Map 10. Today, north-west Namibia boasts over 30 communal conservancies – signifying a significant process of re-territorialisation and changes in terms of social structures, use of the environment, livelihood strategies and institutional formation (Lendelvo and Nakanyala 2013). In addition, CBNRM has involved the mapping of "new administrative domains for integrating conservation and development and defining rights in terms of both new policy and the citizenry governed thereby" (Sullivan 2019a, p. 1, 2022). The CBNRM programme has also expanded to include other resources. As detailed in one of Lendelvo's joint publications, the CBNRM paradigm was incorporated into Namibia's Forest Strategic Plan of 1996, which makes provision for community-level management and community forestry programmes, including the proclamation of community forest reserves (Mogotsi *et al.* 2016, p. 81). In 2008, forestry management embarked on a new strategic focus, which included improved and integrated natural resources management with a participatory approach, prioritising coping mechanisms to address climate change and the reduction of negative human and animal impacts on environmental health (*ibid*.).

In Namibia, the CBNRM movement, especially at the start, was mostly driven by a growing post-independence NGO culture – with NGOs as mediators between local, national and international interests, institutions and capital (Sullivan 2003, p. 71). With time, these programmes have come under some critique, including regarding issues such as poor design, weak local participation and benefit distribution, and local protests against NGO and donor implementations, institutional changes and political dynamics (Sullivan 2002, 2003, 2006; Sullivan and Homewood 2004, p. 144; Lendelvo and Nakanyala 2013). It is now recognised that the CBNRM programme is constrained when conservation goals are not rooted in local priorities (Sullivan 1999a), by being mapped onto already existing and overlapping rights to land and resources without recognising these existing institutional set-ups or practices (Sullivan 2003), by the reality of involving major costs but minor benefits, and when inequalities in land reform and resource distribution are ignored (Sullivan and Homewood 2004, p. 144).

As Sullivan's work on the desertification discourse has shown, despite the push to decentralise environmental governance and for community-driven conservation, these developments were taking place within a larger post-colonial and globalising context shaped by specific patterns and relations of power. Nature conservation was, and to some extent still is, strongly dominated by formal science and the state as the authoritative voices on how Etosha-Kunene's 'natures' should be used, valued, managed, conserved, and known. Moreover, whilst acknowledging the liberal and progressive structures and intentions of CBNRM, Sullivan's prior work suggests that CBNRM, like colonial forms of conservation, remains rooted in a modernist episteme in which the value of

'nature' arises through its objectification and commodification, rather than according to Indigenous and alternative values (Sullivan 2005b, 2006). These issues and challenges are detailed and studied by Sullivan and Lendelvo for the Namibian context and are discussed in more detail below.

Local environmental narratives, values, and knowledge

Livelihood strategies both in Namibia's rural and peri-urban areas are strongly dependent on the local natural resource base. Resilient livelihoods in these contexts need to be able to cope with and continually recover from stresses and shocks, and maintain or enhance capabilities and assets, while not undermining this natural resource base (Lendelvo and Nakanyala 2013, p. 7). The work of Sullivan, Lendelvo and Dieckmann each brings to the fore the diverse, rich, and practice-based institutions and knowledges which have historically developed in response to such interdependencies. Moreover, the authors argue for recognising the epistemic, economic, and cultural value of these institutions and knowledges – both for conservation and resource-management policy and for resilient and sustainable livelihoods.

Recent paradigms in resource management and conservation have to some extent recognised the importance of such situated and practiced-based ecological knowledge and institutions, which generally is referred to as Indigenous knowledge (Lendelvo *et al.* 2015). Such forms of knowledge are, however, differently defined and understood. Some of these definitions are noted in Lendelvo *et al*. (2015), for instance, Berkes, Colding and Folke (2000) define it "a cumulative body of knowledge, practice and belief, evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmission". Others such as Menzies (2006) define it as a "body of information on the interconnected elements of natural environments taught from generation to generation". Generally, this body of knowledge is understood to be ever growing and dynamic, and informed both by changing customary lifeworlds and environments (Lendelvo *et al.* 2015, p. 222).

Indigenous ecological knowledge (IEK) has specifically gained renewed value due to recognition of the "in-depth know-how that local people have about their immediate environments and the manner in which they make decisions on how to use and manage natural environments" (Lendelvo *et al.* 2015, pp. 222-223). Such recent recognition – both in global and local policy frameworks – has generated several programmes and studies for supporting such knowledge systems, both for their intellectual and economic values. Globally IEK has also been acknowledged for its contribution to science and conservation (*ibid*.), although, and as illustrated in Sullivan's and Dieckmann's work, such forms of knowledge must still contend with larger power and knowledge structures and with the epistemic legacies of colonial and state science (see Chapter 5). When Sullivan and Dieckmann started their research in the early and late 1990s, debates and research on Indigenous knowledge and the recognition of Indigenous institutions were still nascent. In fact, negative stereotypes of communal farmers, and certain Indigenous groups and their knowledge, meant that these were largely ignored in the formulation of resource-management, conservation, and tenure policies. In addition, there was widespread belief and assumption that the alienation of people from the land had led directly to a loss of knowledge (Sullivan 1998, 1999a; Sullivan and Homewood 2004). Such lack of recognition and set of assumptions informs both Sullivan's and Dieckmann's work on Indigenous knowledge and institutions – specifically their work on gathering and hunting. Lendelvo's later joint publications also support a growing body of literature on the challenges and opportunities

of engaging with Indigenous knowledge systems, especially for managing human-wildlife conflict (HWC), strengthening rural food security, and enhancing environmental sustainability.

Sullivan's and Lendelvo's work also supports each other in their engagement with the question of gendered ecological knowledge, and with women's practices and knowledges in collective resource management. And lastly, reading across the work of the three authors, it becomes evident that despite the development rhetoric of the IEK discourse, there is still much to be done to understand how such knowledge systems can be translated into conservation and resource-management praxis within existing structures which favours formal and "hard" sciences, blueprint institutional set-ups, and economising frameworks.

Recovering gathering and gender in local resource domains

When Sullivan began her PhD research in Namibia in the early to mid-1990s, she noted that gathered resources were generally overlooked within policy and CBNRM discussions due to several interrelated dynamics (Sullivan 1998, 1999a). Firstly, there was a deeply entrenched assumption that culturally informed resource-management institutions have "broken down due to the exigencies of colonial rule and apartheid administration during the twentieth century" (Sullivan 2000a, p. 145). Moreover, if gathering did take place, it was considered primarily driven by experiences of poverty and was also stigmatised as a sign of poverty due to the resilience of colonial evolutionist perspectives (Sullivan 1998, 2000a, 2005a). Such bias is noted across Africa and within the sciences – not only for gathering but for hunting practices too (Sullivan and Homewood 2004).

'Gathered' resources can be understood as those resources "procured from the wider landscape" (Sullivan and Homewood 2004, p. 118) and are used across southern Africa, not only in societies historically classified as hunter-gatherers but also in both agro-pastoral and pastoral societies. They can constitute staple foods at times, and also contribute significantly to essential nutrients as well as being consumed when encountered in 'the field' for other purposes such as herding. Additionally, gathered resources are frequently multiuse and include cosmetic, nutritional, symbolic, and curative uses (*ibid*., p. 125; Sullivan 1998). However, as Sullivan and Homewood (2004) note in a later publication, gathered resource-use practices and their importance were and continue to be missed or misrepresented due to their seasonal dynamics, the changing needs of resource users, and historical biases in research and analysis (Sullivan 1998, 1999a, 2000a). In Namibia, the importance of gathering was also generally disregarded due to "imposed patriarchal ideologies associated with colonial administrative and judicial systems" (Sullivan 2000a, p. 142). Such patriarchal perspectives ignored the importance of other modes of production and their importance not only for livelihoods, but also for women's autonomy and a female-dominated cultural, symbolic and material economies (Sullivan 2000a, 2005a, p. 70). Gathered resources are often characterised as 'wild' or 'natural' which is misleading given that they have been "influenced over millennia by African peoples utilising and inhabiting the continent's diverse landscapes" (Sullivan and Homewood 2004, p. 118). This situation radically "obscures the investment that people make in controlling or otherwise ensuring the future productivity of such resources" (*ibid*. p. 124, after Sullivan 2000a).

Sullivan's (1998, p. 279) doctoral research and subsequent publications (Sullivan 1999a, 2000a, 2005a) illustrate that at the time of her research domestic use of gathered resources took place in high frequency in north-west and west Namibia and included a large diversity of species: with over

41 plant species consumed regularly, including fruits, herb teas, seeds, caterpillars, honey, leaves, corms, bulbs and stems (Sullivan 2005a, p. 91; 1998) – see Image 10. She shows that the highest rate of consumption was during times of greatest availability rather than in response to shortages of alternative food sources and/or poverty. Gathered resources were consumed according to "interannual variations in productivity related to rainfall" (*ibid*., p. 86). Flexible kinship and social networks allow for sharing and distribution of gathered foods and animal products, these exchanges being dynamic and thus difficult to measure in terms of daily consumption (Sullivan 1998, p. 279).

Image 10. Using herbarium specimen fieldcards as aids for discussing plants with women of the family of the late Meda Xamses (on left), at ǁGaisoas, Ugab River, in 1995. Research collaborator Welhemina Suro Ganuses is to the right of the image. Photo: © Sian Sullivan.

Additionally, Sullivan's research showed that there is a "positive view of these foods" (Sullivan 1998, 2005a) and that gathering practices are intimately entangled not only with utilitarian needs but also with practices of renewing culture, identity and tradition (Sullivan and Homewood 2004). Moreover, through focusing on gathered resources, Sullivan revises scientific and colonial assumptions of women's roles and knowledge in natural resource management and specifically within pastoral societies, joining a movement of revisionist scholarship recognising women as primary producers and distributors of food and as managers and decision-makers in pastoral societies (Sullivan 2000a, 2005a). In addition, her research moved beyond reactive types of ethnobotany of recording and cataloguing plant-use and knowledge (although she did also collect several hundred plant voucher specimens to support her earlier ethnobotanical research, now housed in Namibia's National Herbarium), to situating such resource-use and knowledge practices in a context of everyday subsistence and meaning-making, and under the then policy and ecological circumstances (Sullivan 2005a). Based on this earlier work, including critique of the dominant representations of historical modes of production as outlined in Chapter 2, in Sullivan's later work she proposes the term

"hunter-herder-harvesters" to describe past and present histories of land-use and emphasise that "past peoples of west Namibia engaged in ways of living involving active tending and management of species from which food and other items were procured, as well as the strategic mobilization of considered technical knowledge in the accessing, harvesting, preparation and storage of these items" (Sullivan and Ganuses 2021a, p. 143).

Similarly, for Hai‖om and San more broadly, it is often assumed that gathering practices no longer take place – especially given their still predominantly landless status – and if they do it is primarily due to conditions of poverty. However, Dieckmann (2018, p. 14), has emphasised and noted the various tubers, berries, fruits, and caterpillars which are still gathered by some San communities, including Hai‖om, where possible (also see Peter *et al.* 2009; Dieckmann 2012; Dieckmann *et al.* 2014). This practice was not only a means of supplementing food supplies (although crucial) but also a cultural practice imbued with memory and meaning – see Image 11. Like Sullivan, Dieckmann thus argues that institutions which were critical to survival during pre-colonial times still partly characterise contemporary means of survival and livelihoods – especially the importance of flexible kinship and social networks (see for instance Dieckmann 2007a, p. 337). The *Xoms /Omis* project was also used to record some of these gathered resources. The publications produced in this project list different gathered and hunted foods – including various berries, bulbs, corms, and leaves – both in their Khoekoegowab, scientific and common names – and their different uses and the various techniques used to harvest or prepare them (Dieckmann 2007f, 2012).

Image 11. Plants used by Hai‖om in Etosha. © Xoms |Omis Project.

Both Sullivan and Dieckmann move beyond utilitarian perspectives on gathered resources to illustrate their embeddedness within cultural land-relations and institutions. Moreover, their work makes a strong case for gathering as having retained its cultural legitimacy and practical value despite extremely disruptive colonial histories, at least at the time of their earlier research (Sullivan 1996a, 1998, 2005a, p. 90). Nevertheless, and as much as the authors show how this knowledge and associated institutions are resilient, they also record a loss associated with histories of displacement and radical land policies: hence, "both erosion and resilience of culturally informed knowledge of local resources" (Sullivan 2005a, p. 90). Sullivan points out that this relationship is non-deterministic. Expectations and assumptions with regards to loss of institutions and knowledge can create situations where local agency and "creative adjustments made by farmers and resource users in contexts of changing circumstances" are overlooked and whereby people are construed as passive rather than active subjects in their own histories (Sullivan 1998, p. 286).

As noted above, a focus on gender, and more specifically on women's roles in resource use and management, weaves through Sullivan's work – a topic also discussed in three of Lendelvo's joint publications (Embashu *et al.* 2015; Mogotsi *et al.* 2016; Lendelvo *et al.* 2018). Sullivan's work, for example, examines artisanal perfume making, honey harvesting and grass seed collecting as specific case studies, together with other gathered resources in west Namibia (Sullivan 1998; also 1999a, 2000a). In discussing perfume-making, she shows how this long-standing cultural practice is valued as a "luxurious source of personal beauty" as well as a "substance with power" for Damara / ǂNūkhoe women (Sullivan 2000a, p. 153). Thus, ǂNūkhoe women have utilised plant perfumes to enhance their beauty, express personal aesthetics and engage in experiences of delight, sensual pleasure, autonomy, and independence. Perfumes are also imbued with cultural symbolism related to 'femaleness' and life-giving female power, and, depending on the context, is used to confer both strength and revival or to enhance a calming effect (*ibid*.). In the 1990s Sullivan documented more than 40 plant species used in making artisanal perfume or *sâi* – a practice led by women – with many of the perfume and aromatic species being multiuse species, including having medicinal uses, and thus also valued and traded as such (*ibid*., also 1998).

Sullivan shows how at the time of her research the production of artisanal perfumes in west Namibia was also embedded within "extensive and historic regional patterns of trade" led and controlled specifically by women (Sullivan 2000a, p. 153). She refers to this as a "female sphere of natural resources" which includes taking into consideration women's "management decisions, the depth of their ecological knowledge about their local environment, and their enjoyment of enacting this knowledge as an expression of cultural identity" (Sullivan 2000a, p. 142, 1998, 2005a). She thus illustrates how gathering is guided by an inherited and "culturally mediated technical knowledge" and speaks of "culturally resonant practices" which are both recursive and resilient (Sullivan 2000a, pp. 150, 154, also 1998, 1999a).

These female spheres of natural resources are context-specific and changing, yet often remain occluded in official narratives due to existing power relations. As Lendelvo and others point out (Mogotsi *et al.* 2016), Namibia, including Etosha-Kunene, is culturally and linguistically heterogeneous, and different groups define gender roles and relations differently, with these also changing over time. Yet although there have been notable changes, patriarchal attitudes and societal stereotypes towards perceived gender roles are slow to shift. This influences the degree to

which women's practices and knowledges are incorporated into land and resource management systems, and their ability to self-determine and control this incorporation. In addition, cultural attitudes shape the gendered division of labour, with women in rural areas still predominantly responsible for household chores and for shouldering most of the care work, together with their subsistence-related responsibilities such as cultivation, gathering and/or herding (Mogotsi *et al*., 2016). These gendered divisions of labour shape gender differentiated knowledge.

Indigenous (and gendered) ecological knowledge

In focusing on gathering and other resource-use and management practices, Dieckmann, Lendelvo and Sullivan all explore the technical and practice-based knowledge which inform (or informed) peoples' subsistence and cultural repertoires across Etosha-Kunene (Sullivan 2005a, p. 90).

For example, Dieckmann's (2007f, 2012) publications not only detail the survival of gathering practices but also the rich ecological knowledge such practices engendered. Moreover, in a joint publication in 2009, Dieckmann worked together with archaeo-zoologists and archaeologists to document remaining/resilient ecological knowledge and social histories about wildlife in the subsistence of Hai‖om who once inhabited the south eastern parts of Etosha (Peter *et al.* 2009). In doing so, they worked together with four elders (men) who shared their knowledge about animals and their exploitation for food and other uses, such as in folk medicine and for other commodities (Peter *et al.* 2009). Through oral history, this publication details the intricate hunter's equipment, hunting methods, technical skills and processes which characterised this practice in the past. This includes the fashioning of hunting equipment from different sourced materials, game dressing, meat distribution, preparation and consumption processes and the cultural taboos and rules which mediated these activities. Hence, they also illustrate the cultural importance of the hunt – both for constituting personhood (including masculinities and manhood), social organisation, and for marking different occasions. Parallel to this historical approach, a small-scale excavation of one of the sites was conducted to test whether the "socio-cultural behaviour of the Hai‖om had left identifiable remnants in the archaeological record of Etosha" (Peter *et al*. 2009, p. 103). The findings from this study were used to facilitate a cross-cultural comparison with existing literature on historical land-use practices in the Kalahari and hence to illustrate the adaptiveness and behavioural diversity of hunter-gatherer societies. Moreover, it showed the uniqueness of Hai‖om cultural and knowledge practices despite their embeddedness in colonial policy developments. The work done in *the Xoms |Omis* project also involved extensive and digital archiving of the Etosha-based Indigenous Hai‖om ecological knowledge (see, for instance, Dieckmann 2021a, p. 100, see also https://www.xoms-omis.org/).

In a later report, Dieckmann *et al.* (2013) argued that studying climate change impacts requires designing participatory methodologies to, first of all, understand how Indigenous people themselves perceive, experience, and understand climate change, and adapt to it. The study thus aimed to look at how locally situated traditional knowledge informs understandings of climatic and environmental changes and adaptation strategies, and to make recommendations based on these findings. In doing so, the research team drew on the concept of vulnerability as defined by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as well as the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, which maps the vulnerability context, livelihood assets and strategies, transforming structures and processes and

outcomes (*ibid*., p. 2). This argument was raised both in the publications of Lendelvo *et al.* (2018) and Dieckmann *et al.* (2013) – with both emphasising the importance of mapping Indigenous knowledges for designing and developing climate change adaptation strategies.

These publications build on Sullivan's work of the early 2000s in illustrating the intricacies and intimate ecological knowing produced by gathering land and resource-use practices, and from a gendered perspective. In particular, Sullivan (1999a, p. 13) shows how the technical knowledge that people draw on is deeply attuned to dryland dynamics and variability, to fostering long-term sustainability, and is embedded in what can be termed 'folk ecology'. In terms of ecological knowledge, Sullivan (1999a, 2005) shows how a "logic of practice" underpins culturally mediated understandings of ecology and can be understood as Damara 'citizen science'. Knowledge of seed availability (in harvester ant nests – see Image 12) is rooted, for example, in observation of the unpredictable rainfall-driven variation in primary productivity which governs constraints in use to ensure productivity in the future. The declining practice of honey gathering, primarily practiced by men, is likewise informed by a wealth of technical knowledge in identifying and managing hives and harvesting (Sullivan 1999a, p. 15). For instance, only a portion of the honey would be removed to ensure the survival of the hive and its "long-term sustainable production" (*ibid*., p. 17).

Image 12. Ruben Sanib looks for *!nabise* (*Enneapogon desvauxii*) grass seeds at a harvester ant nest during a mapping journey in the Upper Barab river area, Palmwag Concession. Photo: © Sian Sullivan, November 2014.

Importantly, Sullivan foregrounds that observational empiricism is shared by both scientific and local knowledge and there are clear areas of convergence in recognising, for instance, the relational dynamics of biological diversity, species interactions and interdependence, rainfall variability, and sustainability as a harvesting principle (Sullivan 1999a). This "culturally implicit logic" mirrors the non-equilibrium ecological concepts discussed in Chapter 1 and draws local and scientific knowledge into a more democratising dialogue (see, for instance, Sullivan 1999a-b, 2000a, p. 156.) Furthermore, and similarly to the non-equilibrium ecological model of drylands, local accounts of environmental dynamics situate "change as the norm" and emphasise extreme rainfall events over and above the 'negative' impacts of livestock grazing on vegetation (Sullivan 2002a, p. 256). Livestock-driven degradation is rather exclusively invoked "in contexts of contested claims to land and grazing, normally associated with instances of recent immigration of herds into areas where others consider themselves to have relatively long-term claims to land" (Sullivan 2000b, p. 32, 2002a, p. 262).

As already alluded to, a key argument in Sullivan's work, is that resource-use and people-environment relations are not purely utilitarian. Rather, in many instances, these are situated in a field of practice and knowledge through which "culture, tradition and identity are renewed and revisited" and are valued as rich symbolic worlds (Sullivan 2005a, p. 65). Consequently, in engaging with Indigenous knowledge, Sullivan's work is also concerned with the different modalities through which such knowledges are enacted and shared, including gathering, songs, embodied performance, movement, and story-telling (see for instance Sullivan 1999a, 2010, and Chapter 5 for more on this).

In a joint publication, Lendelvo (Embashu *et al*., 2015) have likewise delved into reviving the Indigenous knowledge systems in Namibia. Although not directly dealing with Etosha-Kunene, this publication affirms Sullivan's argument that it is important to look at practiced-based Indigenous ways of knowing to comprehend locally-situated understandings of biodiversity and people-environment relations. In this publication, Lendelvo and others focus on the Indigenous knowledge embedded within the process of producing fermented beverages – one of the cheapest and oldest forms of food preservation and a practice prevalent across Namibia, including in Etosha-Kunene (Embashu *et al.* 2015). Fermented products are produced through the effects of microorganisms or enzymes – such as yeast and lactic acid bacteria – which cause biochemical changes while improving improves nutritional value and enhancing the taste, aroma, shelf life and texture (*ibid*., p. 119). This publication specifically looks at Oshikundu, a Namibian cereal and how the brewing process has been adopted and evolved, with empirical knowledge and specific brewing techniques passed orally from generation to generation (*ibid*., p. 118).

Moreover, this publication, like the work of Sullivan, emphasises the importance of women in food security which contributes immensely to the health and nutritional status of people and plays key roles in the socio-cultural practices critical for ceremonial and other functions (Embashu *et al*. 2015, p. 118). It also emphasises the important role of women as custodians of knowledge which have been practiced across generations and which embody cultural memory and identity for people (ibid., p. 122). Thus, importantly, and as noted in the previous sub-section, Indigenous knowledge, cultural norms, and the division of labour shape "gendered relationships to the natural environmental and natural resources", including generating gendered differentiated knowledge and control over and access to resources (Mogotsi *et al*. 2016, p. 81). For example, men and women are observed and

understood to have specific roles and responsibilities in the use of forests and other natural products and therefore opportunities to benefit and exercise control over these resources are not the same. Moreover, the "extent to which leadership structures are all-encompassing determines how community resources are accessed and controlled" (Mogotsi *et al.* 2016, p. 84). For example, in northern Kunene, gender norms dictate that women are responsible for handling birthing and caring for newly born animals, and for milking and processing fermented and curdled milk products, both of which are fundamental to the pastoral economy. Women exercise substantial and recognised rights over livestock and in many instances also own livestock. However, herd mobility, conflict resolution and land management are mostly handled by men (Lendelvo and Nakanyala 2013, p. 21). Thus, how Indigenous knowledge is defined and understood needs to be cognisant of both local gendered relationships to the environment, as well as the power structures within which such relationships are defined, practiced, and enacted.

In another joint publication, Lendelvo and others engage with how both commercial and communal farmers use Indigenous ecological knowledge in dealing with HWC, especially those living at the borders of the ENP (Lendelvo *et al.* 2015) – see Image 13. In particular, they explore the techniques and strategies people draw on to protect their livestock, crops, families, and property (*ibid*., p. 219). In doing so, they argue that "human-wildlife coevolution and cultural tolerance to wildlife in many African societies, including Namibia, have led to traditional land-based practices, beliefs and knowledge, which are necessary for the sustainable use of natural resources and for environmental conservation" (*ibid*., p. 220). For example, many human-wildlife tales among the Aawambo residing north of the ENP indicate "long historical interrelationships" (*ibid*.). Moreover, knowledge to manage these interrelationships is noted as multidimensional, including, for instance, identifying predators in the area based on the spoor of wildlife and the calls of problem animals, understandings of the seasonal movements of different wildlife species, specific herding and livestock management strategies, and making fire with a slow-burning wood to scare off any predators or elephants (*ibid*., pp. 232-236).

Image 13. Livestock grazing close to the Etosha National Park fence, north of ENP. Source: Mfune *et al*. 2013, p. 12.

Although the text above only provides a glimpse into some Indigenous forms of knowing, using and managing resources in Etosha-Kunene, it highlights the complex, gendered and inherited institutions and webs of relations and practices in which they are embedded, raising crucial questions as to how global environmental discourses such as the CBNRM and environmental governance can successfully accommodate and recognise such complexity and diversity. These questions are pertinent given that different people-environment relations also produce different conservation values.

Cultural landscapes and conservation values

As detailed in the previous chapters, a key argument underscoring the work of both Sullivan and Dieckmann is that so-called 'natural' or 'wild' landscapes, rather than being a neutral backdrop, are shaped by different ways of knowing, seeing, perceiving, valuing and experiencing the same landscape and its temporality (Dieckmann 2009). This dynamic is shaped by cultural, social, and cognitive aspects and the materiality of the encountered landscape itself (*ibid*.). Hence, biophysical landscapes are continually socially, materially, culturally, politically and psychologically constructed and experienced (Sullivan 1998, 2000a, 2002a). The idea and discourse of 'natural' landscapes – which have come to imply a lack of human engagement and interaction – have historical precedents and continue to inform dominant conservation values, especially in national parks. Yet, conservation landscapes are also interwoven with multiple other perspectives and cultural values.

In engaging with gathering practices, Sullivan's work illustrates, for example, how people-environment relations are embedded within, while simultaneously shaping landscapes culturally, including through affirming ancestral land-relations and linkages. Hence, these practices imbue the landscape with layers of significance, meaning and memory which then characterise how people know and engage with their biophysical worlds and with places. These "components of cultural landscapes [are] moulded and understood over millennia by their human inhabitants through processes of gathering, hunting, herding, burning and planting" (Sullivan 2005a, p. 64), but also through the embodied and lived dynamics of affect and belonging (Sullivan 2006). In addition, people's understandings of their environment do not take place in a vacuum. Rather "ideas and perceptions of landscape are linked with national [and international] socio-political processes" (Sullivan 2000b, p. 28, 2002b).

Sullivan (2002b) shows how degradation cannot be simply understood and approached as a biophysical process. Rather, it is embedded in peoples' concerns over broader land policy and changes, including local conflicts between groups. For example, during the late 1990s and early 2000s, degradation in north-western Namibia's landscapes became a powerful metaphor for expressing wider negative experiences such as "the impotence people feel in the face of a century of apartheid-rule, followed by an extremely uncertain [post-independence] policy environment" (Sullivan 2000b, p. 30). Such locally-situated environmental narratives simultaneously shape ecologies as culturally and historically inscribed. Yet importantly, both global and local environmental narratives should be seen as historically, politically, and culturally contingent, and as gendered (see, for instance, Sullivan 2000a, 2005a). Based on this research, Sullivan (2006, p. 120) began to foreground how west Namibia's cultural landscapes are shaped by radically different people-environment relations to those of dominant modernist environmental and conservation discourses (Sullivan 2019a, 2022). These relations are characterised by multi-layered meanings and

memories and enacted through movement, intercorpreality, symbolism, dance, and metaphorical and affirmative language of relationship and conceptualisation. These relations thus rather spoke of the "active, participative, and affective relationships with landscapes and non-human species", of nature as a creative subject, rather than an object or a resource to be managed and/or exploited (*ibid*.). These culturally-situated understandings and perceptions of landscapes and the "density of knowledge and of memory in relation to landscape" are crucial in shaping not only local narratives, but also conservation values (Sullivan 1998, 2019a, p. 4, more on this in Chapter 5).

Dieckmann (2009 p. 353) echoes such views when she argues that "both factors, the conceptualisation of and the engagement with space, are closely intertwined and have to be contextualised politically and historically in order to arrive at meaningful explanations of landscape visions and comprehension". Dieckmann then draws on the concept of "landscape" as a heuristic device to analyse two different ways of looking at the same environment – the ENP – and from "dwellers'" and "spectators'" (or tourists') point of view (*ibid*., p. 379). Dominant views of the ENP shape the narratives, including the historical narratives, of the place and its meaning and value. In this case, this narrative tends to be dominated by western tourists visiting the park. This tourist view or what Dieckmann refers to as the "spectator's view" is primarily shaped by "the Western aesthetical perspective of landscapes and a broad idea of how African sceneries should look" (Dieckmann 2009, p. 353). This view privileges visual features and separation from the landscape, as it mainly involves the act of gazing.

Historically, 'western' understandings of landscape were linked to the introduction of motorised transport. Landscape became a picture, with a focus on visual perception, and further strengthened through the genre of landscape painting (Dieckmann 2009, pp. 369–370). The changing relations between people and the land in industrial and post-industrial states also translated into changed ways of perceiving and engaging with ideas of landscape and 'nature'. Urban dwellers began looking at landscape "as an object of contemplation" (*ibid*., p. 370), with such perceptions strongly shaped by elitist and bourgeois aesthetics (*ibid*.). With time, this view of the landscape was also informed by a modernist and culturally-mediated epistemic structure which separated 'nature' from 'culture', with 'wild' landscapes now rendered ahistorical (*ibid*., pp. 371-373). In the case of Namibia, tourists specifically travel to Etosha to view and experience a 'nature' which is to be exotic, rich, primordial and the epitome of African wilderness (Dieckmann 2009, p. 371). These expectations reproduce exoticised and colonial visions of the African landscape – as detailed in Chapter 2 (*ibid*., p. 373). Such views contrast strongly with what is considered a "dweller's perspective". Ingold (2000, p. 189) defines the dweller's perspective as "influenced by long-established cultural concepts and by the mode in which space is experienced and engaged" (quoted in Dieckmann 2009, p. 353). It signals thus rather an "active engagement with the land" in which landscape shifts from being mere scenery to being a "network of paths, of social relations, and of places imbued with social identity" and history (*ibid*., pp. 353-354).

Image 14. Hai||om elder Kadison ||Khomob showing his birthplace and explaining to Hai||om children. Photo: © Ute Dieckmann.

The dweller recognises the temporality of landscapes – the changes over time, their historicity, and seasonality (Dieckmann 2009). Moreover, the act of moving through places and the landscape re-inscribes landscapes with new features, meanings, and memories. In other words, the landscape itself "is under permanent construction and reconstruction and different parties were and are involved in the process" (*ibid*., p. 376). This results in the continual weaving of different historical threads into the texture of the landscape (*ibid*., p. 377). Such dwellers' perspective and cultural landscapes also generate situated forms of knowing and being which are relational and practiced (see Chapter 2 and 5). As noted previously, Dieckmann's publications with the *Xoms /Omis* Project aimed to re-embed more of a dweller's perspective within the landscape history and visions of the ENP, with these publications meant to provide an alternative reading of the Etosha landscapes for tourists visiting the park. Dieckmann reflected that during this time her own perspective of the Etosha landscapes shifted drastically – from seeing it as a "hostile" arid environment to one which is familiar, habitable, and abundant (Dieckmann 2021a, p. 99). Sullivan's work, especially her later work in the context of the *Future Pasts* project, likewise aimed to reinscribe formally constituted conservation landscapes in west Namibia with alternative social and 'natural' histories and heritage values.

Biodiversity and community conservation in practice

Conservation economies and benefit-sharing

There are economic and political considerations at stake when official archives, landscape histories, representations, and values are challenged within formal conservation landscapes, including the ENP. As Lendelvo points out in one of her joint publications (Kimaro *et al.* 2015), ENP prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic was the third most visited place in the country, with 80% of visitors being of international origin. Moreover, at the time of this publication, tourism was Africa's second-largest growth market after the extractive sector, with the Namibian tourism industry largely reliant on nature-based activities, most of which take place in protected areas, tourism concessions and community conservation areas (*ibid*., pp. 116-117, also see Lendelvo *et al.* 2020). In other words, the construction of conservation landscapes as 'natural' and 'wild', as pointed out by Sullivan and Dieckmann, is also linked to processes of commodification in which ideas and experiences of wilderness are what sell, especially to the majority of foreign tourists (Sullivan 2006, 2011b).

Tourism thus plays a crucial role in defining and shaping conservation praxis due to its role in supporting such initiatives financially and economically. In their study on tourist satisfaction in ENP, Kimaro *et al*. (2015, pp. 124-127) found that overall tourist satisfaction depended largely on the attractiveness of the park, the abundance of wildlife and good viewing opportunities, the state of the road infrastructure and facilities, the cost of accommodation and services, and environment-related issues. Although pointing out that there is a need for further research into this topic to guide tourism planners, managers, decision-makers and marketers, such findings illustrate how the conservation values shaping the production and use of the space are strongly shaped by the tourism sector, as well as the changing international political economy of tourism. As Sullivan's work on CBNRM in the western parts of the research area has shown, Etosha-Kunene's natures are enfolded into global circuits of desire and consumption, and these influence the investments made, and how landscapes are inscribed and valued. At the same time, and as Lendelvo and Nakanyala (2013) point out, CBNRM is directly linked to the maintenance and resilience of rural livelihoods in a context where crafting sustainable livelihoods remains a challenge (especially given colonial histories of dispossession). Both Sullivan's and Lendelvo's work thus also look at how economies and livelihoods are changing under the current CBNRM paradigm and larger conservation economies.

Sullivan's early work has questioned the bias towards wildlife conservation in the CBNRM programme and how this has translated into conservancies being rooted in a particular "economizing framework" – primarily designed for members to focus and capitalise on animal-wildlife. This framework assumes that revenue from consumptive and non-consumptive uses of wildlife will enhance livelihoods (Sullivan 2005b, p. 7, also 2002a). The premise is thus that through business both conservation and conservation-related development will arise (Sullivan 2019a, p. 8). Sullivan observed, however, that during the first decade of the conservancy programme "per capita conservancy income, while growing in some cases, tends to be rather low" (Sullivan 2005b, p. 7, 2006, p. 122, 2002a). Rather, income and benefits from the CBNRM programme are primarily in the form of employment and an increased level of economic activity, although such benefits are not equally distributed (Lendelvo *et al.* 2020b, p. 3). While per capita conservancy incomes remain low,

the costs of conserving wildlife are also devolved to communities (Sullivan 2005b, p. 9, 2006, p. 124; Hewitson and Sullivan 2021).

Most of the economic activities in conservancies, as detailed in a recent joint publication by Lendelvo and Sullivan, are through what is termed Joint-Venture (JV) tourism agreements (where an investor constructs a lodge and/or enterprise in the conservancy and with a lease-hold agreement) and conservation hunting concessions which mainly caters for trophy hunting by international hunters (Lendelvo *et al.* 2020b, p. 3; also see Lendelvo and Nakanyala 2013, p. 5). Joint-Venture tourism enterprises generate employment opportunities and income for some conservancies, with 'conservation hunting' being another income stream for a proportion of conservancies. Community-based tourism has been identified as a contributor to household security in conservancies and, along with joint venture agreements, was seen in 2018 to have expanded in the Kunene and Zambezi regions (see, for instance, Lendelvo *et al*. 2018). However, both of these economic activities translate into a high dependency on foreign tourism and commercial hunting – a dependency and vulnerability which was exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying state-imposed lockdowns and restrictions (Lendelvo *et al.* 2020b).

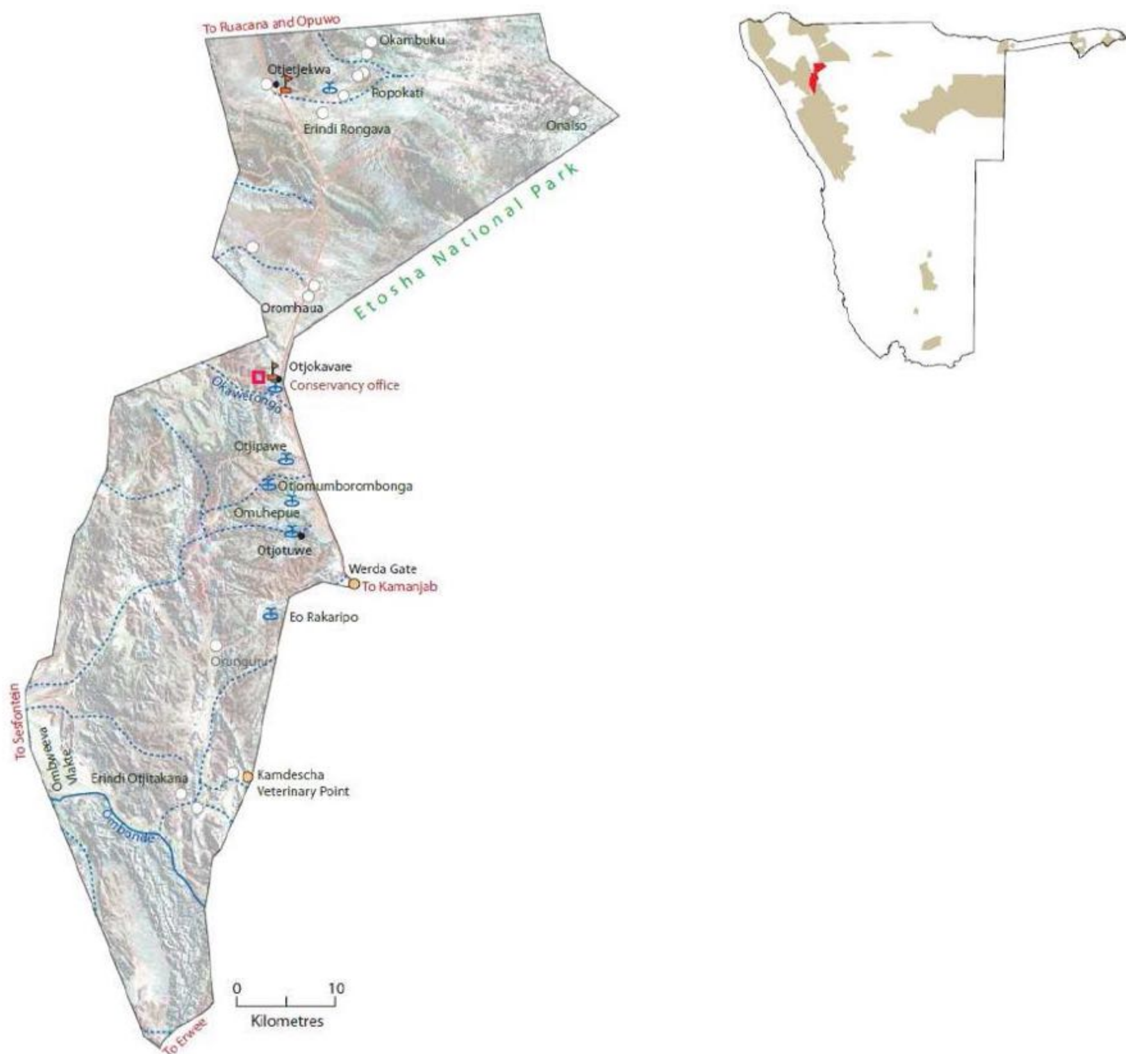
Sullivan has argued that within this economic model "support is only available to 'communities' if they agree to construct themselves as 'suitable' custodians of internationally valued biodiversity, particularly animal-wildlife" (Sullivan 2002a, p. 179). What can be occluded in this process are the multiple plants and invertebrates which simultaneously shape people-environment relations and alternative conservation values (Sullivan 1998, 2005a). The valorisation of animal-wildlife above other conservation agendas may also feed into fantasises of an African wilderness projected by expatriate environmentalists, conservationists, tourists and trophy hunters while not necessarily reflecting the complexity of local conservation and social values and livelihood concerns (Sullivan and Homewood 2004; Sullivan 2006).

Within such a model "sustainability in these contexts seems less about local empowerment and self-determination, or significant redistribution of resources, than about maintaining access to donor investment in the arena of biodiversity conservation, and access to biodiversity by consumers from elsewhere" (Sullivan 2006, p. 125, also see Sullivan 2018). Sullivan thus argued during the mid-2000s that despite the language of democratisation and inclusivity, local communities with the CBNRM programme rather become "service providers" for a "class of globally-mobile tourists, trophy hunters, environment and development professionals, and researchers, hailing to a large extent from the 'global north'" (Sullivan 2006, p. 117). The strong focus on trophy hunting also means that wildlife species are enveloped in market values and commodified through ongoing social practices which reify "neoliberal value frames" (Sullivan *et al.* 2016; Sullivan 2018; Hewitson and Sullivan 2021).

Another way in which the costs of co-habiting with wildlife are meant to be mitigated is through own-use and shoot and sell quotas, with the conservancy's annual game counts determining the allocation of hunting quotas by the Ministry (Sullivan 2005b, p. 6). Sullivan (2002) notes a gap between rhetoric and reality (also see Koot *et al*. 2020) in which, in practice, fees from the trophy hunting businesses and own-use quotas and their benefits become concentrated among commercial operators from outside conservancies, frequently operating from freehold land appropriated

through Namibia's colonial and apartheid pasts (Sullivan 2005b, p. 11; Hewitson and Sullivan 2021) – see Map 10. Hunting under conservancy governance remains illegal for conservancy members and own-use quotas, given that these belong to the conservancy and not individual people, are primarily used for providing meat for community meetings or selling such meat to fund community projects, i.e. rather than for household well-being (Sullivan 2005b, p. 6).

During her early work, Lendelvo and Nakayala (2013) carried out a socio-economic and livelihood analysis of the Ehirovipuka conservancy, situated in north-western Namibia, which borders the ENP – see Map 11. This conservancy, like much of west and north-west Namibia, is characterised by families and people which historically developed strategies to navigate dryland ecologies and optimise their resource-use, including high herd mobility, keeping mixed livestock herds, and dividing larger numbers of livestock between different home-places and seasonal cattle-posts (*ibid*., p. 2). Grazing rights and access to seasonal grazing within this context are amongst the most valuable assets of a household or family, and contradicts the bounded spatial units promoted through conservancies. Fully understanding the impacts of management approaches introduced by conservancies requires understanding how these intersect with rangeland management and access – a still under-researched topic but one which Lendelvo and Nakayala touch upon in their study.



Map 11. Map of Ehirovipuka Conservancy. Source: Lendelvo and Nakayala 2013, p. 9.

Moreover, Ehirovipuka conservancy, like many others in the northwest, is characterised by a high dependency ratio (100%) – with numbers of dependents almost equal to the independent age group, and characterised by low levels of formal education, and high unemployment rates. Primary livelihood building blocks here are livestock farming, crop farming, some formal employment, and a high reliance on state pensions. Livestock keeping, especially that of cattle, is a key economic and cultural practice. Consequently, predation of livestock is a huge concern and herds, especially goat herds, need to be looked after, with livestock enclosed in pens during the night (*ibid*., p. 23). Livelihood activities have also changed over time. Some activities are perceived as always having been important, such as the sale of construction of poles, fuel wood and livestock for own use. Others such as the use and sale of medicinal and edible plants and thatch grass have decreased in importance (it would be important for instance to understand why this is so and whether this applies to the broader area). Moreover, people here strongly rely on social relations and communal level support for their survival – or what Dieckmann refers to as social assets (Lendelvo and Nakanyala 2013, p. 1). Lendelvo and Nakanyala (2013) thus recommend the following for ensuring the sustainable use of resources and livelihoods in Ehirovipuka Conservancy: livestock economies must be balanced with concerns regarding environmental degradation; monitoring mechanisms for vegetation and landscapes need to be developed to assist leaders to make informed decisions; social cohesion among conservancy members should be promoted to reduce vulnerability among poor households; and more employment creation is needed through initiatives in the conservancy.

As noted, the vulnerability of the CBNRM model was also exposed during the last two years due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on a rapid survey of five communal area conservancies a few months after the onset of the pandemic and in different regions across Namibia, in collaborative work by Lendelvo and Sullivan they found that the pandemic caused major disruptions and had serious socio-economic consequences (Lendelvo *et al*. 2020b). Travel restrictions had devastating impacts on Namibia's tourism sector (*ibid*., p. 3) and the onset of the pandemic signalled major staff retrenchments and job and revenue losses. Some investors of the JV partnerships were unable to meet their agreements or had to cancel their initial plans to invest. The loss of revenue further extended to the trophy hunting industry, with most conservancies and rural households left without their prior income streams (*ibid*.). This loss of revenue, combined with restrictions on social gatherings influenced the capacity of conservancies to pay their community game guards or to allow several guards to patrol and monitor wildlife simultaneously. This led to increased incidences of poaching and human-wildlife conflict. The restrictions on social gatherings furthermore affected the ability of members to meet regularly. Given the lack of access to information technologies and connectivity, this had negative consequences on community governance and participation (Lendelvo *et al*. 2020b).

As a result of these impacts, all conservancies required financial assistance. For example, in 2020 an emergency fund was organised between the government, private and international development sectors, to assist in the payment of wages, especially for the game guards (Lendelvo *et al*. 2020b, p. 13). The COVID-19 pandemic thus placed the long-term sustainability of the current CBNRM model in question. As Lendelvo *et al*. (2020b, p. 2) express, "communal-area conservancies must derive benefits from conservation activities in their areas that are commensurate with their role as key actors in the conservation of Namibia's valuable wildlife and landscapes". On the positive side, the COVID-19 pandemic offers a key opportunity to re-assess the CBNRM model in terms of its previous

environmental and social implications, including thinking more seriously about questions of equity and diversification in benefit-sharing (*ibid*.). Indeed, almost 20 years ago, Sullivan (2002a) advocated for a consumer pays model in which long-term subsidies are paid directly to African land-users for biodiversity conservation, especially wildlife conservation, and by global consumers.

Power, community, and gender in mapping CBNRM

Both Sullivan's and Lendelvo's prior research examines questions of community, gender, and power with the mapping and evolution of the CBNRM programme in Namibia. As noted in Chapter 3, Sullivan's early work explored how the negotiation of conservancy boundaries was mobilised as a tool to claim and secure rights over land (see Sullivan 2002a, 2003, 2019a, pp. 9, 22). In doing so, she foregrounds how the "historical structuring of access to landscapes and wildlife is critical in shaping the ways that contemporary 'community-based' conservation unfold in practice" (2019a, p. 12, and references therein, also 2002a). In other words, conservancies were mapped onto inherited land relations, including historical inequalities, thus in mapping these boundaries, Sullivan questioned "whose perspectives and claims [were] represented in these negotiations" (Sullivan 2019a, p. 19). This question of power, access and representation is further examined below.

In Sullivan's later work, she critically engaged with the ongoing codification of resource-rights through the cartographic and administrative practices of conservancies and the socio-cultural and political implications of delineating conservancy boundaries (See Sullivan 2019a, 2022). She asks how both the "historical and recent establishment of state administrative boundaries has interacted with some socio-cultural relationships with 'the land'" (*ibid*., p. 19, more on this in Chapter 5). For instance, during the early 2000s Sullivan showed how, with much of the CBNRM programme initially still relying heavily on international donor-support, there was a lot of pressure to conform to a communalising and spatial discourse which tended to homogenise diverse groupings and bound this grouping to a specific territory (Sullivan 2002b, p. 179). In other words, donor support comes with strings attached: "communities" must shape themselves into suitable custodians and practice particular forms of conservation. This "communalizing rhetoric" did not consider local axes of differences, including race, gender, ethnicity, and divergent aspirations (Sullivan 1998, 2002a). Moreover, the spatial discourse inherent in the discourse does not accommodate the "temporal and spatial fluidity in terms of individuals constituting so-called communities" (Sullivan 1998, p. 280, 2005a).

Sullivan also contended that CBNRM policy may reinforce gendered divisions between people and the environment, given the programme's bias towards internationally valued large wildlife and mammals with the greatest commercial and conservation value and primarily protected and/or hunted by male game guards and community members (Sullivan 1998, 2000a). Directing the primary focus here means enhancing male-dominated decision-making forums despite the rhetoric of inclusion and gender equality. As Sullivan and Homewood (2004, pp. 118, 130) also point out, "gendered associations between animal-wildlife and men as hunters mean that the current plethora of schemes to increase local access to wildlife resources may focus on men as the recipients" and privilege a masculine identity politics while obscuring "women's knowledge about the wider environment" and feminised domains. Another crucial axis of difference that may be occluded is that of ethnicity. Sullivan refers to this homogenising of local "communities" as a "modernising

endeavour" (Sullivan 2019c, p. 13). Sullivan's work instead explores the complexity of historical realities of unequal access to land and power inequities when articulating aspirations for "communal" lands or "community" based resource-management (Sullivan 2002a, 2003, 2019a, 2022). In doing so she argues that "local, multi-layered narratives of, and rights to, land and resources are displaced in global discourses that survive only by excluding such complexity", with the result that this masking of difference may potentially heighten it to produce instances of conflict, protest and resistance (Sullivan 2002a, pp. 160–162, also see Sullivan 2003, 2019a, p. 13).

A later joint publication by Lendelvo (Mogotsi *et al.* 2016) likewise explores the politics of community and participation within the CBNRM model, and the implications of gender-neutral policies. They point out that there is a need to critically consider the degree of local-level stakeholder participation as this "could be shifting from nominal levels to interactive or empowerment levels of participation, involving minority communities and women" (*ibid*., p. 80). Moreover, participation is inherently characterised by unequal power relationships which influence available livelihood options, decision-making abilities, and development outcomes of the stakeholders involved. For example, how income generated from harvested resources – work still done predominantly by women – is distributed and used within the "community". Mogotsi *et al*. (2016, pp. 79-80) show that efforts to involve local users are yet to fully account for how local and unequal gender relations exclude women, minorities, and vulnerable groups, such as the youth, in ways that influence conservancy process and outcomes.

In many instances, "traditionally defined roles" and the gendered division of labour can be an obstacle to inclusive participation – both in terms of benefit sharing and governance – with women unable to express their voices, needs, and knowledge due to their exclusion from leadership and governing committee positions (Mogotsi *et al*. 2016, pp. 81-82). This exclusion can be ever more deeply felt by young women and women from minority groups. For example, in many parts of Namibia, and as discussed in the previous section, "women mainly participate in less commercial non-timber forest resources, which include medicinal, edible plants, agro-forestry resources such as marula and palm tree products that contribute to household health and food security" (*ibid*., p. 87). Likewise, mopane worms (caterpillars of the emperor moth *Gonimbrasia belina*) – a delicacy eaten across northern Namibia, and Devil's Claw (tubers of *Harpagophytum procumbens*) – a now recognised medical plant – were both historically predominantly harvested by women. Recent shifts with men showing interest in economically viable resources historically managed and harvested by women not only creates competition over the resource but also "means that women who possessed Indigenous ecological knowledge of this species [are] no longer in control of this resource" (*ibid*., p. 85). Their study furthermore found that women, youth, and minority group representations on most Community Forest management committees were low (*ibid*., p. 84). Additionally, every committee requires a compulsory representation of members nominated by the Traditional Authorities. TAs are the custodians of communal land on which all CBNRM programmes are located, and thus are one of the most important institutions in influencing CBNRM. In this study, most women felt their participation was hindered by the TAs, who, across Namibia, remain predominantly male (Mogotsi *et al.* 2016).

Despite the shortcomings above, in a study by Lendelvo and Nakanyala (2013) it was also noted that conservancies in some contexts are strongly valued for their community-level support and as an

institutional tool through which social ties and capital can be strengthened, including to better support more vulnerable and marginal households. However, and importantly, Mogotsi *et al*. (2016, p. 80) argue that gender mainstreaming needs to be incorporated into the CBNRM model as a tool to provide an opportunity for "the disadvantaged and marginalised to participate in governing and managing CBNRM activities." Gender mainstreaming will enable the identification and analysis of the locally and culturally specific norms which hinders women's participation. For example, in Ehirovipuka conservancy in Etosha-Kunene a female-only committee was preferred as a platform to allow women's voices to be heard (*ibid*., p. 84). Such arguments strongly support Sullivan's findings in the early 2000s in which she argued that if CBNRM is to be more inclusive it will require a "greater depth of understanding" of the wide range of resource-use and management practices already existing within places and the validation and empowering of "the everyday experiences of women in regard to natural resources" (Sullivan 2000a, p. 157). Moreover, this would require a "culturally-resonant, ecologically appropriate and socially inclusive dialogue" (Sullivan 1999a, p. 1, also 1998) in which both women's and more marginal knowledges and values can be vocalised.

Human-wildlife relations and conservation

As Lendelvo *et al*. (2015, p. 220) point out, there has been a great shift in human-wildlife relationships in Etosha-Kunene due to the implementation of different and overlapping conservation approaches during the last four decades. In-depth research into understanding this shift, including how people are co-managing, knowing, and valuing such shifts, and its various implications for Etosha-Kunene remains limited. However, there have been some studies, especially focusing on HWC, including two co-publications by Lendelvo. In addition, Sullivan has been interested in understanding how global conservation regimes and local conservation economies are transforming human-animal relations, and more specifically how large mammals such as elephants are transformed into global commodities through conservation hunting (see, for instance, Sullivan 2006, Hewitson and Sullivan 2021).

It has been noted that HWC in Etosha-Kunene has been on the increase (Mfune *et al.* 2013, p. 4, Lendelvo *et al.* 2015). This is driven, for instance, by the establishment of CBNRM in the vicinity of national protected areas which, ecologically, provides for "habitat connectivity" (Mfune *et al.* 2013, p. 4). Although the increase in wildlife is considered a positive conservation outcome, this also creates growing costs for people co-habiting and tasked with conserving wildlife. The tension between wildlife conservation and other land-use practices, especially agricultural and livestock farming, has created situations where there is competition for space and resources. It has been shown that lack of adequate management of these conflicting interests means that eventually, wildlife conservation suffers, the economic and social well-being of local people is impaired, and local support for conservation, especially community-based conservation, declines (*ibid*.). In Lendelvo *et al*. (2015, p. 221) some further reasons for escalating HWC cases are noted. These include that local people perceive that the needs or values of wildlife are given priority over their own, that local institutions and people are not adequately empowered to manage such emerging conflicts, and that conservation authorities fail to address the needs of people. Moreover, the authors noted that HWC may increase if human use of wildlife habitats expands – as is the case in Namibia – or due to environmental and climatic changes.

Image 15. Water tank destroyed by elephants. Photo: © John Mfune, March 2010, Mfune *et al*. 2013, p. 19.

Importantly, different wildlife management systems in Namibia have different forms of HWC associated with them, while the type of land-use adjacent to a protected area also influences the extent of HWC (Lendelvo 2015 *et al*., pp. 221-222). For example, as Lendelvo *et al.* (2015) illustrate, the rise in HWC incidence in communal areas adjacent to ENP can be traced to population growth and environmental pressures – with people moving into areas previously unoccupied or used only seasonally for grazing. With most areas having weak fences, the movements of livestock and wildlife increase the risk of regular encounters. As discussed, in managing HWC within different land use and management systems, Indigenous and practice-based ecological knowledge is crucial (see, Lendelvo *et al.* 2015). Incidences of HWC also raise questions of equity and justice which have only marginally been explored and which creates situations for potential resistance to conservation. For instance, HWC around ENP is not a new issue. As discussed in Chapter 2, most of the land south of ENP was historically and still is dominated by settler farmers, who were dependent on wildlife and livestock for their livelihoods. In the 1960s farmers were permitted to kill jackal, caracal, leopard, and wild dog. Over the next decades, wildlife in the Etosha surrounds, and especially predators, were killed, including more than 6,000 jackals in the 1960s, and 79 lions along the border of ENP in 1982 alone (Lendelvo *et al*. 2015, p. 229). This relative autonomy in managing HWC conflicts on privately owned commercial farms contrasts strongly with the many restrictions faced by farmers in communal conservancies and on communal land which greatly impact their ability to successfully establish their herds, fields, and livelihoods.

Climate change, sustainability, and livelihoods

In the last three decades, it has become clear that accelerated and anthropogenic-driven global climatic changes pose socio-cultural, economic, and environmental threats to the African continent at both temporal and spatial scales (Lendelvo *et al.* 2018, p. 88). In general, climatic changes predicted for Namibia include temperature increases and an overall decrease in rainfall (Dieckmann *et al.* 2013, p. 7). The average temperature has already increased by 0,25 degrees per decade since the 1960s, and rainfall is thought to have become less certain, more variable, and localised (see

Lendelvo *et al*. 2018, p. 93). These changes are said to pose a serious threat to Etosha-Kunene's biodiverse social ecologies, most of which consist of drylands, and with a regional economy hugely reliant on rural and peri-urban livelihoods and agriculture, and nature-based tourism and conservation activities.

Driven by larger global policy formulation and implementation, such as that of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPPC), the last decades have thus seen a growing call to develop and institutionalise diverse approaches to climate change vulnerability, mitigation, and adaptation, including a National Climate Policy, for fostering sustainable futures. Together with a broad range of policy instruments, this climate change paradigm builds on long-standing concerns for sustainable livelihoods. Both Lendelvo *et al.* (2018) and Dieckmann *et al.* (2013) have explored the vulnerabilities and implications of climate change for sustainable livelihoods in Etosha-Kunene. This work also builds on their prior work on sustainable livelihoods and specifically concerning Hai‖om (see Dieckmann 2007a), and the Ehiviropuka conservancy (Lendelvo and Nakanyala 2013).

Sullivan's work in turn has explored how so-called globally-formulated 'solutions' to environmental destruction and climate change re-enforce and reify neoliberal ideological and economic structures underlying ecological damage. In doing so, her work has examined dissonance in global sustainability discourses, specifically "the idea that development and economic growth are essential for ensuring environmental conservation and sustainability" (Sullivan 2018, p. 2). Sullivan's work in the *Future Pasts* project considers different practices of sustainability and environmental change in west Namibia (Sullivan *et al.* 2016). Moreover, this project critically looked at how the perception of crisis is shaping responses to perceived and actual environmental change in west Namibia, and "acting to support the transference of particular past and present values forwards towards the future", including new future "hegemonic imaginaries" introduced through the "green economy" (*ibid*., pp. 3, 14).

Importantly, and as discussed in the work of all three authors, the consequences and impacts of environmental crises and ecocides are and will not be distributed equally – which makes the question of how sustainable futures are imagined and understood and the direction of environmental management all the more pertinent. In other words, it is a question of environmental justice (Martin *et al.* 2013). For example, in an edited report, Dieckmann *et al.* (2013), contributes to a larger debate on the impact of climate change on Indigenous people, with two case studies from Namibia. One of the case studies focused on Hai‖om residents of the Tsintsabis and Farm Six resettlement farms in Etosha-Kunene. Based on their research, this report makes a strong argument for not separating climate change impacts from other factors already impacting Indigenous peoples' lives and those who are structurally marginalised.

As discussed in prior chapters, the lack of access to productive land is a major driver of poverty for the Hai‖om, while development interventions aimed at establishing sustainable livelihoods on resettlement farms have largely failed and/or did not take into account the long-term support required (Dieckmann *et al.* 2013, pp. 17–20). Climatic changes can further decrease the sustainability of resettlement farms by leading to a decline in the variety and availability of many plants and small animals, grazing and food and water security in general. For example, in a report by Dieckmann *et al.* (2013) residents noted that rains have decreased and that the rainy season starts and ends later.

This affects the vegetation – including resulting in some food rotting or in plants not producing as previously observed. The impacts of such loss of bushfoods and grazing will be more severely felt in this context due to larger structural problems including land mismanagement, the influx of outsiders, lack of formal education, the remoteness of the farm, discrimination, lack of political representation, and their overall vulnerable economic position (*ibid*., pp. 17-22). In a later research report, Dieckmann (2018) also illustrates that San in general, and San women in particular, are highly food insecure and strongly dependent both on external support and on accessing veld foods and productive land to deter such insecurity.

At the same time, designing adaptative strategies requires recognising people's cultural and social capital and existing Indigenous knowledge, both of which, despite structural realities of poverty, carry wealth in fostering resilience (Dieckmann *et al.* 2013). Likewise, Dieckmann's (2007a) book looked at how the Hai‖om's access to sustainable livelihoods was impacted and shifted throughout their colonial history, the onset of independence in Namibia and the subsequent socio-economic and environmental transformations. In doing so, she explores the interrelated themes of vulnerability and resilience – both of which are relevant for current discussions on climate change and sustainability. Hence, as Dieckmann (2007a, p.9) notes, vulnerability is part of the dynamic aspects of socio-economic wellbeing and can be exacerbated by a range of environmental changes that threaten welfare, including ecological, economic, social, and political changes. Yet the flip side of vulnerability is resilience, with this in turn shaped by peoples' access to a range of coping strategies and resources. In assessing the shifting vulnerability of the Hai‖om, Dieckmann uses a sustainable livelihoods framework which differentiates between different interrelated assets, including natural, social, cultural, financial, and human, and considers these assets as tools to think through the building blocks of sustainable livelihoods (Dieckmann 2007a, p. 11). In contrast to conventional poverty measures, this framework takes the dynamic aspects of socio-economic well-being into account. Access to various interrelated assets or resources and the changing quality and quantity of such assets strongly shape coping strategies in the facing of drastic changes, including climate and environmental change. Although this framework provides a practical tool to assess vulnerability and resilience, in Dieckmann's later work she also questions her use of the concept of "resources" and its embeddedness in particular epistemic frameworks (see Dieckmann 2021a, and Chapter 5 for more on this). Nevertheless, her book succeeds in showing vulnerability and resilience as both multidimensional and relational.

For example, during precolonial times the Hai‖om's reliance and dependency on natural assets was high, which meant a greater vulnerability to natural hazards, such as droughts. Coping strategies during this time were based on other forms of assets, including social assets and human and cultural assets, such as Indigenous ecological knowledge. During later times, cultural assets such as tracking skills became important in accessing temporary employment with European hunters and traders. However, with the onset of colonialism, access to natural resources became more and more limited. With time Hai‖om initially relied on two factors: their position in the colonial geography and their cultural assets – both of which allowed them to still access land, be seasonally mobile and selectively partake in the colonial economy (see for instance Dieckmann 2007a, p. 337, and as discussed in Chapter 2). Later increased delimitation of their movements necessitated other coping mechanisms, but also resistance strategies, including illegal activities such as stock theft and attacks on migrant workers, and opportunistic employment on the farms (*ibid*., p. 338). Post-eviction and with their loss

of land the scales shifted. The loss of natural assets pushed many into illegal activities and human resources, in the form of labour, became the main asset to rely on to secure a livelihood. During the liberation war, the value of male Hai||om labour increased temporarily as tracking skills were in great demand. Nevertheless, the loss of land was accompanied by the loss of other assets as well, including social assets as people and families dispersed, and the cultural assets embedded within land-relations (*ibid*., pp. 338-339). As Dieckmann, points out, self-organisation and self-determination are key components of resilient systems. With a lack of a common land base and a former organisational social structure, most were pushed into becoming a rural proletariat (*ibid*., p. 339).

Hence, post-independence, one has to look at the quantity and quality of assets available to Hai||om to understand the reasons for the revival of a Hai||om ethnicity as a key cultural resource (as discussed in Chapter 3). Even though some Hai||om were successful in their applications on resettlement farms most do not possess enough livestock, land, or financial capital to secure a living or their well-being. In addition, the rationalisation of the commercial farming sector has decreased the value of unskilled labour and fewer opportunities are available to part take in piecemeal work. Finding employment is limited and pays poorly given that many peoples' human resources stayed the same (including a lack of formal education), while the market demand changed drastically. In addition, although financial resources have increased so has the cost of living. What remains are social resources in the form of mutual support and extended social capital through for instance church and political party membership. This however is not sufficient to combat vulnerability, including high food insecurity (see Dieckmann 2007a, p. 342).

As noted by Lendelvo *et al.* (2020a, p. 37), as a still mostly agrarian society, approximately 70% of the Namibian population depend on agricultural activities and rural livelihoods, with land and access to resources crucial to the fostering of sustainable livelihoods. However, this dependence on natural resources makes communities sensitive and vulnerable to climate variability (Lendelvo 2018 *et al*. p. 94). Based on several community consultations and focus group discussions across the Kunene and Zambezi regions, Lendelvo *et al*. (2018) examined the vulnerability of community-based tourism enterprises to climate change impacts. In conclusion, their work shows that these enterprises are not only highly vulnerable to global economic shocks, such as those generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, but also to climate change and environmental disasters. This is primarily due to the generally low socio-economic development and poor infrastructure in these regions (*ibid*., p. 93). For instance, conservancies in Kunene Region are prone to climatic hazard floods and prolonged and severe droughts. Given that tourism here is primarily based on wildlife biodiversity, ideas of 'Edenic' landscapes, and cultural tourism, such events can have a lasting impact. Severe droughts impact the migration and survival of wildlife, lead to increased veld fires and can reduce operations linked for instance to hunting and wildlife viewing. Seasonal flooding in turn affects the accessibility of roads and destroys tourism establishments (*ibid*., p. 95).

Some of these impacts have a disproportionate effect on women. Although most of the small to medium enterprises (SME) in the CBNRM sector are owned by women they receive low wages and are vulnerable to shocks (Lendelvo *et al.* 2018, p. 96). Climate change can severely affect livelihood strategies which are managed by women, including agriculture, and gathering. Recovering a gendered perspective in resource-management paradigms is also crucial for adequately addressing

the development of long-term climate change adaptation and coping strategies, especially for the survival of community-driven tourism enterprises.

The authors argue that local institutions such as conservancies can play an important role in reducing vulnerability to climate change impacts through strengthening collective capacity building and empowerment, facilitating income generation and social networking, and as a lobbying agent for community members and their interests (*ibid*., p. 100).

For this to happen, however, women's participation is key, including identifying gendered vulnerabilities and inequalities in CBNRM, and gendered-responsive actions and activities (Lendelvo *et al.* 2018; also Sullivan 2000a). This would mean effectively mainstreaming gender in CBNRM institutions, including considering intersections regarding marginalisation, age, and social status, and addressing disparity in accessing information and capacity building opportunities and in decision-making processes. This, the authors believe, would make possible the creation of synergies between mitigation actions and the adaptive capacities of women and men to deliver long-term benefits, including equitable interventions (Lendelvo *et al.* 2018, p. 101). Thus, climate change impacts have the potential to change gender and social relations at local levels either positively or negatively (*ibid*., p. 89). The authors also recommend that climate change adaptations be mainstreamed, including the creation of "inclusive climate change adaptive strategies that promote climate proof infrastructure for tourism establishment", sustainable water security and environmental management practices (*ibid*., p. 89). In addition, Lendelvo *et al*. call for identifying the gaps and problems for building resilience within rural and community-based tourism and grass-roots enterprises, including how exposure to climatic risks is exacerbated by non-climatic factors such as population pressure, poverty levels, cultural practices and belief systems, and governance-related aspects, human-wildlife conflict, and gender parity in decision-making and governance (*ibid*., p. 99).

Supporting these analyses of sustainability, livelihoods and resilience, Sullivan's (2018; Sullivan *et al.* 2016) work critically engages with the disconnection between public narratives of integrated conservation and development outcomes in west Namibia with the actual observed patterns and voiced impacts on the ground. She is thus concerned with how certain local narratives and experiences are occluded in the official sustainability story of west Namibia and despite other sources of empirical evidence. She draws on the concept of "cognitive dissonance" and how people, in an attempt to maintain the coherence of their beliefs actively exclude "information contradictory to those beliefs, however robustly evidenced that information might be" (Sullivan 2018, p. 4). In working with this concept Sullivan highlight that the management of dissonance "is also ideological in nature, acting to bolster specific patterns of privilege and inequality that other perspectives might understand as detrimental to the flourishing of biocultural diversity" (*ibid*., p. 6).

The *Future Pasts* project also addresses the question of sustainability directly. This project asked how new 'green' materialities and sustainability paradigms intersect with cultural conceptions of environmental change and sustainability, including local values, knowledges, and practices (Sullivan *et al.* 2016, p. 19). The project thus aimed to foreground the hybrid 'natures' of 'sustainability' and 'environmental change' whilst interrogating the power relations in which this hybridity is constituted and/or erased. For instance, it asked whether the rise of calculative 'green economy' and 'natural capital' approaches meant that a utilitarian approach is becoming hegemonic in environmental

decision-making and if so, what are the ethical implications of this shift (*ibid*., p. 40)? This project builds on and was informed by Sullivan's earlier work on the 'green economy' and neoliberal forms of environmental governance and conservation, as discussed below.

Neoliberal conservation and environmental governance

Although the CBNRM approach is portrayed as radically different in approach, the discourse was birthed, like many other developmental and environmental discourses during the late 20th century, from a "globalising neoliberal episteme" (Sullivan 2005b, 2006, pp. 105–106), vesting sovereignty in the structuring power of a global market. Sullivan (2006, pp. 1, 26; also Dunlap and Sullivan 2019) defines neoliberalism in part as a "globalising project that fetishizes commodification, whilst simultaneously desacralizing the affective possibility pregnant in all spheres of relationship". In other words, the "global neoliberal episteme" embodies a specific historical juncture, process and hegemonizing moment in which global finance and the capitalist market dominate through government influence. With the mapping of CBNRM in the global south, there was once again a "shifting of 'the environment' and of local practice into global domains of modernisation, governmentality, decision-making and desire" (Sullivan 2006, p. 107). This can, and in many instances does, come at the cost of locally-situated cultural and historical dimensions of land-use and value (see, Sullivan and Ganuses 2021a, p. 181).

Much of Sullivan's work during the late 2000s and early 2010s engages with the shift in global conservation praxis during the 2000s in which a globalising neoliberal ideology comes to shape the 'natural environment' and ecosystems within a dominant calculating and speculative logic (Sullivan 2009, 2010, 2013a-c, 2017a). She shows how, during especially the last two decades, a new way of thinking about 'nature' became consolidated, conceiving 'the natural world' as a provider of 'ecosystem services' and a stock of 'natural capital' which should and can be used to re-constitute a 'green [capitalist] economy'. Hence, Sullivan examines how a global market-based context and response is being created for environmental concerns, including conservation.

In doing so, Sullivan (2010) illustrates how the ecosystem services and natural capital paradigm rationalises an ideational shift by claiming that 'natural capital', which previously was 'undervalued' or not valued through market mechanisms, needs to be assigned market values to be 'adequately' protected and/or to measure production costs, degradation, loss, and conservation value. In addition, the ecosystem services paradigm is rooted in the "ideational construction of nature as provider of 'services' to humans" – a discursive and conceptual transformation of "nature" into a corporation, providing goods and services "that can be quantified, priced and traded as commodities" (*ibid*., p. 116, also 2009). In terms of international conservation, this paradigm is underpinned by an "increasingly pervasive and powerful narrative" in which "value added to nature through various kinds of for-profit investment and finance can provide incentives for local people to protect nature, and thus also enjoy a profit from the 'cultural services' that they provide in protecting global biodiversity" (Igoe *et al.* 2010, p. 84). This paradigm ultimately signifies a process in which 'nature' and 'biodiversity' is to be made intelligible to a capitalist market system and financial/ising language, allowing the extension of market logic into natural and cultural realms

previously beyond its reach (Sullivan 2009, 2010, p. 116; Igoe *et al.* 2010, pp. 5-6). Such processes mirror the mechanics of late capitalism, as a shape-shifting powerful "global machine" which continues to require:

> …the iterative 'disembedding' of people from land, and of land from 'nature', in service to the exchange of 'fictitious commodities', namely land, money and labour. These become subsumed under the market mechanism through their radical ideational transformation into the commodity form, and not because they come into existence through their initial material creation as such (Sullivan 2010, p. 112).

As noted above, processes of commodification require a "radical ideational transformation", a process accompanied by acts of invention, abstraction, and valorisation. The ecosystem services paradigm introduced "new abstract commodity fictions from which new financial value can be released, traded and speculated on" (Sullivan 2010, p. 127). Ironically, it is thus precisely the scarcity fostering "an emerging high value for conserved nature" (Sullivan 2013a, p. 81) which forms the fodder for such "commodity fictions" and new "green values". Derivatives of this "green economy" include offsets, such as carbon credits, biodiversity offsets and payments for ecosystem services (PES). As Sullivan critically discusses, offsets and exchanges rely on "calculative accounting methods" in which developers and companies can "offset" "their environmental impacts by investing in or purchasing apparently appropriate conservation measures elsewhere" (Sullivan 2013a, pp. 82, 84). Carbon offsets are represented by the carbon commodity exchange developed by global finance and supported by international development and conservation agencies in which a carbon 'budget' is calculated for the earth and carbon credits and products can be purchased, traded, and exchanged to offset negative impact. Such a carbon 'budget' is based on "aggregate rules" and a logic which "aggregate carbon levels through trading emissions in one place with the purchase of credits tied to carbon reductions and/or storage somewhere else" (Sullivan 2017a, p. 229). Hence, losses and gains are exchanged across time and space to seemingly calculate "no net loss" (*ibid*.).

Such exchange and its calculations "proposes equivalence between carbon emitted in the fossil-fuel fumes of cars and industry etc., with that stored in living and decomposing biomass in the myriad forest configurations of long-evolved and diverse assemblages of species" (Sullivan 2010, p. 114). Offsets thus require the invention and attribution of "some form of ecosystem metrics that account for and calculate nature so as to permit exchangeability", and which would allow for the possibility of investments in "environmental health for habitats that are different to, and geographically distant from, the habitat that is being impacted by a development intervention", in order to generate what is considered as "conservation additionality" (Sullivan 2013a, pp. 84–86). The metaphorical language of ecosystem services and "natural capital", together with their underlying calculative technologies, reduces complex and relational ecosystem dynamics to numerical and tradable values.

As an example, Sullivan (2013a) has considered proposals for biodiversity offsets to mitigate uranium mining in Namibia. Both exploration and operating licences are in arid land biodiversity hotspots primarily in western Namibia where there is a very high incidence of endemism. Apart from direct impacts on the landscape through actual mining activity, the industry requires a host of supportive industries and infrastructure, including desalination and chemical plants to produce the needed water and chemicals to precipitate the ore into concentrate known as "yellow cake", as well as an extended road infrastructure to transport it (Sullivan 2013a). Biodiversity offsets have been

proposed as a means of compensating for what is framed as the “unavoidable” direct loss of species or habitats due to projected landscape disturbance and fragmentations (Sullivan 2013a, p. 93). However, Sullivan situates such industry and state responses as a “simultaneous acknowledgement and denial of real casualities” (*ibid*., p. 95). Importantly, above ground radioactivity is activated at most stages of the “uranium commodity circuitry”, with such radioactivity posing a major threat to the present and future “cross-scalar flourishing of biodiversity” (*ibid*. p. 94). These industries not only bind “countless future generations of people to finding ways to contain radioactive waste and contamination”, but also erases the “conservation and evolutionary implications for the other manifestations of life that constitute our companions here on earth” (*ibid*. p. 94). The offsetting discourse to a large extent displaces accountability and silences the implicit ethics at stake, i.e. the “calculative judgements regarding how many individuals, populations, species, relationships, etc., are worth the maintenance of corporate mining wealth, the legacy of amplified above-ground radioactive material for management by future generations, the labor of untold workers, and the loss of diverse cultural values associated with these same species and landscapes” (*ibid*., p. 95). In other words, “the damage that is to be ‘solved’ through the offset is sustained rather than reduced or eliminated” (Sullivan 2017a, p. 230). Hence, Sullivan sees offsetting itself as “symptomatic of acknowledgement of the Real of environmental crisis, dealt with through a fantastical and fetishized solution that functions ideologically to simultaneously disavow this ‘Real’” – i.e. to simultaneously acknowledge and turn away from the underlying causes of the crisis (*ibid*., p. 231).

This analysis builds on Sullivan’s earlier work in which she argues that a key consequence of the current sustainability and “green economy” logic is the “release of new nature values into the totalising and biopolitical control of the smooth flows of capital” so as to intensify “capital’s power-effects”, instead of actually addressing the problematic environmental destructions and ecocides exactly driven by unchecked capital flows (Sullivan 2013b, p. 53). The wider recognition of a global environmental crisis, largely driven by anthropogenic factors and unchecked capitalist expansion, thereby counter-intuitively becomes (conceptually and materially) “a major new frontier of value creation and capitalist accumulation” (Sullivan 2009, p. 2). In this analysis, then, capitalism is acknowledged to thrive on crisis and scarcity as spaces and times where “new forms of capitalist value, new frontiers of accumulation, and new enclosures and dispossessions, are created” (ibid., also 2013c). Such processes are taking place parallel to international and global discourses of climate change and sustainability, including the design and implementation of multiple programmes and mechanisms to mitigate its still largely unpredictable impacts, and with little consideration for the possibility of fostering radically different ways of constituting relations economically, socially, and ecologically.

5. Knowing Etosha-Kunene's post-colonial 'natures': Relationality, ontology, and biocultural ethics

As illustrated throughout this report, Sullivan's and Dieckmann's work speaks directly to each other in examining the various historical and colonial processes which led to the structural marginalisation of Etosha-Kunene's Khoekhoegowab-speaking people and groups. This includes histories of dispossession and displacement which have, over the last decades, delimited their access to land-areas which were part of their former dwelling places. Moreover, their work has detailed how this structural marginalisation has and continues to be shaped by hegemonic and colonial discourses which disavow and/or occlude their pasts, knowledges, and cultural histories. Both authors, albeit from different angles, have looked at some of the strategies that different groups and persons have used in attempting to reclaim both these pasts and landscapes, as well as to gain access to land and livelihoods, including engaging state-driven processes of land reform and resettlement and global movements for recognising indigeneity and Indigenous rights. Lastly, their work, and especially that of Sullivan, has critically analysed the rise of global environmental governance regimes and how this is shaping local conservation praxis and values in Etosha-Kunene, including once again mapping new administrative, and institutional domains.

This last chapter details the resonances in Sullivan's and Dieckmann's work with the question of how Etosha-Kunene's 'natures' and 'cultures' might speak back and reclaim their own historical, cartographic, and environmental narratives in the face of a century of colonial and apartheid rule, lived realities of marginalisation and indigeneity, and their enfolding into globalising and modernising structures of environmental governance. In particular, the chapter details intersections between work on engaging with Indigenous forms of knowing 'nature' and asks how peoples' pasts and cultural heritages might be connected more strongly and with mutual benefit to the conservation activities within Etosha-Kunene, including in visioning futures and sustainability in west Namibia (see, Sullivan and Ganuses 2021a). Of particular concern in both Sullivan's and Dieckmann's work is the creation of a growing archive, including different visual, digital, cartographic, written, and vocal modalities, that demonstrates the existence of different epistemic frameworks in understanding and relating to 'more-than-human-natures' and the environment. Such concerns have an ethical urgency in the current global and local contexts of climatic change, market-driven responses to the environmental crisis, and the erasure of subaltern, feminine, African-centred, and Indigenous ways of knowing, embodying, relating to and being in the world.

The ontological politics of modernity and neoliberal 'natures'

As Sullivan illustrates, a consequence of global paradigms and "green economies" is that conservation and development success is increasingly framed "in terms of market value, income generation, financial investment opportunities, numbers saved (species and individuals), and other 'management goals'" (Sullivan 2006, pp. 109–110). This emphasis shifts local 'environments' into the global arena and is accompanied by the production of "layers of subtle displacements of alternative values and autonomy", including Indigenous institutions and ecologies, with processes of

valorisation increasingly de-localised (*ibid*., p. 108). The question that Sullivan thus asks is whose knowledge and practices and what forms of being are occluded in these instances of 'development'?

In engaging with this question, and inspired by a Foucaultian approach, Sullivan interrogates the "situatedness of truth" and the political and powerful workings of "techno-managerial environmental discourses" in creating particular "regimes of truth" (Sullivan 2017a, p. 233). Hence, "what is considered to be 'truth', therefore, is always the outcome of dialogue, agreement, thought and reflection, access to artefacts, texts and archives, accepted methodologies, and so on, all of which arise in historical and socio-cultural contexts" (*ibid*., p. 234). Hegemonic 'regimes of truth' and dominant environmental discourses also relate to ontology – to the circumscribing of the nature of reality and how this can or should be known and encountered – and thus ultimately to ethics – to what is considered appropriate action (*ibid*.). Sullivan (2016a, p. 157, 2017a, p. 223) defines ontology as denoting:

> …what entities can exist, into what categories they can be sorted, and by what practices and methods they can be known (i.e., epistemology), for participants in a social grouping sharing and negotiating these assumptions. Knowledge and performative practices are thereby both based on, and recursively amplify, specific ontological 'realities'....

In other words, ontological inquiries involve:

> …approaches to the nature of being, asserting that ontological assumptions are diverse, shaping how 'the world' can be known legitimately (epistemology), as well as the conception of appropriate actions in the world (ethics) (Sullivan 2017a, p. 228).

In a later publication, Dieckmann (2021b, p. 18) also explores and details the recent "ontological turn" in anthropology and other disciplines which can be broadly understood as the "questioning of previously seemingly fundamental ontological certainties in order to generate new and different insights into 'the world' or 'the worlds'", and thus to also "open us up to other kinds of experiences and thinking of and in the world, of other ways of being-in-the-world". Such explorations have especially characterised another disciplinary field which encompasses both the work of Sullivan and Dieckmann – that of 'environmental humanities' – which specifically emerged as a novel and transdisciplinary field through which to understand the current ecological crisis, climate change, the loss of biodiversity and people-environment relations (*ibid*., p. 19). Inherent in the ontological turn is thus that this world can be differently and diversely known – also meaning that which "truths" are privileged becomes a question of power (see Sullivan 2017a).

As Sullivan (2019a, p.6, see also 2013b, 2016b) notes, it has become common to locate the origin of contemporary environmental problems in the conceptual severing of mind from body, culture from nature, and animate from inanimate, with this severing having emerged from a 'Western' and Cartesian ontology of knowing and of making the world. This epistemic framework favoured mechanistic and positivist approaches to constructing knowledge and eventually became rooted in a culturally-specific disembedded and disconnected ontology (Sullivan 2017a, p.232). Within this epistemic framework, "transcendent, disembodied minds were elevated over proliferating abstractions of mechanised bodies" (Sullivan 2016b, p. 119), creating a reality where only humans (and often only some humans) possess intelligence and mind. In this instrumentalising dynamic, plants, animals, and other biophysical realities, as well as some categories of humans, were steadily and systematically dispossessed of and denied "capacities of movement, perception,

communication, and self-directed telos, and thus usefully backgrounded as existing only for the instrumental ends of humans" or by a specific group of humans (Sullivan 2016b, p. 120, 2016a, p. 158).

Importantly, this 'Western' episteme tends to foster a form of "ontological denial" which "permits the doing of harm without *recognition* that harm has been done", and which allowed (and continues to allow) for the "objectification, instrumentalization, and myriad associated violations" to be committed against certain categories of humans and against 'other-than-human-natures' without moral recourse (Sullivan 2016b, p. 121, also see Sullivan 2016a, p. 158). The question of ontology thus matters because it involves a normative dimension with ethical implications, both for local and global biodiversity and development: as exhibited by the ongoing parcelling up of lands and the ocean for mining exploration and extractive industries in Namibia (Sullivan 2017a). Moreover, the consequence of ongoing creation of "green financial values" and the institutionalisation of "ecosystem services" is to enfold "local livelihoods and other cultural lifeworlds into desires and values established in distant locations, spread globally via incursions of development aid, conservation finance and capital" (Sullivan 2010, p. 119). Sullivan argues that what becomes occluded in this process of valorisation are "active, participative and affective relationship[s]" with ecologies (Sullivan 2005b, p. 5, 2006, p. 120). The question then becomes, how can "sources of pleasure, meaning and mystery – these aspects of living that make it possible to be/become 'fully human'" be empowered through environment and development trajectories which are rather "orientated towards commodification, cash income, service provision, governance and regulation" (Sullivan 2005b, pp. 6–7)? More importantly, what is the consequences of devaluing such socio-natural knowledge and relational practices? And is it possible for such radically divergent knowledge practices to co-exist within environmental management and conservation praxis?

Relational and Indigenous ecologies in Etosha-Kunene

In an ongoing attempt to address the questions raised above and in their recent work, both Dieckmann (2021a, 2021b) and Sullivan (2010, 2011, 2013b, 2016a, 2017a, 2019a; Sullivan and Low 2014; Hannis and Sullivan 2018c) draw deeply on new thinking around ontology and animism, considering the relevance of these ideas for understanding cultural relationships with beyond-human natures. This work builds on their prior and respective cultural landscape mapping engagements in the Etosha and west Namibian landscapes, with collaborative journeying understood as having facilitated embodied encounters with different, relational, and occluded socio-natural knowledges and poetic practices of care.

Drawing both on her long-term ethnographic research in Namibia, as well as on her own personal and lived experiences, Sullivan's work from the 2000s onwards brings what she terms an "animist 'immanent ecology'" or "animist ontologies" into a critical conversation with the imperial ecologies and the modernist modes of knowing detailed in the subsections above. This 'immanent ecology' constitutes an ecology in which human and 'nature' relations are experienced and lived through various intersubjective intensities and shared sentience (Sullivan 2010, p. 113, Sullivan 2017a), to become a situated ontology of a "potently communicative non-human world that is sentient and asserts agency" (*ibid*., p. 124). As Sullivan (2013b, pp. 55–56) details, although animism is considered

by some as a knowledge construct of the West (Garuba 2012), it found traction as a universalising term to describe the "primacy of relationality" (Bird-David 1999) in people-environment relations which move beyond the animate/inanimate and subject/object divisions inherent in the modernist epistemic framework (also see Dieckmann 2021b, p. 21). It is thus a way of being and of relating which affirms that a "creative energy – an irresistible evanescence – permeates all existence" (Sullivan 2010, p. 125). In other words, alive sentience and agency are attributed to 'other-than-human natures' and different animals, plants, and biophysical, geographical and climatic features becoming "relational subjects, rather than inanimate and atomised objects" (Sullivan 2013b, p. 55). Animist ontologies thus reorganise modern categories of subject/object, body/mind and nature/culture into a differently understood language of complex system flows and intensities which "re-embeds relationships between interior (subjective) and exterior (social and environmental) potencies" (Sullivan 2010, pp. 122–125) to foreground "an ecology of selves-beyond-the-human" (Sullivan 2016b, p. 165). Such cosmologies have been discussed in detail by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro in his studies with Amazonian societies. Described as "multinatural perspectivism" these cosmologies foreground that "all beings share culture, kinship, and reciprocal relationships, [yet] their perspectives [differ] due to being seated in different bodily affects (or "natures")" (Sullivan 2013b, p. 57). "Amerindian" and "KhoeSan" societies in southern Africa share cosmologies incorporating a "primal time" wherein people and animals were related and shared language, culture, and kinship, encouraging "agential and reciprocal relationships in the present" that retain communicative and personhood attributes across species boundaries (Sullivan 2016b, p. 160; also Sullivan and Low 2014). Relational ontologies and animism have also been noted to be widespread in hunter-gatherer societies in general (see Dieckmann 2021b, p. 21).

In what Sullivan (2010) refers to as 'animist immanent ecologies' ecological relations are thus social relations and social or kin relations are understood not as genealogical ties, but relational bonds that can include more-than-human others (Sullivan 2016b, p. 160; Dieckmann 2021b, p. 21). For example, 'more-than-human-natures' are understood and experienced as kin, ancestral embodiments, spirits and communicative agencies activated, known, enhanced and appreciated through particular acts and practices of listening, communication and sharing (Sullivan 2010, p. 125). In these 'culturenature ontologies' agency is present everywhere and hence all activity is "imbued with a moral, if frequently ambiguous, dimension" which curtails and/or enhances people's actions within an "ethical mode of mutual constitution" (Sullivan 2013b, p. 56). Sullivan describes how the Khoekhoegowab-speaking persons and families she works with in north-west and west Namibia likewise dwell and move through landscapes in a manner reflective of such animist ontologies. For one, acknowledgement, greeting and offering practices in relation to ancestral agencies and those who came before remain significant (what is referred to as *tsē-khom*) (Sullivan 1999a, 2017a, 2019a, also see Sullivan and Ganuses 2021a, pp. 175-176), normally involving the offering and smoking of tobacco and communicating one's presence and requests for guidance in journeying – see Image 1. Evidence of such guidance is experienced through "intuitions people receive in response to queries that may arise as they are travelling" (Hannis and Sullivan 2018c, p. 285). Hence, ancestors are understood to have an "ontological reality in the present" and are especially associated with "potent places". (*ibid.*, p. 286, also see Sullivan and Ganuses 2021a, p. 176). In addition, as Sullivan and Ganuses (2021, p. 169) note, relational ontologies are experienced as "interwoven relationships between places, people, ancestors, and varies beyond-human natures" with these rhizomatically and generatively associated. The genealogies and complex relations embedded in places are enacted

through "the remembered significance of *ǀgaidi* praise songs and *arudi* healing dances linked with formed living sites" (sing. *ǁan-ǁhuib*) (*ibid*., p. 140). Peoples' belonging and relatedness are thereby embedded with land and place, informing vernacular and situated spatial and temporal orientations (Sullivan and Ganuses 2021a, p. 162). For instance, previous land-based lineages continue to inform current socio-spatial dynamics, including the layouts of settlements and the directions in which people travel to gather food and herd livestock. Places are thus relationally understood and lived relative to past mobilities and ancestral genealogies. These long associations within the west Namibian landscape still flourish despite imposed governmentalities constraining access possibilities over the last decades (also see Sullivan 2019a, 2022).

Furthermore, some animals, especially lions, are understood as "ensouled beings", while specific plants are also considered powerful or *soxa.* These plants are conferred "special properties of agency", potency and the ability to act in a protective manner, including some plants used in the making of perfumes, with harvesting practices involving this category of plants marked by acts of material exchange (Hannis and Sullivan 2018b, pp. 287–289). Biophysical processes and flows, especially rain, are also interpreted as animated by supernatural forces and entities. Rain, as the personified force of *ǀnanus*, is thus key in asserting agency in selecting persons who will become healers (*ibid*., p. 290, also see Sullivan and Ganuses 2021a, p. 176 and *The Music Returns to Kai-as*, https://vimeo.com/486865709). Activities by agents, including animals, components of weather such as *ǀnanus*, plants, spirit-beings, and ancestors are thus "imbued with a moral, if relative and frequently ambiguous, dimension, requiring ongoing awareness, participation and adjustment in relation to the actions of these acting others" (Sullivan and Ganuses 2021a, p. 176). Ancestors are linked to specific places, yet given histories of displacement it is often difficult to maintain these connections. Praise songs (*ǀgaidi*) and healing songs (*arudi*) are two modalities through which these relations are then re-enacted, with the "songs and their performance reaffirm[ing] identities, values and histories about people and places, thereby constituting a form of "Indigenous mapping" (*ibid*., p. 178). These performances engender enjoyment, affective intensities, and experiences of connection which allows participants to "recursively and affectively (re)experience places, events and values expressed in the songs" (*ibid*., p. 178). Place-relations, story-telling and cultural identity are all elements poetically entangled and expressed through songs and dances, generating a multifaceted intimacy (*ibid*.).

Reflecting the particular characteristics of lions in the relational ontologies in west Namibia reported by Sullivan, Dieckmann noted in her earlier work (2007f) that lions were respected as persons, colleagues, and friends, as equals, and sources of divine power by the Haiǁom. Moreover, spiritual agents (*ǁgamagu*) held sway over the land and people and prevented inappropriate behaviour (Dieckmann 2009, p. 374). Healers/shamans were usually situated as the communicator between such spirit worlds and that of humans. Theirs was thus a world not divided into 'natural' and 'cultural' spheres, but rather integrated: "the relationship amongst the land, human beings, and nonhuman beings is obviously defined differently than in Western thought" (Dieckmann 2009, p. 374). This meant that the "land is charged with emotion and personal identities" (*ibid*., p. 374). In her later and recent work, Dieckmann returns to Haiǁom relations with "beings-beyond-the-human", noting that a systematic study on this is still outstanding. Nevertheless, she reflects on the manner in which these ontologies share some features of those noted for other 'KhoeSan' in the region (Dieckmann 2021a, p. 117). In particular she details some emic distinctions between different animal

groups and the specific ritual *(|hâson*) carried out when hunting a particular group – that of *am|naen* (which includes bigger non-carnivorous animals such as eland, giraffe, gemsbok, and kudu) (see also Peters *et al*. 2009). In doing so, she argues that this ritual indicates that animals are endowed with personhood. Moreover, Dieckmann once again notes the position of lions as colleagues and equals, with one spirit being (*ǁgamagu*) a lion spirit who can pass its spirit to specific people who can then become healers/shamans (see p. 119 for more on this). Haiǁom ecology is furthermore characterised by several food taboos linked to specific birds and other beings which are not eaten either because they are similar to humans or embody communicative or other benefits (Dieckmann 2021a, p. 120).

Dieckmann (2021a, p. 120) also notes that, as with lions, snakes are imbued with multiple relations, including mythic and spirit relations, with, for example, snake spirits being amongst the known spirit beings. The importance of snakes in 'KhoeSan' relational ontologies and ecologies is explored in detail by Sullivan and Low (2014), including the strong symbolic potential for transformation, healing and the embodiment of duality, fluidity, and ambiguity. Dieckmann (2021a, p. 121) notes that spirit beings were or still are an "integral part of the ecology, although it is said that they usually stay in *ǁgama ǁaes*, a place 'up there'", these beings occupying a morally ambiguous space and said to be supervising the observation of taboo rules (*sõxa*). Dieckmann details the different spirit beings (*ǁgamagu*), including the lion spirit noted above, and the strongest one, the spirit of rain (*|nanus*). These agencies, when encountered or experienced, provide a different potency/spirit/wind to a person and are related to situated and culturally-informed understandings of personhood. They can also transform into different animals (*ibid*., p. 123). Relations between humans, spirit beings and ancestral spirits are primarily mediated through healing/trance dance and the activities of shamans/healers (see Dieckmann 2021a, p. 123 for more on this).

Lastly, Dieckmann's (2021a, p. 110) later explorations argue that Haiǁom historical tenure institutions as discussed in Chapter 2 should not necessarily be understood in the 'Western' sense of ownership over the land but rather according to a more relational perspective. Hence, land-based 'clusters' were an "indication that family groups were tied to specific patches of land and had guardianship for that area, that places and people *belonged/related* to each other" (*ibid*.). Rather than bounded units, these relations were predominantly defined through kinship networks, which organised both land, people, and mobility, with movement between and within places continually enacting these family relations (*ibid*.). In addition, kinship knowledge was woven into the landscape, with kinship ties implying "spatial connections and guide movements" and continually creating home-places and land linkages (*ibid*., pp. 112-114). These spatialities and relational ecologies strongly mirror those of Damara/ ǂNūkhoen, as detailed in Sullivan's work.

Dieckmann argues that these diverse agencies and relations point to a relational ontology in which multiple relations are continually and mutually co-constituting a person's being, including one's relations to land, to kin-others, including animals, to place, and to various spirit and ancestral beings. Relationality thus also engenders a mutuality which has continual transformative potential (Dieckmann 2021, p. 125) and instead of fixed boundaries between humans, animals, climatic events etc., and between the natural and supernatural, there exists rather what Sullivan and Low (2014, p. 226) refer to as "categorical ambivalence". Speaking directly to Sullivan's work in west Namibia, Dieckmann (2021a) argues that these relationships are continually constituted and enacted through

practices of sharing, including that of food and tobacco. This sharing extends beyond material exchanges into the realm of sharing potencies (also see Sullivan and Low 2014). As Sullivan (2013b, p.60) expresses it, "the 'social character' of relations between humans and nonhumans tend towards multi-way economies of gifts, exchanges, sharings and transformations between all persons". These relations however are also experienced through both "pragmatic relationship practices" as well as a rich repertoire of performance and memory-making (Sullivan 2016a, p. 161). For instance, "through making and experiencing intricate and intimate 'technologies' of song, music, rhythm, dance, stories, and costume, an array of affects are stimulated: aesthetic appreciation, senses of delight, wonder, and mystery, perceptual opening to the presence and forms of spirit-beings, and the experience of joy and connection with entities beyond-the-self" (*ibid*., p. 164). As noted above, the "constant attention and attunement in choices by humans" within such relational ontologies have ethical implications (Sullivan and Ganuses 2021a, p. 176). For one, "beings (including non-humans) are regarded as persons in relationships, and they are constituted by these relationships", with both sociality and historicity indisputably inclusive of non-human others (Dieckmann 2021b, p. 21). Such understanding potentially binds one's well-being, identity, personhood, and existence to others in ways that are both immediate and embodied.

Accessing, translating, and mapping relational ecologies

For Sullivan (2019a, 2022), acknowledging epistemological and ontological disjunctions in conceptions and experiences of people-land relationships might contribute towards generating nuanced understandings of why conflict emerges in these contexts. This approach could set the stage for thinking more about deeply who and what wins or loses within contemporary globalising trajectories of development, environment and sustainability (Martin *et al*. 2013). In trying to access and activate such an ontological shift, Sullivan's work draws on poststructuralist philosophy and phenomenology.

In phenomenological thought, lived and embodied experience is "both mutually constituting and being constituted by non-human worlds", with subjectivity embedded within environment, process, movement and participatory and intercorporeal encounters (Sullivan 2010, pp. 112–113). Phenomenological thought thus "affirm[s] the active participation of sensual perception in a collaborative bringing forth of a world of intersubjective comprehensibility", with perception inseparable from "kinaesthetic corporeality, and the doing of perceiving manifest[ing] phenomena in processes of mutual constitution" (*ibid*., pp. 125-126). This approach is thus a theory of knowledge which is situational and relational, rather than representational, and which foregrounds encounter and practice in the mutual constitution of knowing, but also of being.

Sullivan argues further for recognition of the ways in which embodied reality is "also historically and culturally situated, caught within specific regimes of truth that make possible particular embodiments and embodied experiences" (Sullivan 2016b, p. 122). Hence, bodies are always "both caught within, as well as performing, the particularities of historical and cultural contexts" (*ibid*.). Such a perspective is sensitive to a Foucauldian understanding of power relations and how power works through "process[es] of subjectification", governmentality and (self)disciplining techniques (*ibid*., pp. 123-124). Consequently, both 'the body' and 'the self' are always "fully caught, inscribed,

and repetitively enacted within discursive webs, whose diagnosis may encourage awareness and contestation" (*ibid*., p. 123). Change and resistance thus becomes possible through reflection and critical understanding of these "discursive webs" and scripts which shape "acts that perform social reality" (*ibid*., p. 124).

Such work is critical given that "the structuring epistemic and institutional grids shaping corporeal understanding and experience" shape and define "appropriate ethical and other responses" (Sullivan 2016b, p. 126) – towards the self and others, and both human and 'more-than-human' agencies. The corporealities circumscribed through technologies of a neoliberal governmentality and 'environmentality' thus become issues of life itself: of what is let live and what is let die – what philosopher Michel Foucault termed 'biopolitics'. In recognising that the body is both epistemically plural and political situated, Sullivan makes a normative call for (re)embodiments which are resistant to "the disembodying impetus of capitalist symbolic and material orders", and which allow for "unlearning the docile, labouring, traumatised body of such utility for the accumulations driving capitalist political economy" (*ibid*., pp. 122, 125).

Sullivan also turns to post-structuralist philosophers Deleuze and Guattari and their "non-totalising affective ontology of rhizomes, nomadism, and becoming" which allow for an understanding of the body as diffuse, multiple, and always pregnant with "transgressive, experiential potencies" (Sullivan 2016b, p. 126). This focus on 'affect' simultaneously allows for an approach sensitive to the power geometries and "discursive webs" which circumscribe which embodiments are valued, performed and lived, whilst simultaneously acknowledging the always potential becomings generated through the situated materiality of the body and its emplacement within particular relations (*ibid*., p. 127). Such an approach is an affirmation of the assertion by anthropologist Gregory Bateson that '*difference makes a difference'*, as well as of a post-humanist philosophy which emphasises distributed agency, specifically the agencies of more-than-human-others in the mutual constitution of realities and of the self (*ibid*.). As she writes, "both corporeality and embodiment are ambiguous, shifting, and dynamic affairs – sites of the continual recognition and negotiation of values" (ibid., p. 131). Acknowledging the difficulty of accessing different ways of being and communicating choices regarding subjectivity and relationality, Hannis and Sullivan (2018c, p. 295) argue that "a heuristic interpretation may still do the job of opening up the required extra reciprocal dimensions, of stretching the imaginative muscles required to really perceive the complex webs of interconnections between living (and nonliving) things". This sense "that everything has the power to do things – to assert some form of entwined agency – affirms and reclaims a knowledge that community, communication and commonwealth between human and non-human worlds not only are possible, but are normal" (Sullivan 2010, p. 126).

Building on this work, Dieckmann (2021b, p. 10) asks, given the dynamism and lived relationality of such ways of knowing, how maps can become a medium to visualise relational ontologies and other issues related to such being-in-the-world? Relational ontologies, as detailed above, have a clear reference to space – still, "how can animals and plants turn from resources or cultural heritage items into agential subjects, and how can less tangible agents, like ancestors, spirits, potency or winds be depicted on maps" (*ibid*., p. 23)? Dieckmann (2021a, p. 99) for instance reflects on her own experience with the *Xoms |Omis* project noting that their project was "deeply impaired by a rather Cartesian ontology, anthropogenic and anthropo-hubristic, embedded in a categorical thinking

about objects, considering plant and animal species as 'resources' to be exploited". In other words, in using the term "resources" they denoted rather "a one-directional relationship between the user (the subject, usually a human person or at least made up of human persons) and the item (object) itself, rather than a mutual relationship" and a relation that refers to a "a community of humans exploiting 'nature'" (*ibid*., p. 104).

During this project Dieckmann and others were not yet equipped with notions of relational epistemologies and hence it was difficult to make visible such perspectives. Dieckmann thus reflects on how this shaped the eventual shortcomings in their data collection and archiving process, including how the material was classified, according to which categories and their use of general cartographic conventions (Dieckmann 2021a, pp. 102-103). She critically reflects on the disjuncture between the researchers' mapping modalities and that of Hai‖om, and the various absences it generated – including in terms of spatial and temporal frames, orientation, mode of perception and relational dynamics. These maps fostered a view of Hai‖om which can be seen as essentialist – given that it did not foreground the multiple historical, economic, and political relations and interdependencies they had established with other groups over the years, including with tourists (*ibid*., p. 116). Despite these shortcomings, these maps still succeeded in acknowledging the cultural heritage of Hai‖om embedded within the Etosha landscapes (more on this below).

Mapping and counter-mapping landscapes

Within the history of globalising 'Western' and modernist epistemologies, cartography and acts of mapping have played an important part. As made evident throughout this report, both Sullivan's and Dieckmann's prior work has grappled with the relationship between cartography, power, representation, and knowledge – both in cementing colonial rule and in the coloniality still prevalent within Etosha-Kunene's dominant landscape visions and in the governance of land and resource-access. In engaging with the relationship between maps and power, both Sullivan and Dieckmann, and as discussed in Chapter 3, have intentionally participated in, and facilitated projects of "counter-mapping" or "cultural mapping". Dieckmann (2021b, pp. 14-17) argues that "maps and the technologies linked to them provide a multifaceted field for communication" (Dieckmann 2021b, p. 16), that are more accessible than academic texts. Yet critical engagement is key, including reflecting on "what information, knowledges, experiences, practices and messages we would like to convey, for what reason and for/to whom" (*ibid.*, p. 17), emphasising that maps need to be means rather than ends in themselves.

Moreover, as both authors have shown, cartography, rather than being an objective representation of reality, is historically rooted in modernist, 'Western' and Cartesian conceptions of time and space and was, and still is, used as a key tool in institutionalising hegemonic conservation and land regimes and a modernist governmentality (see, Dieckmann 2001, 2007a, 2021b; Sullivan 2019a, for a detailed discussion). Hence, as noted by Dieckmann (2021b), maps often privilege particular dominant and modernist worldviews and knowledge systems. This is echoed by Sullivan (2019a, p. 22) who reminds us that mapping exercises and acts of mapping are not neutral – they engender a particular conception of the environment, of space and time, and a relationship to the land, and one often rooted in "objectification and experiential distance *vis á vis* land". For instance, there is

frequently an overt fixation on mapping boundaries as a "prerequisite for administrative and managerial control" and on bounded and fixed spatial phenomena (Sullivan 2019a, p. 22), with such map-making exercises serving as powerful tools for fixing and codifying rights to land and resources. In other words, "whilst 'the map is not the territory', the relations of power distilled in mapped representations may nonetheless shape possibilities of use and access, with multiple material [and political] consequences" (*ibid*., p. 9).

Building on such critical cartographic studies, in a recent publication Dieckmann (2021a, pp. 11, 94) reviews the rise and practice of cultural maps and cultural landscape mapping discussed above, noting that "maps – if understood as two or three-dimensional representations of information related to space – are per se cultural, produced by specific humans embedded in specific environments". Hence, it is misleading to call maps produced by Indigenous people "cultural maps", as all maps are thus. Nevertheless, as Dieckmann points out, cultural mapping exercises with Indigenous people have specific issues and histories which they have grappled with – including different spatial scales and time frames – and thus the concept of 'cultural' or 'counter' mapping is used to further dialogue and exchange around these issues. Understood as a process of subverting the "master's tool", counter or cultural mapping has been used across the world to make more participatory claims to land, resources and alternative representations of reality, especially of landscapes and places (Dieckmann 2021b). These maps have been used, for instance, to target policy-makers, judges or decision-makers in the field of nature conservation management for Indigenous people, or in recognition of their cultural heritage and/or land rights – as is the case with the counter-mapping projects of Dieckmann and Sullivan. Yet this methodology has also come under critique, for example in relation to its limitations for subverting dominant and authoritative narratives, with regards to the issue of participation, implications of technology transfer, and conflict between or within communities. These issues, including the advantages and benefits of such a methodology, is discussed by Dieckmann (see, 2021b, pp. 12-14). In addition, and as discussed, both Sullivan and Dieckmann have contended with how alternative ways of knowing, multivocality and cultural and historical complexity can be mapped, especially given the epistemic and imperial histories of cartography and the dominance of modernist and neoliberal epistemes in understanding 'the environment'. As Sullivan and Ganuses (2021a, p. 158) point out, privileging "epistemologies and ontologies of representation associated with colonial and apartheid statecraft" has made "certain presences and relationships more-or-less 'unmappable' in the present".

Some mapping examples from other parts of the world and the promise of new digital mapping tools such as those arising from the digital humanities field, also provide useful starting points to consider innovative approaches to mapping and translating relationality (Dieckmann 2021b, pp. 28-29). These new relational and animated maps will, however, require simultaneously developing new cartographic literacy (*ibid*., p. 24). In addition, the mapping process itself potentially allows for processes of translation. Sullivan and Ganuses (2021a, p. 142) noted for instance how dimensions of significance emerged through the mapping exercise. This then required alternative yet accessible mapping modalities which can bring "these 'unmapped' culturally dense dimensions more systemically into present management and investment choices" as a possible route "towards amplifying equitability and recognition for diverse pasts linked with the present high value biodiversity conservation of areas of west Namibia" (*ibid*.).

Such equity carries immense weight given the historicity of Etosha-Kunene. As Sullivan and Ganuses (2021a, p. 158) remind us "what is able to be mapped today are the traces remaining in a history severely constrained by land appropriations serviced and supported by cartographic land-claiming techniques, combined with normalized categories of mapping in the present that are exceeded by many dimensions of experience, meaning and value". The "counter-mapping" projects which emerged tried to simultaneously communicate the "intimacy and wildness shaping how west Namibian landscapes are known" (*ibid*., p. 179), becoming a stark reminder of how the "contemporary moment is infused with structural processes that can seem to enforce forgetting, leading to erasure of the density of cultural meaning with which the landscapes of west Namibia have been known" (*ibid*., p. 181).

Sustainable futures, environmental ethics, and justice

'Biodiversity conservation' involves both intra-and intergenerational concerns and requires strategies to deal with its unequal spatial distribution, impacts and opportunities. Hence questions of procedural justice are inseparable from distributional justice (Martin *et al.* 2013). As alluded to above, however, recognition of, and creating equality between, different ways of knowing biodiverse 'natures' is also important in aligning "a 'difference-friendly' cosmopolitan cultural politics…with a politics of sustainability" (*ibid*., p. 124): questions of environmental justice need to recognise differences in culture-nature cosmologies and worldviews (*ibid*., p. 122). Efforts to improve distribution without giving attention to recognition, especially within contexts of resource poverty, can require beneficiaries to assimilate dominant ways of knowing and living with nature, or dominant approaches to consensus-seeking and decision-making.

The ontological considerations discussed in this chapter thus have eco-ethical implications. Biological and cultural diversity are linked in knowledge, language and practice and sustaining both is necessary: meaning there is an urgent need to bring varied cultural values explicitly into debate and policy (Sullivan 2011a). In many contexts across the world, a "separation of market exchanges from ecosocial relations (as in the ideal of free market economics) has been variously inhibited in part because this separation is known to break embodied ties of living community: ties which otherwise might be understood as binding all emplaced entities in moral and maintaining economies of connection, cooperation and sharing" (Sullivan 2013b, p. 54). In addition, animist ontologies and associated practices have been recognised as engendering "an expanded sphere of moral agency and considerability, as well as relations of reciprocity with these other-than-human entities" (Sullivan 2016a, p. 163, also see Dieckmann 2021a). Although this might seem to be a constraining manner of being, such ontologies tend to assume abundance rather than crisis and scarcity (*ibid*.).

Consequently, Sullivan's later work explicitly engages with ethics, in particular with "ecocultural ethics" and "eudaimonist ecological virtue ethics" – asking what it means to live a flourishing life (Hannis and Sullivan 2018c, p. 296). According to eudaimonist virtue ethics a "fully flourishing human life requires connection and relationship not only with humans but also with the rest of the world", combining recognition of both commonality and difference (*ibid*., p. 280). This ecocultural ethics requires a shift away from homogenised and commoditised categories such as 'nature', 'natural capital' and 'ecosystem services' towards asking what kinds of relationships and relations allow for a flourishing human life (*ibid*., p. 279). In particular, Sullivan explores connections between ethical

reflections and animist arts of conduct, arguing that such ontologies are "folded into moral economies of representation, choice, action, sharing and predation that are not solely human", and hence enables differently configured "caring entanglements of human with other-than-human lives" (Sullivan 2019d, p. 7; Hannis and Sullivan 2018c). Phrased differently, relational ontologies embody an "implicit logic of reciprocity in the flow of relationship with other beings that make up what we now call biodiversity" (Sullivan 2011a, p. 18). These "webs of mutual obligation" centre on symbiotic rather than parasitic or extractive relations and encompasses an "expanded sphere of moral agency" (Hannis and Sullivan 2018c, p. 294). Hence, animist ontologies are also embedded within different "future-making logics and habits" (*ibid*., p. 291). Animist socialist and affective practices can thus foster an ethos of care through the conduct of relationships with others, including with what Eduardo Kohn calls 'beyond-human life' and 'natures-beyond-the-human', that is affirming of diversity and relationality rather than destructive (Sullivan 2011a, p. 13, 2019d).

As pointed out by Sullivan and Ganuses (2021a, p. 181), "a decoupling of indigenous and local cultures from natures has been part and parcel of the historical creation of 'wild' African landscapes associated with biodiversity conservation and with both tourism and trophy-hunting income". A renewed engagement with relational ontologies is thus also a renewed and committed shift towards reinscribing alternative and Indigenous conservation values within such landscapes, and thus towards democratising and decolonising debates on both cultural and environmental heritage management, and on Etosha-Kunene's development trajectories.

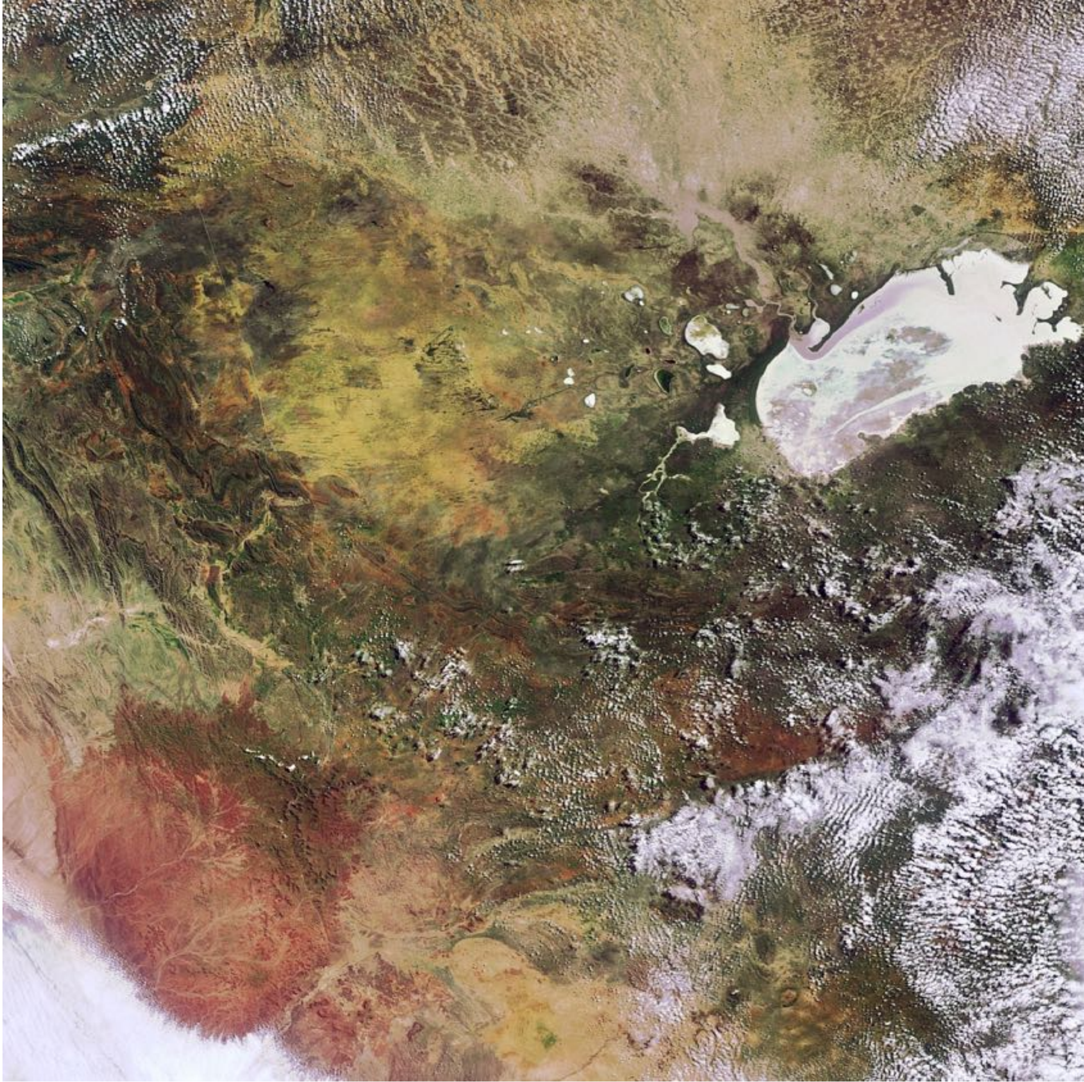
Conclusion / outlook – in brief

This report has presented a weave of the prior work by the principal investigators of the *Etosha-Kunene Histories* project, and of the complex and entangled past and present landscapes, peoples and 'natures' within this region. It highlighted thematic overlaps, theoretical threads and regional foci of the three principal investigators and explored their contributions to understanding Etosha-Kunene's overlapping colonial histories of settlement, nature conservation, land dispossession, and indigeneity; as well as the changing livelihoods and land-relations, and the diversity of resource use, management and knowledge practices, which co-constitute the past and present. The report provided insight into the historical processes, the colonial and global ideas and practices which have shaped Etosha-Kunene, its landscapes and ecologies, and its human and other-than-human inhabitants. It also explored the ideas and practices of the diverse social groupings inhabiting in the area, their identities and ontologies and situatedness in the colonial context and post-independent Namibia. As such, the report has contributed to the multivocal and historical analysis offering new thinking on colonialism, indigeneity and 'natural history' in Namibia aimed for in *Etosha-Kunene Histories*.

The diverse pasts and presents explored by the three authors have the potential to play a strong role in dialogue on Etosha-Kunene's futures, including its combined trajectories of development and conservation. Review of their prior work has exposed diverging and at times contradicting ideas and practices of human-ecology relations, economic versus other benefits, and biodiversity conservation in connection and/or conflict with livelihood priorities within the region. It has foregrounded that only with full recognition and integration of the diversity of pasts, perspectives, cultures and natures, can this internationally-valued region become a sustainable habitat not only for its flora and fauna but also for its diverse peoples. Fully recognising this diversity and opening up spaces for dialogue and representation need to account for persistent structural inequalities and marginality within the region, including unequal power relations in management and governance structures.

Future research agendas rooted in local needs, voices, and diversity can assist in developing this vision. These might include participatory and transdisciplinary research projects in which Indigenous ontologies and scientific knowledge practices are brought more fully into a democratising dialogue with conservation and land management practices. An important aim might be to collectively rethink the standardisation of tenure and land and resource-management policies within a framework that can be more responsive to regional diversity and culturally-informed institutions and practices.

Additionally, this report foregrounds the imperative for supporting and strengthening Indigenous knowledge systems and reclaiming cultural heritage, not only for the future of rural and urban livelihoods and sustainability, but also for facilitating processes of healing and reconciliation within contexts in which communities and families have been violently displaced and marginalised by centuries of colonialism and global capitalist expansion. Lastly, and as illustrated in this report, writing and seeing from the situated perspectives of Etosha-Kunene and through collaborative and innovative post-colonial and transdisciplinary research methodologies offers crucial contributions to global debates on environmental ethics and justice during a critical time of anthropogenic-driven climatic changes and the highly unequal distribution of its impacts.



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