

Re-negotiating the Boundaries and Authority Structures of Communities – Local Power, State Building and the Globalisation of Environmental Governance in Northwestern Namibia

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Abstract

Diverse initiatives of community based natural resource management (conservancies, community, forests, community based range management, water-point associations) have transformed social-ecological systems in north-western Namibia (Kunene Region) profoundly since the mid 1990s. In a spate of legislative efforts the Namibian government altered state-community relations in respect to resource management profoundly. These measures had a three-fold aim: they were meant to (a) ensure the sustainable management of natural resources in rural areas, (b) to democratise decision making in rural communities and (c) to ensure that benefits of natural resources could be harvested at the local level. Since 1996 communities could then apply for a conservancy status, which provided them with the authority to use game quotas either through hunting or through leasing such quotas to tourism entrepreneurs. They could also negotiate with the private sector to lease out land for the built up of lodges and camps and reap the benefits from such engagements. In order to be gazetted as a conservancy they had to clearly define community boundaries and to define membership within communities. Whereas before both boundaries had been negotiable, they were now fixed with GPS technology and laid down in documents. Membership in resource user groups had been flexibly defined in the past making full use of a double descent kinship system; now membership was attainable only if long term residency in a place could be proven. Similar efforts were taken in the field of water management: the state transferred water-related infrastructure (boreholes, piping) to communities on the provision that they established clearly defined user groups. In many respects legal reform followed the Design Principles of Elinor Ostrom for the sustainable management of common pool resources. These governmental efforts which were by and large informed by international agendas on sustainable resource management in the post-Rio 1992 phase had fundamental effects on the political ecology of resource management in north-western Namibia.

However, changes did not unfold exactly as envisioned: the use of natural resources has become fragmented with the creation of more enclosures at different spatial scales, a multitude of institutional arrangements (frequently competing) has emerged and local power structures are transformed with the intrusion of party politics, migrant aspirations and elite capture into local resource management.

The contributions is based on long-term field work in north-western Namibia (1994-2010) and draws on different sets of data pertaining to individual hopes and strategies, communal institutions and cross-scale interrelations between local actors, NGO activists and administrators.

1. Introduction

In 2004/2005 and again in 2009 I did a restudy of resource management in north-western Namibia after an initial study in 1994/95 and much to my surprise, a lot had changed. During interviews in 2004 respondents emphasized the high degree of detrimental vegetation change they had experienced during the past decade and the prevalence of internal conflict and institutional dilemmas. Ten years earlier, in 1994/95, herders had self-confidently

depicted a solid system of indigenous resource management constituted by a set of interlinked institutions and a moral code condensed in the *ozonduninyo yo maryo*, the rules of good grazing. They had related degradation of vegetation and soils - which had been well observable also then - to the imponderability of rainfall and had rejected the idea that the phenomenon was related to high livestock numbers or mismanagement. In 2004 respondents were sure that high grazing pressure combined with institutional failure caused severe forms of degradation in the grass/herb layer. Informants claimed that the local system of pasture management had virtually crumbled. Several indicators for the demise of grazing control were given:

- In several grazing areas disputes were pertinent as to who was allowed to make use of specific pastures. While on the one hand politically dominant figures succeeded in reserving pastures for their own herds (without fencing them), in other areas young herders moved into areas which were far away from their regular settlement areas. Grazing schemes run along the principles of holistic range management and inspired by a local NGO required the exclusive use of some prime pastures, which they managed along specific institutional mechanisms.
- Conservancies had established themselves and others were in the process of consolidation. This led to intensive discussions on borders between conservancies and internal boundaries of different resource management zones. While conservancy boundaries did not directly impede pastoral movements across such borders, the lengthy discussions on the establishment of boundaries reinvigorated older quarrels about grazing rights and the relation between user groups and resources.
- Himba informants in the Epupa area – my core research area - stated that the sanctioning of misbehaviour had virtually been abandoned. Several reasons were given: one informant said that it was simply hard to put enough pressure on a culprit to pay his fine; others claimed that the death of some elders who had dominated the local community as wealthy cattle patrons and who had been central for the handling of cases had weakened grazing control; yet other informants stated that many people reasoned that it was not the cattle camp herders (often younger relatives of the stock owners) who were to be fined but the owners of these herds who were frequently far away as they had given the orders to their herders to move onto forbidden pastures, or, at least, were the ones who profited from such moves. Such ambiguous considerations prevented the community from effectively defining and sanctioning misbehaviour.

Several factors were apparently contributing to these manifold institutional dilemmas – which internally were perceived as contributing to a chaotic situation of natural resource

management. In an odd constellation institutional chaos seemed to grow with the number of institutional options and alternations offered by different stake holders. Informants vividly reported lengthy internal meetings to find a way through this upsurge of institutional diversification and recalled many meetings with NGOs and ministerial staff to consolidate committees, constitutions and internal monitoring systems.

Several structural factors had ostensibly contributed to this situation: The number of cattle had nearly reached the 200,000 level, an all-time high, and to manage such large numbers of livestock within a restricted area was simply much more difficult than to manage about 100,000 cattle (the number of cattle that had been resident in the area in the mid 1990s). This increasing number of cattle was herded by a rapidly growing number of herding units. This rapid increase of livestock and herding units heightened the transaction costs of institutions and the likelihood of conflicts: communal meetings took longer because of more community members being present and because a higher diversity of interests had to be harmonised. Informants mentioned the strain lengthy community meetings put on their time budget. Frustratingly many such meetings ended without any clear decision. Large livestock numbers and the decline of grazing control had apparently contributed to a demise of pasture quality. Apparently nomadic livestock husbandry in the region was in disarray. It was obvious that some people suffered more than others: the local chief and some of his close relatives had successfully delineated a grazing area for his own, some households participating in grazing schemes profited from the tutelage of the NGO running the scheme and households near the major tourist attractions gained from some small contracts with tourist entrepreneurs. Some women did directly profit from the harvest and sale of some wild resources (especially the resins of *Commiphora wildii* which were used as perfume) organised through the NGO active with the conservancies. They felt that their access to these resources was safe-guarded best under the protection of the regulations of a community forest. There were others who would have wanted to profit more from the new options: they busily campaigned for the emergence of a conservancy in order to participate from the monies brought by tourists and tourist entrepreneurs (who still paid a levy directly to the chief) and yet others hoped to gain from improved water supply through newly established water-point committees. Local actors who did not belong to one of the two dominant ethnic communities (Herero, Himba), many of them with Angolan ancestry, found it difficult to enrol as members of newly found conservancies – the establishment of conservancies rather underlined their outsider status, as activists of emergent conservancies argued that giving them full membership would be tantamount to accept their presence once and for all.

2. The wider framework

These local processes of differentiation, fragmentation and social experiment took place within a wider political framework in which a newly independent Namibia sought for strategies to democratise former homeland politics and to use natural resources sustainably. With the independence of Namibia in 1990 a number of fundamental socio-political processes were set in motion (see also Miescher & Henrichsen 2000, Friedman 2005). Whereas the Kaokoveld had been a separate administrative unit with its own homeland administration and had been isolated for many decades from the rest of the country now linkages to actors and organisations beyond the Kaokoveld were intensified. The homeland Kaokoland became the administrative unit Kunene Region and Opuwo became the administrative headquarter attracting civil servants but also migrants from other areas. Tourism in the region boomed and NGO activities became prominent. Within a period of 20 years the population probably grew by 30 per cent and perhaps more. Due to the immediate supply of drought fodder to herds during droughts in the early and the late 1990s herds grew unfettered.

The central government changed laws pertaining to the management of natural resources. The direction of these legal changes was uni-directional: state-controlled resources as game and water as well as resources which had been administered semi-autonomously like forest and pasture were to be managed by locally constituted user groups. These groups were established as legal bodies, with well defined membership, clearly defined resource base and democratically elected committees. These legal changes intersected with a number of other dynamics which can hardly be touched upon here: trade developed rapidly in the region, traditional authorities became delegitimized (Bollig 2011) while a new elite (linked either to the administration, to NGO activities or to trade) established itself, the population grew profoundly. With Opuwo an urban centre rapidly developed from an army camp to a regional administrative centre with some 6000 inhabitants. Banks, modern means of telecommunication and whole-sale shops got established in the area. Whereas it was difficult in 1994 to do any phone-call out of the area, now many local people made use of cellular phones.

Probably due to the affiliation of some parts of the population with the South African administration and the South African army, many inhabitants of the Kaokoveld felt oppositional to the new independent government. When in the mid 1990s the government tried to push for a huge hydro electric dam at the Kunene against the will of the larger part of the local population this anti-government stand became even more pronounced (Friedman 2005, Bollig 2011).

In the following I will first sketch the legal changes pertaining to natural resource

management in Namibia and will outline some local consequences. I will then proceed to highlight how local actors involved themselves in newly found institutions and how others failed to find their place in these institutional changes.

3. The changing legal framework

In several southern African Countries the legislation on game use, water and forestry has been changed during the 1990s and early 2000's. The general trend has been a devolvement of administrative rights to the local level and the establishment of "accountable" local institutions. I will shortly address the three different fields of legal innovation: game, water, forestry.

3.1 Conservancies and *Community Based Natural Resource Management* (CBNRM)

CBNRM attempts to establish links between local development and resource protection and in conservancies such a link is meant to emerge from community based game protection and locally reaped incomes from tourism (Gujadhur 2000, Jones 2001, SNV 2001).¹ Local communities are encouraged, to establish corporate entities, with a regulated membership, a well defined territory, representative forms of internal leadership, democratically legitimized institutions and detailed management plans. In many respects the formula for CBNRM mirrors Elinor Ostrom's design principles for communal resources. In return, the Namibian Ministry of Environment and Tourism delegates rights in game and other natural resources to the newly formed corporate entity, the conservancy. Once a conservancy is formally registered it may engage in contracts with the private sector and lease out parts of the conservancy's land to tourist companies. A conservancy may also engage in contracts with tourist operators who run hunting tours or photographic safaris. Income derived from such contracts stays with the conservancy and is administered by the elected conservancy committee.

The Conservancy approach has grown into a fully fledged movement in Namibia and is especially relevant in north-western Namibia; after the Torra Conservancy in Kunene

¹ The umbrella organisation of Namibian CBNRM organisations NACSO (*The Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organisations*) presents the aims of the CBNRM approach as follows: "(i) supporting sustainable use and conservation of Namibia's unique ecosystems and related biodiversity (the majority of biodiversity is to be found outside the National Park network); (ii) promoting appropriate land management schemes in an environment where availability of water and suitable rangeland as well as land degradation are the key limiting factors to sustainable management of scarce resources; (iii) contributing to reduce poverty in rural areas by providing diversified livelihood strategies through responsibility over local resources, thereby addressing root causes of threats to unsustainable ecosystem management; and (iv) promoting participatory, accountable and democratic systems of local and regional governance". (NACSO, 2001)

Region and the NyaeNyae *Conservancy* in Otjozondjupa-Region became registered in 1998, over 50 conservancies have become registered meanwhile. Natural resources in major parts of the Kunene Region are nowadays administered through conservancies.

Non-Governmental institutions have been instrumental in the establishment of conservancies. In order to prevent competition and to integrate activities NGOs have specialised regionally and thematically. IRDNC (*Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation*) mainly deals with conservancies in the Kunene and the Caprivi Region and is instrumental in the establishment of management plans and constitutions.² Beyond a narrow focus on game protection IRDNC has widened its portfolio and is also active in the field of grazing management. Like all other NGOs active in the wide field of CBNRM IRDNC is mainly funded by major international donors.

3.2 Water-point and Forestry Committees: The devolvement of management rights in game and forests from state to community

In the late 1990s new legislation on water management in communal areas (Water and Sanitation Policy [WASP] of 1997, Water Resources Management Act of 2004) and forestry (Forest Act, Act 2 of 2001) was passed, stipulating the control over water and forestry in communal areas to be handed over to communities. Boreholes were handed over by the regional branch of Water Affairs to local water-point committees. The Water Resources Management Act of 2004 underlines the community based approach of WASP (PTT 2005:16). At the local level the Act “encourages and provides guidelines for local water point users to establish water point user associations and local water user associations. Members of the water point user associations will elect water point committees to oversee the daily management of water resources and financial issues.” (PTT 2005:16, see especially Part 5 Sect. 16). The functions of Water Point Users Associations are fixed as follows “(a) make rules for the use of rural water supply by members and non-members, (b) power to prevent any person who does not comply with the rules or constitutions of a water point user association from using such water point, (c) power to adopt measures to prevent the wastage of water and (d) power to plan and control the use of communal land in the immediate vicinity of the water point in co-operation with the respective communal land board and traditional authority.” (Part 5 Sect 16 of Water Resources Management Act of 2004). A special court –

² RISE (*Rural Peoples’ Institute for Social Empowerment*) concentrates on *Conservancies* in the Erongo-Region and NDT (*Namibia Development Trust*) works with *Conservancies* in the south and the east of the country. NACOBTA (*Nambian Community Based Tourism Association*) offers expertise to engage in and control contracts between conservancies and private businesses. NNF (*Namibia Nature Foundation*) has its own projects and has established conservancies in the Kavango Region but also administers donor-funds on behalf of other projects.

the Water Tribunal is established to hear and decide on matters relating to water resources. The Water Tribunal will enable water point users associations to lay charges against water users who do not comply with the provisions of their respective water point rules – but apparently the Tribunal has not been very active.

Each water-point community consists of a specified number of households which constitute a committee as a decision making body. This committee sets up a number of rules how the water point should be used and specifies what each household has to contribute to the common good. If such a management plan is in place the water point is refurbished by the Department of Water Affairs and then formally handed over to the community. The Department of Water Affairs will then only come in if substantial repairs to the installation are necessary. Communities found fairly different solutions for water point management. While for example one community requests each household to contribute on a monthly basis according to the size of the herd, another one works on yearly contributions and a third one requires minimal amounts of money and stipulates that each household in turn has to contribute one or two cans of diesel. Apparently the new regulations of water use bear several potentially severe problems: regulations on contributions may be bent in a way that rich people pay little more than poor people and in fact poor people may feel forced to subsidise the much bigger herds of their wealthier neighbours; non-payment of fees may lead to the exclusion of users: this potentially opens a situation in which poorer households are excluded from the use of water. There has been very little research on the effects of the new water legislation.

The Forest Act provides the legal framework for the proclamation of community forests relating to the use of forests and forest produce (repeals former legislation such as the Proclamation No.1 of 1923 Bees and Honey Proclamation, Ordinance No 37 of 1952 Preservation of Trees and Forests ordinance, and the Forest Act 1968, Act No. 72). The new law enables the Minister of Lands and Resettlement to declare three types of forest areas: state forest reserves, regional forests and community forests. In the case of community forests the Act transfers rights (fixed in a management plan) “to manage and use forest produce and other natural resources, to graze animals, to authorise others to exercise those rights, to collect and retain fees, and to impose conditions for the use of the forest.” (PTT 2005:14). In this way the Forest Act also provides for a grip on pastures and is not only geared towards true forests.

3.3 Grazing Schemes

The management of pastures was not directly addressed either by the conservancy legislation (which pertained to game), the water point legislation (which pertained to water) or

the forestry act (which pertained to forests but had a caveat for pastures). This may seem odd as pastures are the key resource within the pastoral and agro-pastoral systems of northern Namibia. One may wonder why this local key resource was so much left out in the process of re-organising local resource tenure: I assume that pasture management was just not on the agenda of international donors and conventions which concentrated on biodiversity protection (game, forests) and the sound management of water.

However, since about 2005 grazing schemes based on the principles of holistic range management were established in gazetted and emergent conservancies. If necessary they made use of the Forestry Act to define project areas which were to be exclusively used by grazing scheme members. While for a period of some few years only pilot projects were run, since 2009 the programme was rolled out to reach a larger number of communities. Grazing schemes were usually embedded within conservancy management plans. While the conservancy plan mainly cared for wildlife protection and the allotment of parcels of land to conservation and pasture, grazing schemes directly addressed the management of ranges through livestock. Holistic range management held the promise that the intense management of large, combined livestock herds allowed for high stocking rates and yet sustainable land use. Short grazing periods and long fallows would allow for a recuperation of ranges, the re-establishment of perennial grasses and improved care for livestock. In several instances I found that those active in grazing schemes were also active in the establishment of conservancies.

4. Deinstitutionalisation and the search for the reorganisation of common pool resource management

In a second step I would like to pinpoint how local actors navigate through a period which on the one hand they perceive as crisis ridden and which on the other hand offers a multitude of institutional solutions to their pertinent questions. It is noteworthy that interviewed herders were unanimous in their judgement that the system was actually going through a crisis and that new options of management should be considered. The degradation of pastures they framed as “the country has become weak” and then listed more detailed observations. They also reported on a great number of meetings which had taken place to find new institutional solutions to the grazing problem. Some, however, did not want to wait for new institutions to emerge. During the past decade a remarkable out-migration of households from the research area had taken place: some households had migrated south of Opuwo (some 200km away), some reaching the Sesfontein area (some 350km away), others going to the wider Ekoto area (c. 300km). Some households had left for Angola and some few had more or less

permanently settled in a neighbouring mountainous area. Some of the heads of out-migrating households could be interviewed on the reasons for their decision. The answers were unanimous: the pastures had been bad in the research area, losses of livestock due to emaciation had been frequent and other areas seemed to offer better grazing due to either better grasses or better management. The out-migration of households from the wider Epupa area has been paralleled by similar moves of Himba households from other areas of the Epupa constituency to the southern parts of the Kaokoveld, areas which are mainly occupied by Herero herders. These moves were clearly different from the normal transhumant patterns of seasonal mobility. In migrations taking two to four weeks several hundred heads of livestock had to be moved over 200 to 300km. New transhumant patterns of mobility were established from the new settlement areas. In a two week long survey we listed 26 Himba households in the southern parts of the Kaokoveld, which had taken residence there. It is hard to establish with what number of cattle they migrated there. In interviews migrant herders said that they were attracted to these areas by better grazing conditions and by more stable institutions of resource tenure. Many Herero herders however saw these moves with some scepticism and alleged that migrant Himba herders often contributed to the demise of grazing by adding substantial numbers of cattle to the regional herd and by not adhering strictly to grazing rules.

4.1 Conservancies as an option to redefine “the community of resource users”

In this situation of perceived crisis and increasing mobility local actors actively went for various offers of GOs and NGOs to reorganise resource tenure. The region's herders resorted to the conservancy movement in astonishingly high numbers and in an amazingly rapid manner: the first conservancy in the wider region was inaugurated in 1998, only 10 years later almost the entire region has been parcelled out in already endorsed or in emergent conservancies. While the map shows that almost the entire former Damaraland has been turned into a patchwork of conservancies, large parts of Opuwo and Epupa Constituencies have been turned into conservancies as well. In the centre of the Kunene Region a number of emergent conservancies are seeking formal acknowledgement from the government and in a few years time probably the entire Kunene Region will be covered by conservancies.

Many conservancies in the Kunene region are cut along the boundaries of former wards which under South African rule (that is until 1989) were identical with chieftaincies: On the one hand it was much easier to resort to former chieftaincy boundaries than to define completely new ones when negotiating boundaries with neighbouring communities. On the

other hand traditional elites were keen to see the territorial structures they were relating to being transformed into entities of natural resource management. In order to prepare the documents for registration the boundaries of conservancies were to be clearly marked making use of modern mapping equipment. This process of successful boundary demarcation of chiefdoms was frequently mentioned by traditional authorities as something beneficial and as a measure that would at the same time ensure that outsiders would not trespass on “their” territory and would hold conflicts with neighbouring communities at bay in the long run. (... but leading to a spate of heated debates between community leaders during the establishment of conservancies).

While traditional authorities had comparatively little say in governmental administrative procedures after 1990, they now became partners of non-governmental organisations. This engagement with the NGO sector also offered material rewards. While beforehand the South African government had paid chiefs’ salaries, such a procedure was disbanded as only two out of the Kaokoveld’s 36 chiefs were acknowledged as traditional leaders. Through conservancies and agreements with the conservancy committees some chiefs could divert some income from tourism into their coffers. Also institutionally they were included in the reorganisation of resource tenure.

The first issue a conservancy had to solve was to define the relation of its elected committee to the local chief and his councillors or sub-chiefs. Conservancies in north-west Namibia have solved this issue with a great enthusiasm for constitutional experiments. Conservancy constitutions have found very different ways to define the linkage to traditional authorities: in some committees the traditional authorities are ex-officio members, in some they are only allowed to send representatives and in yet others they establish a sort of second chamber together with their councillors. It is noteworthy however, that there is not one constitution where traditional authorities are not of decisive relevance. Chiefs however are often ambivalent about the emergence of new resource management units and clearly feel that new nodal points of decision-making are emerging within the local community. They are often at loggerheads with these up-coming community activists, who in many instances are better educated and better connected than they are.

A land management plan on which all members of a conservancy agree upon, a plan which specifies pastures for seasonal grazing, settlement areas and core conservation areas is part and parcel of the application to the Ministry of Environment and Tourism for a conservancy status. Communities devote a long time into such plans and for months and sometimes years such plans are discussed controversially. The prior system of land management did not such written fixations.

Why do local actors go for such a time consuming exercise, which occasionally brings the community to the brink of severe internal conflict. There are several answers: (1) First, the

land management plan later becomes an officially endorsed document which is deemed to be the blueprint for future land use. Many people interviewed voiced their hope that the reshaping of chieftaincies as conservancies and the acknowledgment of the central government of such boundaries would restore some degree of sovereignty to them and would in case of outsiders intruding into their conservancy compel the government to side with them. It was also the hope that in such cases legal means could be taken against outsiders that motivated the move towards this legal form of tenure. (2) Second, the combination of traditional and modern elites in committees offered a chance to harmonize the aspirations of both parties. (3) Third, conservancies were deemed to be modern and held the promise to bring new kinds of income and measures of capacity building to communities; the erection of camping grounds in some communities, and the investment into other infrastructure (such as boreholes) in others heightened expectations of material rewards from the participation in the programme.

4.2 Grazing Schemes as an attempt to attain control of local resources

In some areas of the Kunene Region Grazing Schemes based on the principles of holistic range management were inaugurated. Holistic range management rests on the assumption that high stocking densities can be maintained, once it is assured that intense grazing is concentrated in short time intervals. In order to guarantee such conditions household herds are amalgamated preferably to herds of a few hundred animals and are put under one management. This is a sharp divide from earlier practices: herding was autonomously organised by the household. The joined herd is then grazed on clearly demarcated stretches of pasture for short periods of time. The introduction of such schemes implicates a profound reorganisation of herd management in Himba and Herero households. Where such schemes have been implemented several households come together and build one central cattle enclosure from which grazing is organised. Each household seconds one or two herders to the joined herd. In several instances milk was transported from this main enclosure to the cattle camps. Through most of the year the herd is herded together at varying distances from the main settlement.

The HRM project currently works with five project groups. Roughly they could be divided in three types:

1. **Communities:** In Erora and Otjiuu entire communities (in both cases more than 10 households) opted for HRM. In these cases all households of the community participated in the programme. In these cases the program was backed by the traditional authority. Households opted for herding all their cattle together all year

long. As a consequence project herds were fairly large, numbering between 600 and 1000 cattle (temporarily apparently even more). Households joining the community have to agree to the principles of HRM herding before being admitted. In both communities this happened repeatedly and occasionally new-comers herded under HRM rules for some months and then returned to their home communities and traditional herding styles.

2. **Herding Associations:** In Otjikango and Otjindingwe herders were herding parts of their cattle herds together. In both cases it were cows and calves which were herded together, while oxen and also small stock were herded in other places. Accordingly the project herds were rather small and usually numbered between 80 and 200 cattle. The herding associations applied HRM regulations mainly in one grazing area. The three Otjikango herders were struggling to apply grazing principles also in the rainy season area of Ondova, where also other households who are not members of the project reside and use pastures. The seven herders from Otjindingwe currently agreed to herd according to HRM principles as long as they are in Otjindingwe, which they use as a dry season grazing area. Once they return to their respective communities however they will not be able to apply HRM.
3. **Patron-based groups:** The Omao group has basically formed around one wealthy individual. Mr. Tjirora owns probably far more than half of the cattle herded under HRM. HRM herding continues throughout the year, where the project has drilled a borehole. All project members come from Omao community, which in total has some 12 households. This implicates that only a third of the community participates in the project. The community has to harmonize the ideas of some herders practising HRM and others practising traditional herding styles.

The re-organisation of labour is an essential point of the HRM project. It is very obvious that to apply sound range management principles herding duties have to be re-scheduled completely. Usually herders accompany cattle herds just an hour or so in the direction they want the animals to move to and then go back to the homestead to turn to other duties. Occasionally smaller children are walking with – or rather trailing behind – herds. This is rather to prevent losses than to actually steer herding. HRM herding however requires that herds are actively herded. They are moved in larger groups and with larger speed across the terrain. This requires adult or at least adolescent herders. The project groups had found different answers to this challenge. The project group at Omao had employed four shepherds which were not from their community. The Erora/Otjiuu groups have about ten herders each. Each group had found different approaches for the payment of shepherds. As the work was classified as project work, the NGO motivating herders for the scheme, was asked to pay the

“salaries” for the shepherds, who for that purpose were rather regarded as project staff then as herders looking after the animals of close kin. It was argued that these young men would otherwise look for jobs in road construction or farm-work. Payment scales were different: the herders at Omaso were paid slightly better than the herders at Erera (300 in Erera and 200 in Omaso). The Himba communities apparently have not yet found a permanent answer to this challenge: in both places we met small children being in charge of the herds and factually trailing behind the animals as before. In both instances herd owners claimed that cattle would be herded according to HRM principles when they were present. Probably they spend some time herding themselves. On the other hand Himba households argued that it was not good to pay shepherds and they also did not ask the NGO for any contribution in this direction.

The definition of boundaries became a crucial problem for grazing questions. The success of holistic range-management was endangered should cattle of other communities stray onto their pastures frequently. This necessitated buffer zones around grazing schemes or more intense supervision of herds of their neighbours.

All HRM project groups stroke direct links with existing and emerging conservancies. All HRM projects were located within emerging or gazetted conservancy areas. In several cases members of the HRM project were also prominent members within local conservancies. The leading figure of the Omaso HRM project was also chairman of the Okangundumba conservancy. In the Otjiuwa/Erera case some HRM project members were active as committee members of the emergent Okongoro conservancy. The same held true for the Ovahimba project areas where project members were active very active in the Epupa conservancy.

4.3 The dynamics of institutions

How do these changes impact land management in the case study area, the wider region? I will again turn my attention to the community I know best. Several profound changes have taken place there over the past ten years. A conservancy status has been applied for. After lengthy negotiations with a neighbouring emergent conservancy on the boundaries and even more difficult negotiations between the local chief and the emergent conservancy committee on the sharing of benefits derived from tourist businesses in the conservancy area all necessary documents have been handed in to the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. The land management plan attached to this application shows core conservation areas, areas designated for intense use through livestock herds and settlement areas. Currently the community is awaiting the Ministry's final decision and the years to come have to show to what extent the land management plan and the steering of some aspects of resource exploitation through an elected committee will shape resource exploitation. Within the

emergent Epupa conservancy a grazing scheme has been launched some years ago which is supported by an NGO and which also renders support to the emergent conservancy. A number of herders (varying between three and six over the course of the years) came together to herd their cattle according to the principles of holistic range management in the Otjikango area. In order to allow them to water a larger herd of cattle permanently at the Otjikango well, the NGO drilled a new borehole there. During the rainy season they moved their animals to Ondova where they joined other cattle camps. There they did not herd according to the principles of holistic range management. They agreed with other community members and the chief that other cattle camps should abstain from moving into the Otjikango area unless they join the grazing scheme.

Who was driving these moves towards conservancies and new modes of range management? The chairman of the conservancy is a local herdsman who had left the area several years ago and resides 250km away from the conservancy area. He works for the NGO active with conservancies in the region and travels frequently to the area. Most of his close relatives still live in the area and through his deputy – at the same time his mother's brother's son - he is always well presented in the area. There are several other Himba migrants who are very active in the establishment of the conservancy. Asked whether they would possibly return to the area once the conservancy was established they answered that they would probably not do so, as they liked the new environment. However, they pointed out that their relatives were all still living in the region. Younger people were disproportionately represented in the discussions on the conservancy and also on water-point associations. Local discussions were usually accompanied by staff of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism and/or the NGO – both were often even instrumental in bringing people together by providing lifts. Negotiations on resource management plans usually involved sets of different stakeholders – quite a number of them not even making direct use of local resources but rather interested in wider political aims.

5. Summary

Resource management in north-western Namibia has changed profoundly. It is as yet difficult to say into what direction the pastoral mode of production changes as new institutions of resource tenure are only emerging. At the moment the fragmentation of common pool resource management dominates: the group of resource users becomes internally more differentiated and so do the rules of resource use themselves. In our case study area the people of Omuhandja and the herders of Otjikango – for different reasons – try to establish their own commons and to stipulate their own rules for their management. In both cases the community sharing a resource becomes restricted and certain management principles are

more narrowly defined. Outside agencies – NGOs and GOs alike - are involved in the local search for new institutions: they either inform about blue prints for conservation management or rules conducive for a smooth working of grazing institutions. Rules derived from such blueprints as well as older, locally established institutions are reconsidered locally and their potential combinability is much discussed. Such developments seem rather typical all over the Kunene Region and whether new stable institutions will emerge organising resource management across the wider landscape seems questionable.

6.

7. Bibliography

- **To be supplied later** -