



KATHOLISCHE UNIVERSITÄT
EICHSTÄTT-INGOLSTADT

Hunting “the wild”

(Re-)configurations of “the wild” through dynamics of practices,
imaginations and place

Dissertation for the doctoral degree at the Faculty of Mathe-
matics and Geography of the Catholic University Eichstätt-
Ingolstadt

Submitted by

Nina Welters

*Düsseldorf

Eichstätt, 2025

Date of submission:	21.06.2024
First supervisor:	Prof. Dr. Christian Steiner
Second supervisor:	Prof. Dr. Richard Nate
Date of defence:	12.12.2024

Acknowledgement

I would like to take a moment to express my gratitude to the various people who supported me during this PhD.

First and foremost, my thanks go to my supervisors Prof. Dr. Christian Steiner and Prof. Dr. Richard Nate, who were both always open for questions, valuable advice, and fruitful discussions and gave me the freedom to develop the project to my own likings.

Furthermore, I would like to thank Matthias Bellinghausen for taking the time to give his honest, critical and well thought out feedback on the first version of this text, and Alexandra Kaiser for the beautiful map she created and individualised for me in an incredibly short time.

Thank you to my GraKo people, who I was lucky to share this journey with, and my friends who joined me on this rollercoaster more or less willingly – going through the ups and downs together made these past few years much easier and I am beyond grateful for all their patience, support and the little escapes from reality.

Without the people in Namibia, who opened their doors, minds and hearts for me and introduced me to so many new perspectives, insights and experiences, this whole project would not have turned out near the way it is now. I learned so much more than I ever could have expected and not just for my project but for life. Namibia, its people and nature will always have a special place in my heart.

And finally, I want to thank my mum and dad, who were with me every step of the way – physically, in my mind and in my heart, on earth and in heaven. They never stopped believing in me and encourage me to keep hunting my dreams.

Note on gender and content warning

Especially when talking about hunting, narratives tend to only include male examples and the male gender. As a female myself, I did encounter such stereotypical moments during my own research and am well aware that this not only applies to hunting in a traditional sense. However, I decided to use male gender forms in general throughout the text except for situations which specifically refer to females. This in no way intends to exclude females from my research but simply serves the purpose of easier accessibility and comprehensibility of the text.

This dissertation contains descriptions and explicit graphics of lethal animal hunting, including guns, shooting, dead animals, and their processing. If you do not wish to be confronted with these, you may consider skipping pages 51, 95, 99-101, 103, 110-113, 117-118, 121-122, 124-125, 127-128. Please note that this might impede transparency and plausibility of the conclusion(s) presented.

Table of contents

I	Table of figures	III
II	Glossary	IV
1.	Hunting “the wild” – more than just a lethal shot!?	5
2.	Approaching “the hunt” – on theory	10
2.1	“The wild” – from threat to desire	10
2.2	“The hunt” – from ancient essential to desire	18
2.3	What to hunt – geographical imaginations	23
2.4	How to hunt – social practices	26
2.5	Where to hunt – places	33
2.6	How to succeed in hunting – linking imaginations, practices, and places	36
3.	Hunting ground Namibia	43
3.1	From colonialism to independence	43
3.2	Namibia and “the wild”	46
4.	Assessing “the hunt” – on methodology	52
4.1	Participant observation	54
4.2	Hanging out	59
4.3	Go-along interview	62
4.4	Semi-structured interview	67
4.5	Content-structuring qualitative content analysis	71
4.6	Critical reflection	74
5.	Practicing “the hunt” – from imagining to reminiscing “the wild”	81
5.1	Imagining “the wild” – images & expectations	81
5.2	Stalking “the wild” – tracking & watching	89
5.3	Getting in touch with “the wild” – petting, driving & camping	102
5.4	Shooting “the wild” – cameras & rifles	109
5.5	Mediating “the wild” – campfire stories, trophies & the untold	120

6. “The wild” – (re-)configured by hunting	130
III Bibliography	134
IV Appendix	160
IV.1 Landownership and land use in Namibia	160
IV.2 Categorisation of game species	161
IV.3 ART Measurement System	164
IV.4 Guiding questions	165
IV.5 Code handbook	166

I Table of figures

Figure 1: Theoretical frame of social practices, geographical imaginations and places	36
Figure 2: Cattle fence	49
Figure 3: Game fence	49
Figure 4: Top categories of the coding system	73
Figure 5: Herd of blue wildebeest, Etosha NP	81
Figure 6: Kudu bull, Waterberg Plateau	89
Figure 7: Watching elephants at the waterhole in Okaukuejo, Etosha NP	90
Figure 8: Spotted hyena during a night game drive, Etosha NP	91
Figure 9: Cars gathering at a waterhole, Etosha NP	92
Figure 10: Car queue on the way to Deadvlei, Namib-Naukluft NP	92
Figure 11: Safari car with closed cabin, Cape Cross Seal Reserve	97
Figure 12: Toyota Land Cruiser on a farm	97
Figure 13: Toyota Hilux in the Namib Desert, Garub	98
Figure 14: Sunrise in the side view mirror, Epupa	98
Figure 15: Oryx tracks, Sesriem	99
Figure 16: Petting a "tame" cheetah, private sanctuary near Etosha	102
Figure 17: Camping at a higher-end campsite, Uis	106
Figure 19: View over the Aba Huab river bed from campsite	108
Figure 18: Bucket shower at Camp Aussicht	108
Figure 20: Taking a picture of a Namib dune gecko, Dorob NP	109
Figure 21: Hunting client and PH preparing to shoot	110
Figure 22: Photographer aiming at a group of seals, Cape Cross Seal Reserve	111
Figure 23: Camelthorn tree in Deadvlei, Namib-Naukluft NP	115
Figure 24: Tourists shooting in Deadvlei, Namib-Naukluft NP	116
Figure 25: Trophy picture with black wildebeest	117
Figure 26: Campfire	120
Figure 27: Close-up shot of a Namib dune gecko, Dorob NP	125
Figure 28: Farm worker skinning a black wildebeest for a shoulder mount	127

II Glossary

ART	Age Related Trophy Measurement System
biltong	air-dried beef/game meat in stripes or flakes (afr.)
boerewors	farmers sausage, a typical type of bratwurst for braai (afr.)
braai	barbecue (afr.)
CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resource Management
DEHRLA	Desert Lions Human Relations Aid
game	any wild animal hunted for animal products, recreation and/or trophies
HCRN	High Commission of the Republic of Namibia
kamp	plot, subdivision of land (afr.)
MEFT	Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism
mielie pap	millet or corn mash (afr.)
NACSO	Namibian Association of Community Based Natural Resource Management Support Organisations
NAPHA	Namibian Professional Hunters Association
NAU	Namibian Agricultural Union
NTB	Namibia Tourism Board
PH	professional hunter
SWAPO	South-West Africa People's Organisation

1. Hunting “the wild” – more than just a lethal shot!?

“It is 5 a.m. in the morning when my alarm goes off. My head is a bit heavy from the drinks last night at the bar. Still half asleep, I get dressed and step outside to grab a coffee. Dawn hasn’t yet begun and the cold morning air quickly clears my mind. Just now I am starting to realise what I am up to today. It all started with a few drinks and chats at the bar [...] Here I am now, up before dawn and ready to go on a hunt” (Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022)

Hunting is one of the most primal practices of humankind and typically associated with the stalking and killing of wild animals for resources, recreation, and profit. In everyday language however, “hunting” is used to signify the going after, the chase of a certain goal or desire – whether this is an animal, an inanimate object, a social status, a source of income or any other personally relevant purpose. Going on a hunt and thus following one’s desires involves having the goal mapped out clearly in one’s imagination to then strive for “the real” experience through a variety of practices at a destined place.

“The wild” and experiencing it as this somewhat mysterious and just as intriguing as nerve-racking concept of seemingly unspoiled and pristine nature which is out of human control can be seen as one of modern days greatest desires. From initially representing the place of evil and threat, it’s meaning has become increasingly romanticised in most Western societies as a place of reconnection and escape from uniformity of daily life, allowing to explore adventure, serenity and self-efficacy instead. In the course of this, what used to be praised as an elitist practice, traditional hunting of wild animals is increasingly being deemed unethical, out-dated or even barbaric and unnecessary. The value of “the wild” and the characteristics sought for are, for the majority of people, nowadays derived from its existence and persistence against human influence, thus crediting living animals and pristine, uninhabited landscapes alongside so-called “non-consumptive” practices of experiencing them higher (moral) worth than “consumptive” or lethal hunting practices.

Despite the harsh societal differentiation and judgement of different “hunting” practices, the image of “the ideal wild” and the strive to turn this image into a “real-life” experience seems to be rather uniform and commonly shared within Western societies. This therefore raises the main question of “How is ‘the wild’ (re-)configured through practices of hunting?”. While trying to answer this, it will also be necessary to think about aspects like

“What is expected from ‘the wild’?”, “How do people approach and conduct their hunt?” and “In how far does place matter when hunting ‘the wild’?”.

Research on “wilderness”, and the “placing” of nature, “wilderness” and “wildlife” in particular, is plentiful, with the most prominent works by authors of human and animal geography like Sarah WHATMORE & Lorraine THORNE (1998, 2000), Chris PHILO & Chris WILBERT (2000) and Julie URBANIK (2012). What they all have in common, aside from their disciplinary background, is their questioning of a seemingly naturalised dichotomy of nature or “wilderness” on the one hand and culture or civilisation on the other hand that has been passed down through (Western) society for centuries. They rather understand “wilderness” as the result of place- and context-bound social configuration processes. Analysing aspects of “placing” and “place-making” however in most cases remain on symbolic and case-specific levels with focus on the social configurations themselves.

While the configured character of places of “the wild” and the social allocation of meanings are critically thematised, the “how” of these configurations, namely the practices of configuring, however, are strikingly underexposed. Theoretical approaches lack the transition from recognising the social configurativeness of places and “the wild” to the assessment of the preceding practices that only allow “the wild” to be placed somewhere and a place to come into existence as one for/of “the wild”. Simultaneously, in cases where practices are thematised, e.g. in research on wildlife tourism in Africa, they are dealt with superficially as descriptions of what people do and contrasting this to other groups of actors, especially highlighting and judging the seemingly gaping chasm between non-consumptive (photography) tourism and consumptive (trophy hunting) tourism (cf. BOTHA 2005, GISSIBL 2016, KOOT et al. 2020). Instead of dividing and focusing on groups of actors and their activities individually, there appears to be great potential in dissecting the individual practices regardless from their participants first, therefore allowing deeper connections, shared and distinguishable elements and their culminating effects on the perception of “the wild” to come to the foreground outside of ideological barriers.

Speaking of ideology, the originally colonial conceptualisation of “empty other lands” as basis for the Western ideal of “the wild”, including the paradox of favouring wildlife-inhabited landscapes, and its regular continuation in “modern” imaginations has been widely recognised and criticised in academia, namely by authors like CREWS (2001) or D’HAUTESERRE (2004). However, the way these are (re-)configured on a regular basis through everyday practices have rarely been looked at, partially except for trophy hunting,

which has been out-called as highly (neo-)colonial practice reproducing the very same power asymmetries and images that had been prevalent during European colonisation, particularly in Southern Africa (cf. GISSIBL 2016, MKONO 2019, SULLIVAN 2022/2023).

Taking hunting outside its traditional contexts like trophy shooting, killing animals and (neo)colonialism is rare but can be found in literature and gender studies, where the use of hunting terminology in contexts of love, sexual desire and lust is analysed, particularly regarding its impact on passed down gender roles (cf. e.g. LUKE 1998, LOPÉZ MAESTRE 2015/2020). Word plays with “hunting” can also very frequently be found in natural sciences, all referring to “imaginary constructs with no objective existence” (BÉDARD et al. 2013: 20) and potential discoveries based on existing technologies and knowledge (cf. e.g. LIPKIN 2010, BÉDARD et al. 2013). The aspect of chasing something specific that is desired, yet elusive and imagined seems to be a connecting factor. And while there is a considerable amount of work in the humanities on especially modern days’ increasing desire for experiencing “the wild” (cf. e.g. KIRCHHOFF & VICENZOTTI 2017), hunting as a concept is hardly applied to these cases. However, there are apparently close relations between consumptive and non-consumptive hunting practices like stalking, tracking, watching, telling stories around campfires, and creating some sort of trophy for memorising the experience. It therefore seems fruitful to take a more conceptual approach towards hunting and examine it as a collection of practices that come into play when going after or chasing a specific goal or desire – be it a material object, a living being or immaterialities.

As it has become apparent in the explanations made, imaginations, practices and place all play important roles when talking about hunting, desire and “the wild”. Theories of imaginations, practices and place are widespread in various disciplines, above all in geography and sociology, and several works do hint to interconnections between the different theories, as in the prominent example of Derek GREGORY’S geographical imaginations (cf. e.g. GREGORY 1994/1995). However, when brought together, the three concepts are rarely considered in equal depth but rather focus on one aspect that is supported or marginally touches upon one or two of the other concepts. This does show a general compatibility of the three strands of theory and also a tendency in academia to think these three together, which is why the potentials of a triangular theoretical frame building upon geographical imaginations, social practices and place likewise seem worthwhile to be explored.

Based on these gaps identified in existing research, both on a theoretical and textual level, the aim of this PhD is to explore the capabilities of conceptualising hunting as a culmination of (re)configurative practices of “the wild” as a desire aside from groups of actors and ideologies by using a triangular theoretical frame that considers geographical imaginations, social practices and place as equally influential in (re-)configuration processes. When thinking about the practical application of this theoretical frame, Namibia came across as a suitable research site as it combines several important aspects this project wants to cover. On a material level, the country offers a variety of vast and dramatic landscapes as well as an abundance of wildlife, including the classic “Big Five”, which play right into the typical Western image of “the ideal wild”. Traditional lethal hunting, whether for sustenance and meat supply, population control or trophies, is an established and highly valued practice throughout the country by locals as well as tourists. Simultaneously, other forms of wilderness- and wildlife-related tourism have a similarly high prevalence and (economic) relevance. This is also backed by the Namibian constitution that, as the very first one in Africa, accounts for the protection of environment through the maintenance and sustainable utilisation of natural resources (cf. REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA 2014: 52).

On a more theoretical level, the rather recent colonial history of Namibia as a former German colony and South African mandate until 1990 aligns with the attempted theoretical framing, allowing to critically reflect on theoretical assumptions and contrast them to actual effects and practices in the field. Additionally, the colonial history also brings about a language advantage as English and partially also German is widely spoken throughout the country. Thus, communication was relatively easy, not only in formal interviews but especially in casual conversations and ethnographic encounters which were essential elements of methodology and will be dealt with in detail in chapter 4.

Before that, chapter 2 will focus on building a coherent theoretical frame, laying the foundations for later empirical analysis by discussing the development of Western common understanding of “the wild” and working towards an early conceptualisation of “hunting”. Following this, theories of geographical imaginations, social practices and place are explicated individually to then be mended together into a coherent theoretical frame for investigating hunting of “the wild” empirically. Chapter 3 then introduces the above mentioned research field, Namibia, from its colonial history to its current state, the latter explicitly drawing vignettes on aspects of land use and ownership, the diverse roles of

wildlife in tourism and rules and regulations of trophy hunting. With this context in mind, chapter 4 outlines the different qualitative and ethnographic methods implemented during the empirical field research alongside short reflections on the experiences, challenges, and benefits encountered in the field. Afterwards, the results of the field research are presented in chapter 5, structured according to the main practices conducted during a “typical” hunt – from imagining to mediating “the wild”. The final conclusion consolidates the major findings and simultaneously offers outlooks on potential future fields of application for the theoretical considerations.

A particular emphasis is put on the note that focusing on a specifically Western configuration of “the wild” does neither deny the existence of other ways of conceptualising or thinking of this topic nor aims at naturalizing and reproducing a European/Western concept. By consciously deciding to work with this preposition of “the wild” as being something desirable to experience in a certain (pre-imagined) place, the author instead acknowledges the often unrecognised persistence of such a Western colonial ideal in a supposedly post-colonial context and aims at making the practices behind it and their ongoing effects on site more visible.

2. Approaching “the hunt” – on theory

What is perceived as “the wild”, how it is connotated and dealt with has changed over the centuries in Western societies up until its modern-day dominant appreciation as something desirable – a development worth discussing as initial context. Closely connected to “the wild” is and has always been hunting, traditionally in a sense of chasing and killing animals. But as already hinted at in chapter 1, there is more to hunting, which is why the potentials of hunting as a concept are explored in a second sub-chapter. Following, the three main pillars of the theoretical frame of this dissertation, consisting of geographical imaginations, social practices, and place, are introduced individually first, before tying them together to build a coherent and fruitful frame for the later analysis.

2.1 “The wild” – from threat to desire

In most Western/European debates – colloquial as well as academic – the term “wilderness” is predominantly used to refer to a place or landscape that is considered to encapsulate characteristics typically associated with “wild”. Viewed as a moral counterpart against modern society and culture, it is most commonly affiliated with assets of being remote, uncontrolled, (seemingly) independent and undisturbed from human influence or habitation, often also referred to as “natural”. However, what is considered “wild”, or “wilderness”, and how this is valued is far from natural. It is rather a social construct based on symbolic attributions of meaning that are situated in cultural contexts, ideals and morals leading to a huge variety of concepts and valuations of “wilderness” which additionally change with the related cultural order over time (cf. KIRCHHOFF 2017: 21ff, KIRCHHOFF & VICENZOTTI 2017: 314f, MEGERLE 2019: 676ff).

As such, “wilderness” for a long time carried predominantly negative connotations, associated with “waste” landscapes and referring to areas that were said to be barren, uncontrollable and therefore nothing of (economic) value (cf. KIRCHHOFF 2017: 20f, MEGERLE 2019: 678). It was regarded as a place of fear, violence, unruliness, and darkness, threatening the life of individuals that dared to or were forced to enter and the order of what was considered civilised society on more broader terms (cf. CASTREE 2005: 139, KIRCHHOFF & TREPL 2009: 22/43f). In Western societies, Christian religion played a particularly decisive role in carving out the differentiation of “wilderness” as place of moral evil and refuge of the persecuted on the one hand and the orderly faithful members of society on the other (cf. KIRCHHOFF & TREPL 2009: 44, KIRCHHOFF & VICENZOTTI 2017:

315). Therefore, the only way to deal with “wilderness” was to either conquer and subjugate it to people’s will or to avoid and fight against its potential intrusion into “civilisation” (cf. CASTREE 2005: 139). Others like DE MONTESINOS (1511) and DE LAS CASAS (1981) however openly criticised this derogatory and pretentious attitude, claiming all people equal in front of God and the subjugation of certain groups of people therefore not compatible with the Christian belief in human dignity (cf. BITTERLI 1986: 90ff)¹.

Especially during Romanticism, another perspective on “the wild” gained popularity – the one of “the sublime”. Works like Edmund BURKE’s “A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful” (1757) outlined how the extremes of nature like vastness, height or obscurity evoke feelings of danger, uncertainty and uncomfortable exposition. While reminding one of one’s own mortality and insignificance, these extremes simultaneously conveyed fascination, awe and exhilaration, thus valuing the experience of one’s limitations (cf. RYAN 2001: 266f, THOMA 2015: 76). “Wilderness” became a place of testing and spirituality, sometimes linked to common Christian myths of saints wandering in deserted areas. The initial mixed feelings of awe and distress associated with this spiritual experience of “wilderness” soon gave way to an increased romanticisation of being “out there” in spectacular landscapes (cf. KIRCHHOFF & VICENZOTTI 2017: 317). It became a place of refuge from the constraints and expectations of the increasingly modernised and urbanised civilisation of the late 18th and 19th century, a place where one could come back to one’s roots and rediscover one’s “true, natural” self again (cf. KIRCHHOFF & TREPL 2009: 43, KIRCHHOFF & VICENZOTTI 2017: 315ff, SCHLOTTMANN & GRAEFE 2023: 6). The very same cultural reasons that had deemed “wilderness” the place of evil now became the remains of God’s natural order – and therefore sacred (cf. MUIR 1992: 211, KIRCHHOFF & TREPL 2009: 43, KIRCHHOFF & VICENZOTTI 2017: 315).

However, this idealised “wilderness”, valued both for its aesthetically pleasing landscapes, natural harmony and serenity to recover from social pressures and expectations on the one hand and, on the other hand, promising adventure, unfiltered authenticity and “rawness”, was seen as endangered by European civilisation (cf. ROTHFELS 2002: 78ff, CASTREE 2005: 137, KIRCHHOFF & VICENZOTTI 2017: 318ff). At the time, the European

¹ See also KONETZKE (1963), SHEEHAN (1980), MARTIN (1993), GREENBLATT (2007) for more in-depth analyses of (self-)images of European colonisers, indigenous people and their various relations.

self-image was considerably shaped by a Eurocentric perspective, claiming Western societies the origin of global civilisation and therefore having already conquered and subdued anything potentially “wild” within Europe (cf. KUPPER 2008: 6, STEINKAMP 2015: 195f, KIRCHHOFF & VICENZOTTI 2017: 320). To satisfy the desire for the “*fiction of pristine, deserted areas*” (KUPPER 2008: 6; transl. by author) nonetheless, it was transferred onto European colonies around the globe as those lands were considered to still be “empty” and nature could thus be protected in its “original” state (cf. KUPPER 2008: 6, MEGERLE 2019: 678). This conceptualisation denied any previous human existence in these areas or rather, to put it more precisely, denied indigenous people equal recognition as “civilised” human beings or human beings at all by the Western colonisers (cf. OSTERHAMMEL 2006: 28).

Religion played an important role in this as the definition or characterisation of “wilds” or “savages”, as who indigenous people were often titled by European colonisers, was partially also based on their lack of Christianisation through which missionaries became important legitimate – and socially highly accepted – actors of colonisation (cf. BITTERLI 1986: 48/85, FENDLER & GREILICH 2006: 135). For some, indigenous people were equal to Europeans before God and simply had not had the chance to experience Christian revelation; therefore, missions to colonies were seen as an act of religious duty (cf. BITTERLI 1986: 25, MARTIN 1993: 195f). Alternatively, these “good savages”, an image particularly popular in the 15th and 16th centuries, meant to represent a “*natural innocence*” (KOHL 1981: 21, transl. by author) based on a way of living closer in alignment with nature as designed by God, as mentioned by Michel DE MONTAIGNE for example (cf. KOHL 1981: 21ff).

Furthermore, there was a great spark of interest in gaining and sharing knowledge about the outer-European world and its inhabitants and cultures starting in the 18th century in particular with travelogues, encyclopaedias, drawings and paintings being high in demand (cf. FENDLER & GREILICH 2006: 113, LÜSEBRINK 2006: 11ff, REINHARD 2016: 613ff). Along with this came criticism of slavery, the treatment of slaves and colonialism as inhumane, not according to societal moral values and economically not viable (any more) (cf. FENDLER & GREILICH 2006: 116f/126f, THOMA 2015: 67).

Others however, amongst them the growing European bourgeoisie of the 17th and 18th centuries in particular, referred to social classification systems based on physical traits as result of a (god-made) continuity of natural evolution (cf. MARTIN 1993: 198f, GEULEN

2021: 67). In their understanding, indigenous people, especially from the African continent, represented links or steps in the human evolution from apes to Western Europeans as most developed form of (human) life – a perspective backed by the development of Social Darwinism (cf. MARTIN 1993: 203ff, GEULEN 2021: 53).

In short, Social Darwinism generalises Charles DARWIN's Theory of Evolution (1859) with its basic assumption of "*rivalry between organisms throughout historical periods and geographical areas over survival, and only organisms survive that can best fit [or transform to fit] with the environment*" (REZANIA SHIRAZI & RAHIMI SOJASI 2022: 242) (cf. GEULEN 2021: 68f, DIOGO 2022: 376, REZANIA SHIRAZI & RAHIMI SOJASI 2022: 235/242). Thus, the three main principles of "survival of the fittest", "struggle for existence" and "evolution through (natural) selection" are transferred to societies and their constant aiming for improvement or "progress" (cf. REZANIA SHIRAZI & RAHIMI SOJASI 2022: 242). As a Eurocentric perspective, Western societal development was presumed superior to others, thus claiming social inequalities to be "*natural, inevitable, and even necessary*" (IBID 2022: 243). Social Darwinism justified the discrimination and even elimination of the perceived "other", deviating from manifested Western standards e.g. physical traits, social and moral values, or intellectual properties and "racial"/ethnic identity (cf. GEULEN 2021: 79, DIOGO 2022: 156, REZANIA SHIRAZI & RAHIMI SOJASI 2022: 242ff). Backing the self-configuration of a dominant European civilisation with these seemingly scientific arguments of Social Darwinists portrayed Western colonisations around the world as "natural" result of biodeterminism – the "white race", highly civilised in regard of European standards, as "naturally superior" to "the other" living in ascribed "*cultural backwardness*" (GISSIBL 2016: 214) – therefore becoming the racist backbone of European colonisation (cf. WHATMORE 2014: 157, GEULEN 2021: 84ff, DIOGO 2022: 156).

Violent conflicts between Europeans and indigenous people were often presented by the former as proofs of preconceived barbarism and inability to lead civilised lives; thereby withholding the fact that most of the conflicts could be attributed to the military and political threat Europeans posed to the local population, their lifestyle and property (cf. BITTERLI 1986: 27f, FENDLER & GREILICH 2006: 118ff). While some practices like deterritorialisation and dehumanisation of those people actually living in "the wilds" aimed at making those idealised images of "empty wilderness" a reality in place, other practices played a significant role in solidifying imaginaries within the social common (cf. KUPPER

2008: 6). Visual representations and narratives were and still are a major part in familiarizing people with stereotypical elements of “the wild”, making them more readily accessible to and imaginable by Westerners (cf. D’HAUTESERRE 2004: 237f/242, DELOUGHREY & HANDLEY 2011: 9ff).

One well known example of how highly influential such narratives of free but wild land that has to be subdued in order to survive can be on not only a person’s but a whole nation’s self-identity is Frederick Jackson TURNER’s “frontier thesis” (1893). It has served as popular paradigm for American socio-cultural self-understanding (cf. HOFSTADTER 1949: 434, WEBER 1986: 66f, MONDI 2006: 30). In his thesis, TURNER claims that the experiences of early European migrants in today’s US making their way from the East coast towards the West into seemingly unsettled land with severe hardships and constant struggles for existence against the “wilderness” have shaped American culture. Resulting coping strategies and values like individualism, resilience, and resourcefulness are claimed to build the core of American self-conception (cf. TURNER 1893: n.n., HOFSTADTER 1949: 434, WEBER 1986: 66f). Despite considerable criticism since its first publication, particularly regarding the greatly idealised and one-sided perspective on American development that ignores the majority of people who had drastically different experiences and e.g. could not benefit from the highly praised spatial or social mobility (see e.g. MONDI 2006), TURNER’s thesis remains relevant up until today.

Alongside the officially proclaimed elimination of the frontier line by the end of the 19th century came another shift in perspective with “wilderness” becoming increasingly recognised as a symbol for moral and cultural values. In sharp contrast to earlier dominant narratives of uncivilised, animalistic barbarism and danger that had fuelled violent and ruthless occupation, myths of “the exotic”, “the noble savage” or “paradise” resurged (cf. THOMA 2015: 76f). They not only glorified experiences of “wilderness” and an idealised image of indigenous people but essentially mourned the diminishment of their ideal – a fate they had caused themselves by conquest (cf. BITTERLI 1986: 32, D’HAUTESERRE 2004: 237f, OSTERHAMMEL 2006: 28). As one result, this called for a preservation of the last remaining areas of “wilderness” to maintain this core element of American identity and make it accessible to a wider spectatorship – the founding grounds of national parks with the very first one being the Yellowstone National Park in 1872 (cf. KUPPER 2008: 2f).

Taking all of this into account, the ideal of “wilderness” is built upon an essentialised and seemingly “natural” differentiation between “nature” or “non-human” and “society” or “human”. For “wilderness” to be considered “true” and “authentic”, it has to be most remote and independent from “us” humans and “modern” social structures – thereby eradicating people living in proclaimed “wilderness” areas or categorizing them as “wild” and “non-human” too² (cf. CASTREE 2005: 137ff, KIRCHHOFF & TREPL 2009: 22, CASTREE 2013: 24). This clearly idealised view, however, cannot fully conceal another striking paradox. As “wilderness” is constantly being mediated, imagined, experienced, evaluated, monitored, and commercialised, it becomes intrinsically interwoven with the human or social world (cf. HINCHLIFFE 2007: 13, KIRCHHOFF & VICENZOTTI 2017: 320). More still, it is fundamentally shaped and colonised by human imagination and practices with degrees ranging from naming and making sense of the world around them over distributing photographs, videos and texts to those not able or wanting to travel to crafting specific desirable experiences for touristic markets – all together (re-)configuring that historically rooted cultural conceptualisation of what “wilderness” is or should be like (cf. CASTREE 2005: 137, DELOUGHREY & HANDLEY 2011: 9ff, WHATMORE 2014: 156f).

This said, it goes without denial that that which configurations of “wilderness” mainly build upon – be it landscapes or non-human inhabitants – exist materially and are not just imagined. It is more about the memories, images, and associations we carry and share within certain cultural and social contexts that contribute to this collective understanding of “wilderness” – making it a rather “fuzzy concept” (CASTREE 2013: 27) (cf. CASTREE 2013: 27, WHATMORE 2014: 156f).

One element that has been central to the concept of “wilderness” ever since is so called “wildlife”. Defined as „*individual member of, or group of, a particular species that has not been actively controlled by humans*” (URBANIK 2012: 139), wildlife is key to the perceived value of “wilderness” as it is mainly through its presence that landscapes were and still are deemed pristine or even paradise-like and thus worth protecting and longing for (cf. WALEY 2000: 159, GISSIBL 2016: 214, PÜTZ & SCHLOTTMANN 2019: 100). At first glance, this seems to contradict the afore described criterium of an “empty” landscape to qualify as “wilderness”. A further look makes clear though that this “emptiness” only

² For more detailed discussions about the diverse and contradictory relations between Europeans and native people or so-called “wilds” especially during colonialism see e.g. KOHL 1981, BITTERLI 1986, MARTIN 1993.

refers to human habitation and, due to an ingrained binary understanding of human-wildlife-relations, does not refer to an absence of wild animals. In contrast, as the “*antipodes of human society*” (WHATMORE & THORNE 1998: 435) “*animals [...] have their place*” (CRESSWELL 2014: 253), too. Expectations are that specific animals can and should be found in certain places – and only there (cf. WHATMORE & THORNE 1998: 437, URBANIK 2012: 155ff, CRESSWELL 2014: 253).

Just like humans are configured to have no (permanent) place in “real wilderness”, wild animals have ascribed borders as well. As soon as wildlife crosses human-made, (im-)material boundaries, its associations transgress from that which brings value to a landscape to being a threat or nuisance for human livelihood. Unlike wild animals, whose boundaries are drawn rather rigid and one-sided by humans, the latter tend to carry their borders with them and flexibly impose them to their liking – whether through materials like fences or immaterially by ascribing and imagining (cf. WHATMORE & THORNE 1998: 435, BULLER 2008: 1583ff, LORIMER 2015: 164). This leads to an uneven relation where wildlife (and wilderness) is configured as static and place-bound, contained by clear borderlines while humans on the other side consider themselves “in place” wherever they go. This even applies to situations where they actually invade areas that used to be considered “wilderness” and any crossing of wildlife into these self-defined “human places” is perceived as breach of privacy (cf. URBANIK 2012: 170f, LORIMER 2015: 164).

What plays an additional role in the perception of these cases of “being near” is the likeability of certain species, mainly rooted in prescribed cultural beliefs that influence the disparate valuation of different properties (cf. VACCARO & BELTRAN 2009: 510, URBANIK 2012: 140/166ff, LORIMER 2015: 40ff). In the course of controversies and negotiations about the exceptional and the daily practices of managing various species as well as forms of tourism and land use, landscapes and animals can be turned into cultural symbols of ideologies, beliefs and history, weighing heavy as arguments for or against certain practices (cf. PROCTOR 1998: 192ff, VACCARO & BELTRAN 2009: 502ff, URBANIK 2012: 166ff). Especially when it comes to (Western) wildlife tourism, the so-called “*non-human charisma*” (LORIMER 2015: 39ff) plays an important role in deciding which species is valued how much and for which properties or purposes. While ecological charisma is mainly based on the perceived value one species has for the ecosystem, aesthetic charisma originates in a visible likeness to humans – be it through appearance or behaviour – that triggers a strong emotional response in spectators. Closely related to this aspect is the

corporeal charisma which builds upon affections and emotions, both positive or negative, that are engendered over time due to the ability of experiencing a group or individual of a certain species up close, in person and potentially during several encounters (cf. LORIMER 2007: 915f, URBANIK 2012: 175, LORIMER 2015: 39ff).

As WHATMORE (2002) phrased it, “the wild” *“is a relational achievement spun between people and animals, plants and soils, documents and devices in heterogeneous social networks which are performed in and through multiple places”* (IBID 2002: 14). It exists and persists in and through every bit of our daily life – thus being more than just about landscapes or animals (cf. WHATMORE & THORNE 1998: 437, WHATMORE 2002: 11ff, HINCHLIFFE 2007: 51f, LORIMER 2015: 7). “The wild” is encompassing all of that is “wilderness” and “wildlife”: the uncontrolled or even uncontrollable, independent and natural, unsettling or violent but special and exciting at the same time. But it goes even beyond and caters for the immaterialities of imaginations, practices and places that come with the configuration of “the wild” and the desire to encounter it as a quality.

Great parts of today’s rather static and dichotomic concept of “the wild” is mediated through visual media, like photography and films. They frame what “the wild” is and what it is not and create additional distance between “the wild” and “the non-wild” or “the civilised” as the consumers of such visual media are situated far away from those places and situations displayed (cf. DAVIES 2000: 453, RYAN 2000: 217, URBANIK 2012: 145f). It is the paradox of wanting to experience “the wild” in its most natural form, be exposed to feelings of bravery and excitement, connectedness, and empathy, already evoked through the stylistic means of videography, without having to sacrifice comfort and adapted to individual terms and conditions of hunting down one’s “ideal wild” (cf. URBANIK 2012: 145ff).

2.2 “The hunt” – from ancient essential to desire

Hunting is commonly understood as the “*chase or search for a wild animal or bird with the intention of killing or catching it for food, sport or profit*” (CAMBRIDGE DICTIONARY 2014) by (non-)humans. Hunting and “the wild” have always been closely connected, whether in practices or in values. Historically, humans have been both, the hunter and the hunted, and up until today several biochemical processes can be traced back to this position. For example so-called “fight or flight” reactions, adrenaline rushes and goose bumps that make our hair stand up in stressful or potentially threatening situations or depth perception through binocular vision, a distinct trait mostly found in predatory mammals (cf. ZANETTE & SIH 2015: 168, GROSSMAN et al. 2022: 11f/26ff). It also initiated social and cooperative behaviour in groups as well as the development of different kinds of communication – verbal, non-verbal and “written” or painted – to create and improve solidarity, efficiency, and security (cf. DENKER 2019: 6f, GROSSMAN et al. 2022: 22ff). Simultaneously, hunting and the corresponding increase of protein in humans diet allowed their brains to grow and develop, setting the basis for many processes like the use and development of tools. These outbalanced some of humans hunting disadvantages like a comparatively weak physicality and a lack of “natural” weapons e.g. claws, fangs, and bite strength (cf. DENKER 2019: 6f, GROSSMAN et al. 2022: 30).

With the dominant assertion of a sedentary and agricultural lifestyle, hunting kept losing its initial function as main means of meat supply in most (Western) societies. Instead, it developed into a recreational activity and structured competitive sport that was, especially in medieval and early modern times’ Europe, reserved for members of the royal and upper class (cf. RÖSENER 2000: 148f, KNOLL 2004: 9, GOLDBERG 2021: 4f). Moreso than just an elitist pastime, the legal regulation of hunting was accompanied by significant social exclusions. Denying great parts of society the right to hunt, designating and fencing off game parks to ensure the exclusive provision of huntable game for the elite only, to mention just a few practices, made hunting an active place-taking practice loaded with power demonstration (cf. KNOLL 2004: 9f, GOLDBERG 2021: 7ff, GROSSMAN et al. 2022: 95).

This attitude was transmitted to European colonies. In the 1840s, trophy collections, whether in private houses or in public exhibitions, became references for a hunter’s social reputation (cf. RYAN 2000: 205). In major colonizing countries like Great Britain, hunters were seen as “*pioneer[s] of the Empire*” (PEEL 1906: 4ff in RYAN 2000: 207), representing “*manly adventurer[s] and hero[es]*” (RYAN 2000: 206) and thus demonstrated the

“supposed superiority of the white [...] race as justification for colonisation in Africa” (IBID 2000: 207). Especially the hunting of so-called big game like Africa’s “Big Five” lion, elephant, buffalo, leopard and rhino or Bengal tigers and rhinos in India had the status of *“exercis[ing] all the faculties which go to make a man most manly”* (PEEL 1906: 4ff in RYAN 2000: 207). Therefore, the public display of such trophies *“served as monuments to the big-game hunters”* (RYAN 2000: 205) and symbolised the ultimate domination and prowess of man over nature (cf. RYAN 2000: 205, MANGAN & MCKENZIE 2010: 139f, MOORE 2017: 187).

“‘Man the hunter’” (LÓPEZ MAESTRE 2015: 89) was presented as the epitome of a very prevalent nature-culture dualism in which Western societies represented themselves as cultured and civilised. Everything else outside their reach and control was labelled as “nature” or “wild(erness)” that was to be conquered – whether this referred to animals, landscapes, or people (cf. RYAN 2000: 208, KNOLL 2004: 25ff, GISSIBL 2016: 206). This perspective went hand in hand with strong notions of supreme masculinity and manliness (cf. RYAN 2000: 206ff, LÓPEZ MAESTRE 2015: 108, GOLDBERG 2021: 6f). Skills required for hunting like *“physical strength, [weaponry,] horsemanship, self-discipline, and courage”* (GOLDBERG 2021: 7) were predominantly male-coded and essentialised as “natural” or “original” state of men to gain social status and recognition – aspects which prevail until today (cf. BEINART 1990: 165, GOLDBERG 2021: 6f, GROSSMAN et al. 2022: 46f).

The combination of imperial aspirations, political power demonstrations and individual strive for a “manly” self-image with trophies of particularly exotic and high-risk game species lead to a dramatic decrease and even extinction of wildlife populations. Alongside the effects of excessive hunting came other hazards like an outbreak of Rinderpest in Southern and Eastern Africa in the 1880s and 90s (cf. ROTHFELS 2002: 60ff, GISSIBL 2016: 202, MOORE 2017: 35f). These dramatic developments lead to realisations that what was left of “the wild” needed to be protected and preserved from mankind (cf. KUPPER 2008: 6, GISSIBL 2016: 203). This paralleled with changes of thought in Western societies where an idealised idea of wilderness initiated the establishment of the first national park “Yellowstone” in the U.S. in 1872, a concept which spread back to Europe (cf. KUPPER 2008: 2f). Several colonial powers like Great Britain, France, or Germany then “out-sourced” their conservation endeavours to their colonies. By establishing game reserves, conservancies, sanctuaries, and national parks they aimed to preserve the “primitive

wilderness” deemed lost in Europe’s well-advanced process of civilisation (cf. KUPPER 2008: 5f, NIXON 2011: 159ff, GISSIBL 2016: 209).

Hunters played a pivotal role in this process as they were well skilled and knowledgeable to ascertain and determine areas within the colonies that suited the required characteristics of such conservation areas best: rich in game, scenic landscape and (seemingly) unpopulated – thus “worthy” of being protected from uncontrolled depletion of natural resources (cf. GISSIBL 2016: 211ff, GROSSMAN et al. 2022: 253, KALVELAGE et al. 2023: 1824). Despite general hunting bans in these conservation areas, feudal practices of selective elitism and exclusive hunting of so-called “*imperial game*” (GISSIBL 2016: 207) for and by the emperor and his elites continued (cf. NIXON 2011: 169ff, GISSIBL 2016: 207). Local population, in contrast, was regarded from a racist Social Darwinist standpoint as “*closer to the animal ancestry of the human race than Europeans*” (RYAN 2000: 217) with no concept of sportsmanship and thus rigorously prohibited from hunting. Instead, they were made dependent of colonial forced labour as trackers, guides, or carriers – an attitude still prevalent today (cf. RYAN 2000: 217f, ROTHFELS 2002: 65ff).

In many Western societies, “wild” or pristine nature and the experience of such has become an asset of itself that is to be enjoyed as refuge from ordinary life in a less lethal or consumptive way by e.g. hiking or wildlife-watching and taking pictures rather than shooting and displaying taxidermied animals, which is what hunting has mainly been reduced to in Western general public (cf. GROSSMAN et al. 2022: 66f). Despite societies’ differentiating from nature as the opposite realm of daily cultured life and the distancing on hunting as supposedly most intense and intimate but simultaneously and more importantly most outdated and unethical way to experience nature, there remains a growing yearning and desire to seek encounters in and with “the wild” – or maybe exactly because of this distance (cf. KING 2010: 151f, GROSSMAN et al. 2022: 252ff/263ff)?

In contrast to traditional concepts of desire which regard the latter as a result or rather problem of acquisition, meaning the fundamental lack of a (possible) object, Gilles DELEUZE and Félix GUATTARI understand desire as socially constructed assemblage, a fantasy that doubles as an alternative “reality” (cf. DELEUZE & PARNET 1988, DELEUZE & GUATTARI 2000: 25f/33/40). These intricate combinations of different contextual elements form a composition – also referred to as “*landscape*” (DELEUZE & PARNET 1988) – which create a complex, to some extent “*delirious*” (IBID 1988) “*reality [...] that which we could never anticipate*” (TUCK 2010: 643) (cf. DELEUZE & PARNET 1988, DELEUZE &

GUATTARI 2000: 40, TUCK 2010: 639). It is therefore not a specific object (or person) that is desired, but an ensemble anchored in a particular object that is repetitively (re-)imagined and (re-)configured (cf. DELEUZE & PARNET 1988, DELEUZE & GUATTARI 2000: 25, KERSLAKE 2010: 51f). Desire is an ongoing process of evolving, changing and rupturing compositions; thus (re-)producing not only itself in an imaginary sense but also the social reality it refers to and is embedded in (cf. DELEUZE & GUATTARI 2000: 26/30f, TUCK 2010: 641). It is this characteristic of continuous processuality that also makes desire ever tentative, creating feelings of longing or lacking while simultaneously allowing “*the unanticipated, the uninvited, the uncharted, and unintended*” (TUCK 2010: 641) to unfold (cf. DELEUZE & PARNET 1988, DELEUZE & GUATTARI 2000: 26f/42, TUCK 2010: 640ff). Therefore, following one’s desires is much less about attaining and “owning” a physical object (or person) rather than the experience of the process of actively seeking it (cf. DELEUZE & GUATTARI 2000: 31, KERSLAKE 2010: 56, TUCK 2010: 640f). Put in other words: it’s all about the intensity and thrill of the hunt (cf. LÓPEZ MAESTRE 2015: 103, GROSSMAN et al. 2022: 35f).

Thinking about desire in such a way simultaneously allows the conceptualisation of hunting as something more than just going after and killing animals. Instead, “the hunt” as a concept can easily be transferred to various other aspects of chasing a desire – from love and sexual relationships to jobs and social status or emotions like luck and happiness. In their book “*Metaphors We Live By*” LAKOFF & JOHNSON (1980) state that, by applying the means of well established, clearly delineated and perceptible concepts to other, “*more abstract, socially controversial or emotionally irritating phenomena*” (SCHMITT 2009: n.n.; translation by author), such conceptual metaphors help structure and “*get a grasp on them*” (LAKOFF & JOHNSON 1980: 115). By forming collective patterns of meanings and thinking, conceptual metaphors are not only constitutive for day-to-day language, expressions and common sayings, but for the practical understanding and actions (with)in the world people live in (cf. JOHNSON 1987: 29, KERTÉSZ 2004: 41f, SCHMITT 2009: n.n.). Simultaneously, and much like geographical imaginations, these experiences in and of this world are the very same ones that (in)form these complex metaphors mutually (cf. LAKOFF & JOHNSON 1980: 117ff). Following LAKOFF & JOHNSON’s arguments, “the hunt” can be regarded as a source domain to better understand and talk about desire as a rather elusive concept.

Authors like KYRATZIS (2007) and LÓPEZ MAESTRE (2015) already showcased this compatibility in their works on hunting metaphors in contexts of love and sexual desire e.g. “*a heart pierced by Love’s arrows*” (LÓPEZ MAESTRE 2015: 98), “*a good catch*” (LÓPEZ MAESTRE 2015: 103) or “*harpooning someone*” (KYRATZIS 2007: 106). Moreover, a quick reflection on everyday language reveals that hunting and hunting-related topics can be found in a variety of areas of life like the “hunt for sth./sb. e.g. a job/sex/partner/luck”, “headhunt”, “fair game”, “to take a long shot” or “to bark up the wrong tree” and “run with the hare and hunt with the hounds”.

In traditional hunting, there are two basic principles which can be transferred to aforementioned situations as well. The first one is “*the idea of fair chase. [It] addresses the balance between the hunter and the hunted [...] that allows hunters to occasionally succeed while animals generally avoid being taken.*” (POSEWITZ 1994: 57). The principle of fair chase aims at putting hunters close to eyelevel with their prey and leaving the result of the hunt potentially open. Simultaneously, it calls for the ethical and respectful treatment of each animal hunted, from properly training one’s own skills of effective, thus humane shooting to the dedication of recovering every animal shot (cf. ORTEGA Y GASSET 1960: 32, CUNNINGHAM 2022: 119, GROSSMAN et al. 2022: 114). Put outside a lethal hunting context, similar concepts like “fair play” can be easily found that aim at creating a competition ground as equal and respectful as possible for all parties involved. This also caters for factors of surprise, ambition and opportunity, as the result of any competition like in sports or for a certain job is theoretically open to the best and is part of feeling a “deserved” success.

Secondly, in order to have a successful hunt, one needs an idea of (a) what exactly one is going after, (b) how to bring it down, (c) where to find it and (d) how to measure success. The first question of “what one is going after?” relates to one’s desire, configured through different elements associated and compiled in particular imaginations. Such imagining and visualising of a specific desire, informed by own ideals and external narrations, typically initiates the spark to seek to actually realise its fulfilment and can therefore be regarded as a first phase of hunting. Asking “how to accomplish?” one’s goal requires to look deeper into the combinations of elements and performances of hunting practices “on site” like stalking, getting in touch or shooting, since these are the decisive and required parts to be able to experience one’s desired thrill. The “where” of a hunt can be translated into the place of experience or encounter with the coveted. Therefore, this is also the

result of hunting practices as well as imaginations based off the “landscape”-elements of desire. And lastly, “how to measure a successful hunt?” mainly puts the expectations of the desired experience into focus. They circle back to the imaginations that initially sparked the whole experience but often refer to images and experiences shared by other hunters making mediation an integral part of past and future hunts.

Theorizing hunting in such a way allows to understand the pursuit of desire in more detail and depth. Based off the guiding principles presented before, a more theoretical approach to this topic requires the consideration of three major aspects of “a hunt”: imaginations, practices, and place. Therefore, these concepts are going to be introduced individually in the following before tying them together to form a coherent frame for the empirical analysis to account for their interrelatedness.

2.3 What to hunt – geographical imaginations

“The images we live by are inherently social” (DRIVER 2014: 234), rooted in communal as well as individual perceptions and aspirations, values and anxieties, beliefs, and practices. They culminate in specific constructions of landscapes, cultures, and identities – so called geographical imaginations (cf. DRIVER 2014: 234ff, DESBIENS 2017: 3524). Most prominently coined by Derek GREGORY (1994, 1995), geographical imaginations are configured and maintained through a variety of social practices and situated knowledge of codes, techniques, and contexts conveying generalised and idealised information, representations, and attributions of meaning (cf. GREGORY 1995: 474f, DRIVER 2014: 237ff).

As such, they can give more insights into the perception, norms, desires, fears, and ideals of those people configuring and circulating them than the actual characteristics and situations they are being ascribed to (cf. GREGORY 1995: 459ff, DRIVER 2014: 247, DESBIENS 2017: 3524). Thus, geographical imaginations cannot only be treated as mere *“representations of place, space and landscape”* (DRIVER 2014: 246), but rather be understood as fundamentally configurative for how people imagine, approach, and make sense of the world (cf. GREGORY 1994: 204f, DRIVER 2014: 235f/239/246, DESBIENS 2017: 3529). By circulating specific meaningful imaginations via different types of media, their attributions and implications become increasingly accessible and influential in shaping not only direct actions, relations, and systems of knowledge but especially the very same variety of social practices configuring, performing, and distributing them (cf. GREGORY 1994: 203f, GREGORY 1995: 462ff, DRIVER 2014: 236f/246f).

In its origins, the concept of geographical imaginations is closely tied to (post-)colonial discussions, specifically Edward SAID's "Orientalism" (1978). He exemplified how the images of and dominant narratives on the nature of the "Orient" circulated during European colonialism were not as "naturally" given as presented. They were rather intentional configurations of people, landscapes, cultures, and identities, aiming at homogenizing spaces and creating asymmetrical power and knowledge structures (cf. SAID 1995: 215, GREGORY 1995: 455ff). An important tool for this consolidation was and still is the "*principle of localisation*" (LOSSAU 2013: 656; translation by author). Assigning objects, identities, and imaginations to certain physical locations and people creates alleged homogeneous places and communities which simultaneously become the basis for legitimizing generalised configurations (cf. LOSSAU 2013: 656f, DESBIENS 2017: 3524f). This process goes hand in hand with acts of differentiation along seemingly objective differences. "The other" is created as an antagonist to define and stabilise the "self" or "right" as a positive against it, thus establishing supposedly legitimate asymmetrical power relations to justify symbolic as well as material appropriations (cf. SAID 1978: 54, GREGORY 1995: 460ff, LOSSAU 2013: 656f).

The decisions about which meanings are included and which are excluded or overwritten in these places are hereby intentional to produce and secure authority, essentialise, and stabilise attributions as well as power relations (cf. GREGORY 1995: 459ff, D'HAUTESERRE 2004: 237, DESBIENS 2017: 3525ff). An acknowledgement or "objective existence" of the assigned meanings and attributes by those referred to is not necessary to make an imagination a dominating one (cf. SAID 1978: 54, DESBIENS 2017: 3525f). What comes into play is the integral role of power and asymmetrical relations in configuring, circulating, and constituting prevailing geographical imaginations (cf. GREGORY 1995: 447f/477, DESBIENS 2017: 3524).

The term "power" is based on Anthony GIDDENS' approach in his "*theory of structuration*" (1984) in which he refers to power as composed of the disposition over material, normative, social, and individual resources, which characterises a person or groups capability of social assertiveness (cf. OEBENBRÜGGE 1983: 55, GIDDENS 1988: 70ff). Power, in reference to geographical imaginations, therefore defines who is able to establish specifically coined imaginations as dominant to be continually (re-)configured and performed by a critical number of people or with relevant social positions to increase and secure the popularity, perceived credibility and thus stability of an imagination (cf. GREGORY 1995:

460ff, DRIVER 2014: 239). As a result, the differentiations between “self” and “the other”, “right” and “wrong”, “desirable” and “harmful”, “dynamic” and “static”, “progressive” and “backward” develop to become essential to people’s understanding of themselves, the world around them and the relations to (imagined) places (cf. SAID 1978: 54, GREGORY 1995: 455ff, DRIVER 2014: 239/246).

SAID’s “Orientalism” (1978) is all but one example of how imaginations and their circulation as well as consumption through different forms of media not only influence the mere perception of people, cultures and landscapes, but how their reiteration and recurring performance have also shaped and still do shape people’s situational behaviour and daily practices throughout history up until present-day (cf. GREGORY 2012: 151, DRIVER 2014: 239/246, DESBIENS 2017: 3524f). The role of today’s media in the reconfiguration and spread of geographical imaginations and with this preserving historical knowledge structures and ideals, is crucial. Globalisation, mobility, and digitalisation allow for an advanced coverage and easier accessibility of public and private communication channels that distribute specific configurations and images while keeping up the impression of showing the “real” world on a regular day-to-day basis (cf. GREGORY 1994: 204, CONRAD 2012, DRIVER 2014: 246).

It is this entanglement with the daily making sense of the world that allows to divert away from SAID’s and GREGORY’s initial takes on geographical imaginations as key informants of colonial practices and power-laden tools of identification and legitimisation towards the everyday of geographical imaginations. Over the years, works and studies from different fields of geography and beyond have adopted the concept of geographical imaginations as specific meaningful images, configured, and circulated to convey certain interests and perceptions, to better understand societies, media, art, or politics (cf. e.g. GOODMAN 2004, EK 2006, CAPROTTI 2008, RIDANPÄÄ 2019, BALOGH et al. 2022).

In all works dealing with geographical imaginations, the involvement of diverse practices, be it visual, textual, or discursive, is pointed out as important tools to stabilise, circulate or “realise” said idealised images (cf. GREGORY 1995: 453ff/463, GIERYN 2000: 472f). This hints to an essential reciprocal relation between these two elements – imaginations and practices – in which not only geographical imaginations influence people’s practices but the latter can also be attributed a relevant role in (re-)configuring, shaping, and establishing geographical imaginations themselves in the course of daily and common routines (cf. GREGORY 1995: 456/476). However, literature applying the concept of geographical

imaginings so far hardly ever makes the effort to theoretically conceptualise practices and rather work with explanatory examples to mediate what is meant using the term “practices”. Following GREGORY’s plea to not only critically examine configurations themselves, but specifically take their complex backgrounds and developments into consideration, this thesis aims at expanding the theoretical frame with a practice theory approach (cf. GREGORY 2007: 153). This allows for the opportunity to gain more extensive insights into the role and mechanisms of social practices with and within geographical imaginings.

2.4 How to hunt – social practices

Practice theory(ies) are typically allocated to the group of culturalist social theories – or short cultural theories. They encompass social theories that focus on symbolic and cognitive structures and their “*social construction of reality*” (BERGER & LUCKMANN 1966) to derive better understandings of social actions and order (cf. RECKWITZ 2002: 245f/257ff). In contrast to other cultural theories, within practice theories the so-called “social” is localised in and produced through daily practices in the sense of “*routinised type[s] of behaviour which consist[...] of several elements, interconnected to one another*” (RECKWITZ 2002: 249). It is the repetitive (re)configuration of particular constellations through material and bodily performances at different times and places for “*specific moments of enactment*” (SHOVE et al. 2012: 7) that stabilises social structures, thus enabling or limiting future replications (cf. SCHATZKI 1996: 89f, SHOVE et al. 2012: 7, SCHMIDT 2017: 338).

However, practice theory(ies) are not considered to form a closed theoretical concept. Instead, practice theoretical approaches can be found in a variety of humanities, especially in sociology, philosophy and geography (cf. RECKWITZ 2003: 283, SCHMIDT 2017: 335, SCHÄFER 2017: 112). Roots of practice theories can be found specifically in the former two, with first approaches dating back to the 1950s and 60s. During this time, Ludwig WITTGENSTEIN (1953, 1969), Martin HEIDEGGER (1962) and Harold GARFINKEL (1967) published their first theoretical thoughts on the relevance of “praxis” in social (inter-)actions and the impacts on everyday human life independently from each other (cf. SCHATZKI 1996: 12, RECKWITZ 2003: 283, EVERTS 2016: 51).

Researchers of practice theory(ies) of the so-called “first generation” picked up and expanded their ideas with a main focus on questions of how society and social structures

are reproduced on a daily basis. Charles TAYLOR (1971), for example, based his enhancement on HEIDEGGER (1962) and saw practices as means to contest behaviourism, arguing that “*meanings and norms [...] are not just in the minds of the actors but are out there in the practices themselves, [...] essentially modes of social relations*” (TAYLOR 1971: 27). In the meantime, Pierre BOURDIEU (1976, 1990) first introduced practices into sociology and focused on carving out central elements of practice theoretical modes of knowledge, thereby defining practices themselves as “*socially constructed and situated ways of living*” (CROUCH 2004: 87) with a constant orientation “*towards practical functions*” (BOURDIEU 1990: 52) (cf. BOURDIEU 1976: 147, SHOVE et al. 2012: 6f, EVERTS 2016: 51). Based on this, BOURDIEU developed his prominent concept of “habitus”, referring to incorporated patterns of perception, thought and action that enable to recognise and experience social practices (cf. BOURDIEU 1976: 165, BOURDIEU 1987: 101, SHOVE et al. 2012: 5).

Concurrently, fellow sociologist Anthony GIDDENS (1984) worked on similar approaches resulting in his “*theory of structuration*” (1984). He stated that “*the day to day activity of social actors draws upon and reproduces structural features of wider social systems*” (GIDDENS 1984: 24) with the ongoing daily depending on practical, or implicit knowledge, and structural guidance at the same time (cf. GIDDENS 1984: 24f, SHOVE et al. 2012: 3). With their theoretical framings, both of the latter authors independently from each other aimed at overcoming predominant dichotomies within social sciences e.g. “*agency vs. structure, [...] subject vs. object, mind vs. body*” (SCHMIDT 2017: 336; translation by author) to bring the interrelatedness of collective meanings, implicit knowledge production and social structures within everyday activities to the fore – thinking more about duality rather than dualism (cf. SHOVE et al. 2012: 3ff, SCHÄFER 2017: 111, SCHMIDT 2017: 336).

From the 1980s onwards, BOURDIEU and GIDDENS had a strong influence on strengthening social theoretical currents in human geography, especially in the German-speaking community. They inspired for example the implementation and enhancement of Max WEBER’s action theory in social geography by Benno WERLEN (1988/2002), forming its own action-theoretical paradigm, or the development of Nigel THRIFT’s “*non-representational theory*” (1996/2008) which heavily draws on the importance of practical and bodily experiences over mere textual and spoken narratives (cf. EVERTS et al. 2011: 323f, EVERTS & SCHÄFER 2019: 10f).

Theodore SCHATZKI's critical work on practice theory in the 1990s and his conceptualisation of "site ontology" (2002) in the early 2000s initiated a systematic elaboration of the diversity and complexity of existing practice theories and fragments. Together with authors like Karin KNORR-CETINA and Eike VON SAVIGNY, he lay the foundation for a programmatic "*Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*" (SCHATZKI et al. 2001) (cf. SCHATZKI 1996, SCHATZKI 2002, SCHATZKI et al. 2001). This is symbolic for the so-called "*second generation*" (cf. EVERTS & SCHÄFER 2019: 9; translation by author) of practice theory research, which more specifically aims at creating coherent and stand-alone practice theory(ies) instead of continuously fraying and disaggregating practice theoretical ideas that expand research into the dynamics of societal change and foster empirical applicability (cf. SCHMIDT 2017: 336, GEISELHART et al. 2019: 25ff, EVERTS 2022: 74). SCHATZKI's site ontology was particularly well received within geography, first and foremost by Jonathan EVERTS, Matthias LAHR-KURTEN and Matt WATSON (2011) who showed how an integration of practice theory into human geography can advance researchers' understandings of the formation of communities, integrate materiality as element of empirical research and further explore emotional and structural aspects of social life and the relevance of considering the situatedness of knowledge (cf. EVERTS et al. 2011: 331f). More recently, the potentials of practice theory(ies) in considering non-humans not only as passive elements but active participants in practices are explored in contributions to the field of more-than-human geographies (cf. e.g. EVERTS 2022, STEINER et al. 2022).

Outside of geography, other authors of current practice research focus on in-depth conceptualisations of individual practices or elements of such (cf. e.g. BOLTANSKI 2010, ALKEMEYER et al. 2013, HIRSCHAUER 2014, KALTHOFF et al. 2016), or turn their research towards a "*theoretical systematisation [,] specification*" (SCHMIDT 2017: 336; translation by author) and elaboration (cf. e.g. RECKWITZ 2002/2003, SHOVE et al. 2012, SCHÄFER 2013). Particularly noteworthy authors from the "second generation" are furthermore Andreas RECKWITZ (2002, 2003) and the group of Elizabeth SHOVE, Mika PANTZAR and Matt WATSON (2012). As one of the very first, RECKWITZ sought to summarise the most common characteristics of the diverse practice theory approaches to merge them into an "*ideal type of practice theory*" (RECKWITZ 2002: 244), thus highlighting the pivotal commonalities to mark practice theory off against other culturalist social theories as outlined in the first paragraph of this chapter (cf. RECKWITZ 2002: 245ff/257ff, RECKWITZ 2003:

289ff, SHOVE et al. 2012: 6). SHOVE et al. (2012) further developed RECKWITZ' (2002, 2003) takes on practice theory and specifically dealt with the relevance of place and time for practices (cf. SHOVE et al. 2012: 130ff, EVERTS & SCHÄFER 2019: 12). Therefore, their approach of dynamic social practices will be elaborated in greater detail and build the reference for later theoretical framings and analyses.

Based on the premises mentioned in the beginning, SHOVE et al. (2012) conceptualise practices as entities that are made up of interdependent and routinised combinations of various elements that are integrated at different times and different places for specific "*moments of enactment*" (SHOVE et al. 2012: 7) (cf. SCHATZKI 1996: 90, RECKWITZ 2002: 249, SHOVE et al. 2012: 7/22ff). Said elements can be categorised into materials, competences, and meanings. Materials can be anything physical from objects and tools to infrastructure and bodies and are only barely featured as category of practice elements in classical writings of practice theory like GIDDENS (1984) or BOURDIEU (1984) (cf. RØPKE 2009: 2492, SHOVE et al. 2012: 23). Authors of the so-called "*second generation*" (cf. EVERTS & SCHÄFER 2019: 9; translation by author) of practice theory like RECKWITZ (2002) and SCHATZKI (2002) however pursue an approach that explicitly calls for the integration of materials in practice theory as "*they [artefacts] are in large part the stuff out of which socialness is made*" (LATOUR 2000: 113) and understand practices as "*intrinsically connected to and interwoven with objects*" (SCHATZKI 2002: 106) (cf. LATOUR 2000: 113, RØPKE 2009: 2495ff, SHOVE et al. 2012: 23).

One of the several reasons to take material aspects of practices more into consideration is to understand what influence changes of materiality in practices have on societies' view and valuation of previously essential elements of a practice. For materials, the main factors for circulation are physical relocation through matters of transport, depending on access to sites of production or storage and available infrastructure. In contrast to competences and meanings, materials provide consumable, clearly defined and therefore often-times easily tradable and very durable elements for practices, making them a necessary requisite for stabilisation processes. The more material elements are co-located and the better and more accessible the available infrastructure and convenient modes of transportation are, the easier their distribution becomes, thus increasing the potential for integration in a practice (cf. SHOVE et al. 2012: 45ff).

In contrast to materials, competences are more abstract as they encompass (background) knowledge, meaning information and understanding of such, as well as skilful know-how

and techniques – thus combining multiple forms of theoretical and practical knowledge (cf. SHOVE et al. 2012: 23). While they are crucial for the judgement and correct, meaning stabilising performance of specific practices, some competences are relatively easy to learn on an everyday learning-by-doing basis, others need more time and commitment in training to be able to be performed (cf. SHOVE et al. 2012: 48). In order to be passed on, most forms of knowledge and skills require an abstraction from their situational embeddedness to be transferred and a subsequent re-integration into the new context. Therefore, new practitioners need to be able to decode the abstract knowledge delivered, which is mainly achieved by “*prior, first-hand, practice-based experience*” (SHOVE et al. 2012: 49) (cf. DUGUID 2005: 114, SHOVE et al. 2012: 48f). The more standardised or common a specific competence is among different parties, the easier it is to transfer into corresponding practices, which also increases its mobility (cf. SHOVE et al. 2012: 50f). A special case is the so-called “*cosmopolitan knowledge*” (IBID 2012: 48). In contrast to the majority of competences, this type of knowledge has become disembedded as a result of which it can sustain its own integrity, decodability and accessibility relatively independent from the context transferred to (cf. IBID 2012: 48f). Just like materials, elements of competence can happen to be stored temporarily, however not in terms of one physical location. They rather outlast in a dis-contextualised way “*in virtual and actual reservoirs, depots and memories*” (IBID 2012: 52) without practical enactment to be re-integrated into new combinations and practices (cf. IBID 2012: 49/52).

Lastly, meanings refer to the “*social and symbolic significance of participation*” (IBID 2012: 23), hence this category comprises symbols, ideas, and aspirations along with emotions and motivations (cf. RECKWITZ 2002: 249, SHOVE et al. 2012: 22ff). By “*treat[ing] meaning as an element of practice, not something that stands outside*” (SHOVE et al. 2012: 24), this posts not only a simplification to discussions happening in several other practice theory approaches that are trying to demarcate “*meaning, emotions and motivation*” (IBID 2012: 23) (cf. SCHATZKI 1996: 89, SHOVE et al. 2012: 23f). Shifting the focus from meanings, especially emotions and motivations, as separated and external driving force to inherent elements of practice calls for the recognition that emotions and motivations relevant to configuring practices are just as mediated and socially constructed as symbols and ascribed meanings (cf. SHOVE et al. 2012: 23f/53). Meanings are probably the most volatile elements of practices as their influence on the social significance and reception of a certain practice cannot be controlled by an actor, despite efforts to purposely introduce

and frame the associated semiotics (cf. IBID 2012: 53f). Their elusiveness also leads to an extensive mobility with “*virtually no limits*” (IBID 2012: 55), especially in today’s times of digitalisation and mediatisation, which enables meanings to be integrated into a variety of practices simultaneously though potentially causing frictions within or between different practices (cf. IBID 2012: 54ff). However, the possibilities for dissemination and integration of meanings are not limitless. Just like competences, meanings require the means to be decoded based on previous knowledge and must be integrated within the bounds of existing patterns of meaning (cf. IBID 2012: 55f).

While materials, competences, and to some extent also meanings can overall be considered rather stable and capable of persisting outside of active practices to potentially be reintegrated, they can run the risk of vanishing or being irreversibly forgotten – and so do practices (cf. IBID 2012: 26ff/43). It is only through the recurring performance of specific combinations of elements that entities are consistently reproduced and “filled out” to actualise and stabilise the very practice they configure (cf. IBID 2012: 7/114). At the same time, the necessity for recurring performance opens up the potential – or risk – for materials, competences and meanings to “*circulate within and between different practices*” (IBID 2012: 36). Hence, the aspect and influence of performance is crucial in understanding how practices are maintained and transformed.

Performance, in this context, is understood as an individual’s bodily and expressive action in relation to the self or others as a product of training and routinisation – all standardised practices themselves. Bodily performances actively integrate elements into practices by constituting entities, thus “*giv[ing] the world of humans its visible orderliness*” (RECKWITZ 2002: 251) (cf. RECKWITZ 2002: 250f, CROUCH 2004: 87f, SHOVE et al. 2012: 120). Simultaneously, they convey the potential to disrupt and reconfigure links between existing combinations of elements or different practices and can also change whole practices due to the integration of new elements or the implementation into a new context of performance (cf. RECKWITZ 2003: 291f, CROUCH 2004: 88, SHOVE et al. 2012: 8/36/120ff). Performances of practices are always “*culturally and historically situated*” (SHOVE et al. 2012: 122) and partly unique, thus only “*provid[ing] a template*” (IBID 2012: 122) for individuals on how to perform a certain practice (cf. CROUCH 2004: 90, SHOVE et al. 2012: 122ff).

In SHOVE et al.'s conception, individuals are depicted as “*carriers*” (SHOVE et al. 2012: 7) of a practice who do not contain certain skills, purposes, or other elements of a practice, as configured in most approaches of practice theory, but instead participate in the complex process of practicing (cf. RECKWITZ 2002: 250, SHOVE et al. 2012: 7f). Their role as participants and performers, however, is a crucial one as their degree of commitment and consistency in performing a certain practice a certain way is decisive for its existence and distribution, its solidification or transformation (cf. RECKWITZ 2002: 250, RECKWITZ 2003: 292, SHOVE et al. 2012: 70ff).

Past performances and co-existing practices have consequences on practices and their performance by setting boundaries and simultaneously creating opportunities for future development (cf. SHOVE et al. 2012: 97/102ff). Potential subsequent alterations to a practice' performance like reconfiguring existing or implementing new elements has not only effects on the enactment itself, but also remodels internal structures and linkages within entities; creating a reciprocal relation between performances and elements of entities (cf. IBID 2012: 114ff). Considering the linkages between various practices e.g. through shared elements, it can furthermore be concluded that practices, their performances and outcomes are not simply something going on somewhere, but the actively and recurrently “make” the environments they are situated in or “*take place in*” (IBID 2012: 130), thus reproducing and co-constituting space and time (cf. CROUCH 2004: 91f, SHOVE et al. 2012: 108/133f).

At the same time, practices are (in)directly dependent from spaces and places – the terms are used rather interchangeably by SHOVE et al. (2012) – as well e.g. by posing physical and social limitations to movements of elements and access to performances or serving as a resource for practices in terms of co-location and co-configuration (cf. GIERYN 2000: 473f, SHOVE et al. 2012: 132f). Following the thought that performances of practices rely on places as grounds of feedback and anchor points for stabilisation, thereby reconfiguring the ascribed meanings and simultaneously being reconfigured through pre-existing characteristics, it seems necessary to make the effort of taking a closer look at the concept(s) of place (cf. GIERYN 2000: 473f, KNORR-CETINA 2002: 65f, SHOVE et al. 2012: 130ff).

2.5 Where to hunt – places

The term “place” has found its way into multiple scholarly disciplines. As a result, there is a great diversity of varying definitions, conceptualisations, and understandings co-existing and contesting each other while increasingly being blurred and “*wrapped in common sense*” (CRESWELL 2004: 127). Additionally, there is and has been a great debate amongst and between disciplines about similar concepts like “space”, “site” or “location” and in what way they differ from each other and “place” - if they differ at all and if so, how they are all related and hierarchised (cf. CRESWELL 2009: 176, SCHMID et al. 2019: 101). As important as this discussion is to counter a continuous blurring of terms and clarify understandings, there are more suitable contexts to elaborate deeper on this topic than this dissertation. With regard to the research question and the theoretical frame developed in the course of this work, it seems to be most fruitful to focus on a conceptualisation of ‘place’ as dynamic, multi-faceted, yet unique intersection point whose physical and immaterial boundaries and specificities are constantly (re-)configured through and configurative of social relations and practices (cf. MASSEY 1991: 28f, GRISWORLD 2008: 4ff, DE LA FUENTE et al. 2022: 7).

But it was not until the 1970s that “*place was [...] self-consciously written about*” (CRESWELL 2009: 171) during the so-called “cultural turn” in geography. Before, the discipline had been dominated by a focus on abstract space, quantitative methods, and logical positivism, understanding people and the world around them as rational objects in bounded containers. This became one of the central points of critique of advocates for the “cultural turn” (cf. SCHMID et al. 2019: 101, CRESWELL 2009: 171). Geographers like Yi-Fu TUAN (1974, 1977) and Edward RELPH (1976) started to explore “*the affective bond between people and place*” (DUNCAN & DUNCAN 2001: 41) and its effects not only on people but also place itself (cf. EASTHOPE 2004: 130, PIERCE et al. 2011: 55, SCHMID et al. 2019: 101). Pursuing people as knowing and feeling subjects who relate and make sense of the world around them by ascribing meanings and attachments to particular places posed a harsh contrast to the previously dominant, rather abstract notion of space as a physical container of rationally acting people – a division mainly taken for granted since then (cf. GIERYN 2000: 465, EASTHOPE 2004: 129, CRESWELL 2009: 170ff).

What these initial approaches to place did not yet consider and what was picked up by post-structuralist movements in the 1980s, was the aspect of power relations in processes of making places and their meanings (cf. MASSEY 1991: 25f, HARVEY 1993: 5,

CRESSWELL 2009: 173). It was criticised, that places were predominantly perceived as organically developed, locally bound and presumably “authentic”, thus ignoring, amongst others, limiting and exclusionary factors of power-laden social structures ingrained in the (re-)configuration of places (cf. MASSEY 1995: 48ff, CRESSWELL 2009: 173f, PIERCE et al. 2011: 56). As Doreen MASSEY pointed out in her article “*A Global sense of Place*” (1991), the experiences of “*movement and communication across space, [...] geographical stretching-out of social relations*” (IBID. 1991: 24) as well as the “*degree of control and initiation*” (IBID 1991: 26) vary greatly depending on different social, political, economic, and other factors. The access to power and control of some can actively weaken or strengthen the possibilities of others (cf. MASSEY 1991: 26). Asking about places and their configuration therefore also means asking about the “*power geometry*” (IBID 1991: 25) involved: who is configuring and configured by a specific place, which attributions and norms are featured – or which are left out – and how are they implemented (cf. MASSEY 1991: 25f, HARVEY 1993: 5, CRESSWELL 2009: 173f).

As already touched upon in the chapter on geographical imaginations, configuring a place with specific ascribed meanings and characteristics goes along with acts of differentiation. Being so called “*out of place*” (CRESSWELL 2009: 176) refers to those people, animals, objects, practices, or attributes that are considered not belonging to the normative configuration of a specific place. This presents a place-based form of social control closely linked to SAID’s conceptualisation of “Othering” (SAID 1978) and Julia LOSSAU’s “*principle of localisation*” (IBID 2013: 656; translation by author) as it aims at defining and materially situating aspects of belonging somewhere along seemingly legitimate and physical characteristics, thereby reinforcing and making those social hierarchies stemming from configurations of place actually tangible (cf. SAID 1978: 54, GIERYN 2000: 473ff, LOSSAU 2013: 656f).

While such configurations aim at defining clear (normative) boundaries and stabilising social power relations, places are never finitely fixed or absolute. Instead, as MASSEY (1991) argues, places “*have many identities (or [their] full identity is a complex mix of all these)*” (IBID 1991: 28; brackets in original). By having wider, global, and multidimensional references like movements, communications, and social relations – in short, social practices – embedded into their configuration, places are always linked to the world around them (cf. IBID 1991: 28). This characterises places as inherently dynamic and processual, creating grounds for richness but also makes them constantly prone to

contestation and transformation – be it e.g. through active resistance against social exclusion, subliminal developments or changes of element constellations and performance contexts (cf. MASSEY 1991: 29, CRESSWELL 2009: 174f, PIERCE et al. 2011: 58ff). Tim CRESSWELL's take on place as a combination of materiality, meaning, and (everyday) practices ties into these thoughts, thereby creating points of reference to make the concept of “place” fruitful for and compatible with practice theory (cf. CRESSWELL 2009: 169f/176, SCHMID et al. 2019: 102/104ff). He characterises “*places [as] practiced*” (CRESSWELL 2009: 170), defining them as the result and simultaneous requirement for the daily, routinised practices of ordinary people and not only shaped by intentions of the powerful or professional (cf. GIERYN 2000: 471, CRESSWELL 2009: 170).

As such, places are configured and configurative, they are “real” and imagined, perceptible and intangible, situated and relational, stabilising and dynamic at the same time (cf. GIERYN 2000: 472f, PIERCE et al. 2011: 58ff, SCHMID et al. 2019: 104ff). Places are selectively configured and structured by the routinised and iterative performance of current and past social practices that build on and simultaneously contest pre-existing material characteristics and configurations (cf. PIERCE et al. 2011: 58ff, SHOVE et al. 2012: 132ff). The relevance of such pre-existing elements of place – be it imagined or substantial – for a practice becomes viable in the act of practicing and depends on the context of performance (cf. CROUCH 2004: 90ff, SCHMID et al. 2019: 105). As social practices continuously shape the characteristics of place and secure their own persistence by reiteratively binding their elements to and through place, such co-existing pre-conditions can either foster a sharing of elements and linking of practices, promoting the formation of practice bundles or complexes, or reinforce contestations of dominance over a specific place between competing practices (cf. MASSEY 1991: 29, GIERYN 2000: 473f, SHOVE et al. 2012: 132f). In one way or another, these elements contribute to the recurring process of performing and thus shaping and (re-)linking practices to a particular place just as much as practices carve out “their” places (cf. GIERYN 2000: 465, CRESSWELL 2009: 170, SCHMID et al. 2019: 105). To put it short, “*places cannot exist without [practices]. But equally important, [practices] cannot exist without places*” (SACK 2001: 233).

However, places are not elements of social practices like materials, meanings or competences as it is not place itself that is circulated and shared through the mobility of social practices (cf. SHOVE et al. 2012: 134). It is rather an idea or an image of a specific place that is made visible in its practical performance and that can then travel with the related

practices. This way, social practices create a network of and through similar places, “*a global sense of place*” (MASSEY 1991), that is in a constant process of (re-)configuration as places and practices find themselves in a reciprocal relation (cf. MASSEY 1991: 29, EASTHOPE 2004: 137, SHOVE et al. 2012: 134).

Looking at the past three chapters, it has become clear that geographical imaginations and social practices as well as social practices and places are very closely interrelated. They offer great potential to add to each other’s theoretical value when being combined, which will be explicated into a coherent theoretical frame in the following.

2.6 How to succeed in hunting – linking imaginations, practices, and places

While the previous chapters aimed at specifying the concepts of geographical imaginations, social practices, and place, the following chapter attempts to them together into one coherent, self-reinforcing theoretical frame. First indications on existing theoretical nodal points between the concepts were given and potential benefits from more formal inter-linkages of each theory were insinuated in the chapters before and are highlighted again in figure 1. The following chapter will therefore explicate the linking points and advantages of thinking geographical imaginations, social practices, and place together as well as how this triangular frame can be put into work against the background of hunting for this project in particular.

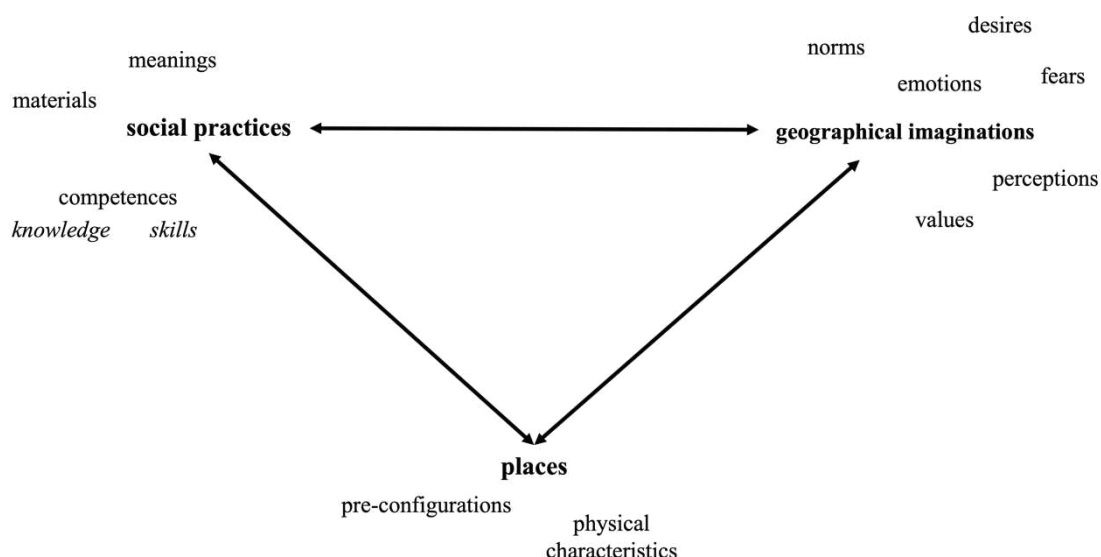


Figure 1: Theoretical frame of social practices, geographical imaginations and places
Source: own design 2024

As already mentioned, geographical imaginations are generalised images of people, cultures and places that are configured and circulated through a variety of social practices, thereby transmitting norms, ideals, and perceptions of those consistently (re-)configuring them (cf. GREGORY 1995: 459ff/474f, DRIVER 2014: 237ff/247). In this conceptualisation, social practices – especially textual, visual, and discursive ones – are embedded to sustain, distribute, or bring specific imaginations “into realisation” (cf. GREGORY 1995: 453ff). Especially the latter leads to the conclusion that geographical imaginations are neither neutral visual replica of “the real world” nor “just” imagined. As selective visualisations that are constantly repeated through the performance of related practices in specific contexts, they are real with “*these [ascribed] meanings [...] eventually acquiring the status of truth*” (DESBIENS 2017: 3525), thus having actual consequences for the everyday of people and places who are (made) part of them – as (re-)configurators or configured (cf. SAID 1978: 54, GIERYN 2000: 472f, GREGORY 2012: 151).

At the same time, these homogenised images contribute to the configuration of the very same practices shaping them by visualising and materialising certain social values and intentions as well (cf. DRIVER 2014: 235, DESBIENS 2017: 3524f). This understanding brings the focus onto social practices themselves as they are considered to be those “*routine[d] type[s] of behaviour*” (RECKWITZ 2002: 249) that structure social reality on a daily basis – and with this also “[t]he images we live by” (DRIVER 2014: 234). With the consistent performance of social practices that is necessary to continuously (re-)link their corresponding materials, competences and meanings and thus actualising a practice itself, imaginations are integrated into daily and ordinary life (cf. GREGORY 1995: 476, RECKWITZ 2002: 250f, SHOVE et al. 2012: 7).

The approach to practice theory illustrated earlier explicitly considers time as a relevant influencing factor on social practices as different elements integrated into practices or whole practices can change over time. Practices are contemplated to be the result or dealing with the consequences of past and co-existing practices, therefore being exposed to constant dynamics while trying to stabilise themselves (cf. SHOVE et al. 2012: 97/102ff/134). This ties very well into the concept of geographical imaginations and their tendency to persist despite changes in society and application context, especially with regards to the strong (post- and neo-)colonial foundation of the concept itself (cf. GREGORY 1995: 455ff, GREGORY 2012: 151, DESBIENS 2017: 3524).

These complex interplays are reflected in hunting “the wild”. Where, in colonial times, handwritten letters and reports, paintings, maps, and seafarer tales shaped people’s image of distant parts of the world, their inhabitants and the “exotic wild”, nowadays documentaries, photo exhibitions, and travel blogs and posts on social media contribute to the daily (re-)configuration of people’s perceptions and expectations of the world (cf. GREGORY 1994: 204, DRIVER 2014: 246, SHOVE et al. 2012: 135f). These normative representations and appropriations make physical and cultural landscapes accessible and relatable, especially for people who have never visited those places claimed to represent “the ideal wild” – an image that has rarely changed since colonial times (cf. SAID 1995: 80ff, ROTHFELS 2002: 161ff, D’HAUTESERRE 2004: 237f/242).

The continuous and repeated performance of the ever-same configurations is essential to the stabilisation and circulation of such dominating imaginations and practices, creating expectations, stereotypes, prejudices, and desires without actual experiences of the practices and places referred to (cf. EASTHOPE 2004: 136, DRIVER 2014: 235, DESBIENS 2017: 3524f). This perspective stemming from geographical imaginations emphasises the aspect of power as defined in chapter 2.3 that is inherent to all kinds of social practices and geographical imaginations alike – even though its significance might seem less obvious in some contexts of everyday life (cf. SAID 1978: 54, GREGORY 1995: 455ff, DESBIENS 2017: 3524f).

However, as SHOVE et al. (2012) mention in reference to PRED (1981) “*systems of class and power are sustained through the social reproduction of dominant projects.*” (SHOVE et al. 2012: 135). Dominant projects are understood as those “*complexes of practice that orient the ways [and] the priorities around which their [people’s; remark of author] lives are organised.*” (IBID 2012: 135). Their power, or dominance, is rooted in their recurring and exclusive performance through individual and collective practitioners e.g. formal institutions like governments or informal, nonetheless influential institutions like society and normative family life, or simply each and every one of us in our regular day-to-day (cf. PRED 1981: 16, SHOVE et al. 2012: 135). As such, dominant social practices create inequality in access and opportunity to become a carrier of a specific practice but also affects the availability and possibilities of circulation for the elements of practices as their range of distribution and future development depends on the means of their carriers to carry them on (cf. PRED 1981: 14ff, HARVEY 1996: 297, SHOVE et al. 2012: 105/135).

Imaginations play a significant role in determining who gets the chance or is allowed to take part in certain social practices and who those practices are imposed on (cf. GREGORY 1995: 459ff, D'HAUTESERRE 2004: 242, DESBIENS 2017: 3525ff). Through their continuous reconfiguration, such complexes of practice including and based on geographical imaginations can be passed on over generations, thus continuing to sustain inequalities and differentiations of various kinds up until the point where they become “natural” to those carrying and distributing them (cf. GREGORY 1995: 447/455ff, SHOVE et al. 2012: 135f, DESBIENS 2017: 3524f).

This process of essentialisation, however, does not implicate that those configured simply subordinate themselves to such practices and imaginations. In a myriad of ways, people, material objects, animals, landscapes, competences and the like resist their appropriation and utilisation. As people demonstrate and create their own narratives, animals hide from views and cross fences, dormant volcanoes erupt or Western agricultural traditions cannot be made fruitful in semi-arid climate zones, practices and imaginations are flawed, thus requiring acts of adaptation to persist and co-exist or otherwise escalate into conflict or become irrelevant (cf. MASSEY 1991: 28f, SHOVE et al. 2012: 114).

The ratio of influence between geographical imaginations and social practices varies depending on the context – in many cases, specific imaginations seem to be the spark for the establishment or change of certain practices, while in other cases social practices appear to be aiming at creating and distributing particular imaginations on purpose (cf. GREGORY 1995: 474f, LOSSAU 2013: 655, DRIVER 2014: 234ff). Place, however, is equally central to both concepts and their “*intersecting circuits*” (SHOVE et al. 2012: 114) of (re-)configuration. It is neither finitely bound and fixed in meaning nor simply anything anywhere, it has physical characteristics but is more than just the sum of its materialities.

Within this triangular conceptual relation, place first of all seems to only have a passive role as a stage on which social practices are performed, geographical imaginations can become “reality” and their dynamics play out. It becomes a material point of reference and consolidation for and confined by practices and imaginations, bringing them “to life” along with the material effects of imaginatively and practically configured differentiation and adaptively changing to their ever-evolving needs (cf. CROUCH 2004: 91f, SHOVE et al. 2012: 132ff, SCHMID et al. 2019: 104ff). Just like geographical imaginations or social practices, place is constituted of embedded cultural, social, and material elements that

have been linked to it and that determine its past, current, and future linkages with other places, social practices and imaginations (cf. GIERYN 2000: 473f).

However, when taking a closer look, place is not a simple passive element of the before mentioned. Instead, it is actively involved in the dynamics of (re-)configuration, constraining and enabling certain developments itself. Pre-existing, potentially conflicting configurations, social structures, and material pre-requisites are just some characteristics of places that can either work against practices' aim to create homogenous and stable conditions or support a specific configuration of a place (cf. MASSEY 1991: 28f, GIERYN 2000: 473f). Also, geographical imaginations will only persist if their configuration and the actual experience of a place's assets do not stray too far from each other. In situations, where place characteristics, their practical and imagined configurations do not align, there is both the potential and need for adaptation and transformation for each of them to persist (cf. KNORR-CETINA 2002: 65f, CRESSWELL 2009: 170, SHOVE et al. 2012: 132ff).

Based on these assumptions, the "*circuits of reproduction*" as SHOVE et al. (2012: 97) call the three different layers of analysing and understanding the intersecting processes involved in the making and transforming of practices, can easily be extended to encompass all three concepts of this theoretical frame (cf. GREGORY 1995: 456, SHOVE et al. 2012: 114). On a first level, or circuit, the different elements of a practice – or respectively an imagination or place – are "*linked together consistently and recurrently over time*" (SHOVE et al. 2012: 114) through active performances. These linkages do not only happen within a practice, but also between practices and imaginations, imaginations, and places as well as places and practices.

Whether and how these intertwined configurations sustain and develop depends on "*the intended and unintended consequences of previous and coexisting configurations*" (SHOVE et al. 2012: 114). Circuit two adds the dimension of time, showcasing the ongoing struggle between stabilisation and adaptation of a configuration that persists and is shaped by its past and multiplicity of performance. The specificities of a place, practice or imagination are defined by their linkages over time and space, which are constantly prone to internal conflicts of negotiation and their external relations to the wider world around them (cf. MASSEY 1991: 28f, SHOVE et al. 2012: 114).

The last circuit extends the view once more, taking the risks and possibilities of recurring performances and co-existing practices into account (cf. SHOVE et al. 2012: 114). Each performance contains the eventuality of disrupting or strengthening a certain

configuration, leading to variations or nearly identical replica. At the same time, configurative processes never happen in a void as they are not only combining elements of imaginations, practices and places but are surrounded by several configuration complexes that are based on the same dynamic principle. In a “*global sense of place*” (MASSEY 1991), their (re-) configurations are not limited to their own little circle but are intrinsically linked to others in the wide world around them as well, which can lead to fruitful amendments but also conflicts (cf. MASSEY 1991: 28f, SHOVE et al. 2012: 114).

The model of SHOVE et al.’s “*circuits of reproduction*” (2012: 97) shows how important it is to understand disruption and transformation as just as important parts of reconfiguration processes as acts of stabilisation. As societies and cultures, values and norms, lifestyles and technologies, landscapes and climate change, so do practices, geographical imaginations and places. Whether this relates to a simple transfer e.g. from one country or continent to another, or to broader phrased developments over longer periods of time, the relations between and within social practices, geographical imaginations and places are dynamic and fluid, with constantly ongoing adaptations of elements, performances, and interpretations. Some might seem insignificant, while others can have more drastic results, even leading to the complete abandonment or a whole new configuration of a practice, imagination, or specific place configuration (cf. MASSEY 1991: 28, GIERYN 2000: 473f, SHOVE et al. 2012: 122).

The last two circuits additionally highlight one of the most important potentials, practice theory offers for this theoretical frame: the possibility to trace elements (of practices) through time and across different practices, imaginations, and places. As past configurations and performances influence the ones today and elements can be dissected and viewed individually in their relations and developments, it allows to further broach certain imaginations and practices again. This can lead to the discovery of new (power) relations within and between practices, imaginations, and places, better identification of core ideas and key elements and thus in-depth understanding of processes and factors of persistence. Furthermore, it enables to conceptually deepen the examination of the complex mechanisms and dynamics between social practices, geographical imaginations, and places (cf. GIERYN 2000: 472f, SHOVE et al. 2012: 122).

To sum it up, a theoretical frame that brings together geographical imaginations, social practices and place allows to cater for the complexity that comes with questions on the social configuration of places based on specific ideas and imaginations and maintained

through their repeated performance. The three concepts are connected through a theoretical double linkage. All of them not only share very similar modes of their respective (re-)configuration processes but are already in their initial conceptualisations considered as essentially intertwined – although these interlinkages are initially not made very explicit or are elaborated on in depth (cf. GREGORY 1995: 456). Considering all three concepts as configured and configurative bears in mind the reciprocal and fragile balance between stability and dynamics without favouring one approach over the other. Each one either supports existing patterns of interpretation or makes up for theoretical blank spaces, therefore strengthening the frame as a whole and expanding the potential of analysis and knowledge gain.

Before discussing what methods were used in the field to practically apply the just described theoretical frame, the following chapter will first give some contextual background information on the research field of Namibia.

3. Hunting ground Namibia

Namibia is a country in the south of Africa that only gained independence in 1990 after being first a German colony, then under South African mandate. Today's country shares borders with South Africa in the south, Botswana and Zambia in the east and Angola in the north. The western border is formed by the Atlantic Ocean whose Benguela current has a decisive influence on the country's climate. The cold air from the western shores suppresses rainfall, making Namibia the driest country in Africa outside the Sahara Desert (cf. GOUDIE & VILES 2015: 3, WORLD BANK GROUP 2021). Namibia is topographically dominated by two deserts, the world's oldest desert Namib and the Kalahari Desert, and the Great Escarpment separating the Namib plains in the west from the Khomas Hochland Plateau and the Kalahari Sandveld in the east (cf. GOUDIE & VILES 2015: 3ff). With a population of around 2.6 million people, Namibia is the second least densely populated country worldwide and comprised of more than 10 different ethnicities. 54.9 % of the population live in cities whereas the by far largest share falls onto the capital Windhoek with about 268,000 inhabitants (cf. CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY [CIA] 2023, WORLD POPULATION REVIEW 2024). Economically, Namibia is classified as an upper middle-income country with tourism, mining (diamonds, metal ores, uranium) and agriculture (livestock, fishing) being the biggest contributors to the country's GDP (cf. CIA 2023, HAMADEH et al. 2023).

3.1 From colonialism to independence

Namibia looks back on an eventful history, in which Western colonialism and "the wild" got to play a significant role. The region of today's Namibia has been inhabited since 25.000 B.C. by the nomadic hunter-gatherer San in particular, and later on by immigrating Damara, Nama, Herero and Ovambo who were mostly pastoral farmers and specialised in copper smelting. After the first European, a Portuguese seafarer, reached the Namibian coast at Cape Cross in 1487, initial and more strategic approaches to claim parts of the land started in the 18th and 19th century. Dutch and Norwegian whalers set up whaling stations along the south-western coast between Walvis Bay and Lüderitz while German and especially British agents set up missions and started to extract and trade copper (cf. WESTPHAL 1984: 25ff, GREEN 2023).

At the Berlin or Congo Conference in 1884/85, the region of today's Namibia officially became the first protectorate of the German Empire under Otto von Bismarck. In the run-

up, a merchant from Bremen, Adolf Lüderitz, and his employee Heinrich Vogelsang had purchased land around Lüderitz Bay from a native Nama chief, which became the gateway for the establishment of “German Southwest Africa”, as the colony was called from then on (cf. WESTPHAL 1984: 20, BUNDESZENTRALE FÜR POLITISCHE BILDUNG [BPB] 2020, GREEN 2023). It’s area was further extended by the so-called “Caprivi strip” in the Helgoland-Zanzibar Contract in 1890 with Great Britain to guarantee access to the Zambezi river in the north-east. In the course of the 1890s, violent conflicts arose between the German colonial settlers and the local groups of Herero and Nama. Protection agreements were established as short-term pacifications, but the increasing social disparities between and racial discriminations of German colonial settlers against local ethnic groups led to an escalation of the situation in 1904 with the Herero uprising and the Battle of Waterberg (cf. GRAICHEN & GRÜNDER 2005: 120ff, BPB 2020, GREEN 2023). In this battle, the German General Lothar von Trotha commanded his troops to drive the already defeated Herero army and their families into the Omaheke desert in the eastern part of the country with the goal to annihilate the Herero:

“Within the German borders every Herero with or without rifle, with or without cattle is to be shot, I will not accommodate women and children anymore, drive them back to their tribes or let them be shot.” (VON TROTHA 1904, quoted in ZIMMERER 2000: 39; translation by author)

A following resistance war by the Nama was put down just as violently and relentlessly with those surviving forced into concentration or work camps. It is estimated that between 1904 and 1910 about 65,000 to 80,000 Herero and 10,000 to 20,000 Nama died due to war, starvation and camp conditions, which equalled about 75-90 % and 65 % of the respective groups population at the time. This so-called German-Herero conflict is therefore claimed to be the very first genocide of the 20th century (cf. GRAICHEN & GRÜNDER 2005: 150, BPB 2020, GREEN 2023).

In the follow-up of the violent Herero and Nama uprisings, the German colonial rule proclaimed the so-called “Police Zone”. It’s inland border was based on an already existing fence line, a veterinary cordon fence [VCF], also known as the “Red Line”, that had been erected by the German colonial rule in 1897 after a rinderpest epidemic caused severe cattle losses amongst native as well as colonial farmers. Running from the Atlantic coast in the west to the border of Botswana in the east, it separates up until today the southern two-thirds of the country with mainly white settlement areas from the communal

land in the north, particularly the Ovambo and Kavango region. Control posts along the whole of its 1,250 km length officially aim at preventing the transportation of livestock and meat from the north to the south as a “*stock disease control mechanism*” (cf. LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE n.n.). However, after the declaration of the “Police Zone”, commercial farming, copper, zinc, and diamond mining and export in the southern part were forged and developed to be central drivers of the economy, while people in the northern parts were mostly limited to live from substantial farming – a division still very present in Namibia today (cf. LÄNGIN 2004: 149, GREEN 2023, LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE n.n.).

The end of the German colonial rule in Namibia came about during World War I in 1915, when South African troops first conquered “German Southwest Africa” and where then ascribed official mandate over now “Southwest Africa” after the Treaty of Versailles by the League of Nations in 1921 (cf. LÄNGIN 2004: 308, BPB 2020, GREEN 2023). With South African authority, its socio-political apartheid system and the so-called “homelands” were introduced, which came with forced removals and restrictively policed dedicated areas for certain population groups only. Beginning in the 1940s, the Southwest African economy boomed, mainly based on metal mining and export, livestock trade and diamond mining. However, a majority of the native population could not participate in this rise with the huge proportion of contract labour additionally corrupting social structures (cf. BPB 2020, GREEN 2023). As a result of growing discontent, the Southwest African People’s Organisation [SWAPO] was founded in 1960 and fought, together with black trade unions aggressively against South African rule. The before rising economy stagnated in the following years and the mandate increasingly became a political, financial and casualty burden. Nevertheless, it took until 1988 before South Africa officially negotiated its withdrawal from Namibia with the United Nations, thus opening up the road to elections (cf. BPB 2020, GREEN 2023, HIGH COMMISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA [HCRN] n.n.).

After winning the elections of 1989 with 57 % of the votes, Sam Nujoma, leader of the SWAPO, became Namibia’s very first president. He declared the country’s independence on March 21, 1990 with a new “*constitution emphasizing human, civil, and property rights*” (GREEN 2023) and peaceful reconciliation as main agenda (cf. GREEN 2023). Since then, SWAPO was able to win all government elections up until today despite recent struggles due to allegations of corruption, high unemployment rates and overall economic struggles (cf. BPB 2020, GREEN 2023, HCRN n.n.).

3.2 Namibia and “the wild”

As a “*land of contrasts*” (NAMIBIA TOURISM BOARD [NTB] n.n.a), the combination of diverse pristine and somewhat harsh landscapes, ranging from desert dunes, wide open plains, rugged mountain ranges, lush savannahs and rough coastlines, with a huge variety of iconic and endangered wildlife like the “Big Five”, the endemic black faced Impala and “*the largest free-roaming population of black rhinos and cheetahs globally*” (NTB n.n.b), Namibia’s natural features play straight into Western ideal imaginations of “the wild” (cf. PÜTZ & SCHLOTTMANN 2020: 96, NTB n.n.b, NTB n.n.c, NTB n.n.d).

Western valuation of Namibian landscape and wildlife goes back to German colonial times when German colonialists proclaimed three game reserves in 1907. Nowadays, the Namib-Naukluft Park, former “Game Reserve No. 3” with particularly great extensions towards Aus in the south, including the western coastline and the eastern Naukluft Mountains, and the Etosha National Park, former “Game Reserve No. 2” reduced by north-western areas, still persist. The latter is not only one of the oldest and largest national parks in Africa, but also “*Namibia’s number one tourist destination*” (MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY & TOURISM [MEFT] n.n.a) (cf. MEFT n.n.a, MEFT n.n.b, MEFT n.n.c). Up until today, Namibia’s tourism industry is mainly based on nature and wildlife tourism with Europe being the largest overseas tourist market in 2022 with an overall share of 33.6 % out of which 85.6 % are holiday tourists (cf. MEFT 2013: 14f, MEFT 2023: 6/12f). Thereby, Germany, France and the United Kingdom are the main source countries with German holiday tourists alone making up 11.6 % of all tourist arrivals to Namibia (cf. MEFT 2023: 12ff).

17 % of the country’s land surface has been proclaimed state-protected areas (see appendix IV.1); however, the vast majority of wildlife can be found on communal and freehold land (cf. MEFT n.n.c, WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE [WWF] NAMIBIA n.n.). In Namibia, freehold tenure refers to declared urban areas (1 %) or commercial farms (44 %) and grants full ownership of land with all respective rights and possibilities of use and heritance. Most of nowadays freehold tenure used to be reserved for white ownership during colonial times with increased government attempts of reallocation of these areas to “*previously disadvantaged Namibians*” (MENDELSON et al. 2012: 3) since the declaration of independence (cf. IBID 2012: 3f). One major tool for this is the state’s “*preferent right to purchase agricultural land whenever any owner of such land intends to alienate such land*” (REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA 1995: 17), meaning that anyone who wants to sell

freehold commercial farmland has to offer it to the state first before eventually providing it to the free market – following the “willing buyer, willing seller” principle (cf. IBID 1995: 17f). Still, the majority of commercial farms in Namibia are owned by farmers with European, more specifically German, or South African heritage (cf. DE SATGÉ 2021, KALVELAGE et al. 2023: 1825f).

The remaining 38 % of Namibia’s land area is rural communal land under customary tenure which is mainly in place in the northern parts of the country (cf. MENDELSON et al. 2012: 3f). Communal land in Namibia “*is land held in trust by the State for the benefit of the communities living on it*” (MINISTRY OF LAND REFORM 2016: 2), meaning that the land is state-owned and people have the rights to use the land and its resources (*usufruct*) in line with customary subsistence farming while the rights to control, transfer and change the type of land use lie with the state and traditional authorities (cf. REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA 2002: 10ff, MENDELSON et al. 2012: 7f, DE SATGÉ 2021). One way for communities to gain more rights over land and its resources is the establishment of conservancies (since 1996), community forests (since 2001) and local water resource management institutions (since 2013) under the Community Based Natural Resource Management [CBNRM] program. In communal conservancies and forests, communities can generate income by commercially using e.g. game by selling meat or operating game drives and trophy hunts (cf. MENDELSON et al. 2012: 11, KALVELAGE et al. 2023: 1826).

All kinds of commercial use of wildlife and landscape need to be registered at the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, whether this refers to game reserves for game drives, 4x4 and horse trails, trophy hunting and alike (cf. MEFT 2008: 14). Trophy hunting is a particularly important economic factor in Namibia. In 2022 alone, 21.6 % of communal conservancies’ revenue was generated through cash and meat income from so-called conservation hunting which refers to selective trophy hunting along population-adequate, socio-economic and ethical guidelines (cf. NAMIBIAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY BASED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS [NACSO] & MEFT 2023).

Livestock farming with a dominance of sheep and goat in the arid south and cattle in the higher rainfall areas of the north and centre is the main primary land use on freehold land. Since the country’s climatic conditions greatly limit not only arable farmland but also the land’s carrying capacity, an extensive pasture management is required to farm sustainably. This is also reflected in the sizes of farms which are on average 7,000 ha to 7,500 ha

but vary between 5,000 ha and 15,000 ha in the northern rainfall areas and about 35,000 ha on average in the arid southern parts of the country (cf. KAKUJAH-MATUNDU & KAVEZERI 1997: 5, BREITKREUZ 2015: 180f, WATERBERG HUNTING NAMIBIA n.n.). Game naturally lives on farmland and is typically hunted to provide meat for farm owners and their staff as livestock is seen as main capital source through breeding, live sales, and meat export. Farm owners are allowed to use land and wildlife for sustenance purposes since the early 1900s with commercial use rights being granted only in 1967 through the South West Africa Wildlife Ordinance and regulated with the Nature Conservation Ordinance No. 4 of 1975 (cf. VAN SCHALKWYK et al. 2010: 3483). The latter gives owners of freehold land the right to hunt exotic and huntable game as well as any wild animal not classified game at any time on their fenced property without permit (cf. REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA 1975: 30/33/36). The permit-free shooting of specially protected and protected game is however limited to protecting humans, livestock and domestic animals and is to be reported in time to the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (cf. IBID 1975: 27, appendix IV.2).

Nowadays, wildlife is used as an additional source of income by about 23 % of cattle farmers, which is estimated to bring about N\$350 million per year (cf. VENTER 2015: 18/34, WRIGHT 2016: 18, CONSERVATION NAMIBIA n.n.). The main reason for increasing efforts of farmer's income diversification is economic viability. As agricultural production inflation is rising and the extreme climate with occasional, but heavy droughts like in 2019 make many farmers resort to game and wildlife as a more adapted and especially drought-resilient base of income (cf. VENTER 2015: 10, WRIGHT 2016: 17, CONSERVATION NAMIBIA n.n.). In comparison to other wildlife-based land use like ecotourism, trophy hunting requires less initial investment and fewer numbers of guests to generate the same amount of income or more (cf. BREITKREUZ 2015: 301, WRIGHT 2016: 18f).



Figure 2: Cattle fence
Source: own photograph 2022

Such a mixed use of land requires the subdivision of different areas on a farm into so-called *kamps*, designated for either livestock or game to ensure sustainable pasture management. A distinction can be made between different types of fences which each have different impacts on game mobility. Traditionally, farmers use conventional or livestock fences, as depicted in figure 2, consisting of five steel wire strands, to mark their farms borders and keep their livestock in the designated *kamp*. Game, whether crawling like oryx and warthogs or jumping like kudu and eland, can effortlessly overcome these kinds of fences. Additionally, there are anti-

digging or “jackal-proof” fences which are “*fence[s] of steel wire and wire netting [...] to be at least four feet [in width]*” (REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA 1922: 4f) from the ground as well as electric fencing where an electric wire is added close above ground level. They hinder not only predators like jackals to get into livestock *kamps* but also prevent crawling game to get out. Lastly, there are game-proof fences like in figure 3. In Namibia, they are allowed to measure 2.3 m in height, are often reinforced with wire netting and/or electric wires at the bottom and/or top and disrupt any kind of wildlife mobility (cf. IBID 1922: 4f). These types of fences can not only be seen at many commercial hunting farms but also around Namibian national parks.



Figure 3: Game fence
Source: own photograph 2022

On communal land, however, hunting of any game or wildlife, whether commercial or for sustenance, has only become legal with the Community Based Natural Resource Management [CBNRM] model introduced with the Nature Conservation Amendment Act of 1996 (cf. VAN SCHALKWYK et al. 2010: 3483). Still, up until today, any person requires a permission from the MEFT to hunt on communal land as the

land and therefore its wildlife resources are state-owned. As one of the consequences of said state ownership, people on communal land are not allowed to erect fences without government and local authorities permission except for *“fenc[ing] in a homestead, cattle pen, water trough or crop field.”* (LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE 2019). Proper fencing of cultivated land is, however, the main condition for people on communal land to be allowed to hunt game that causes wildlife conflicts by damaging or destroying agricultural produce (cf. REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA 1975: 29/38). Communities as well as privately owned businesses can apply for hunting concessions for a defined – not fenced – area of state land to gain income from conservation hunting with annually adapted hunting quotas (cf. MEFT 2020: 38, KALVELAGE et al. 2023: 1827, MEFT n.n.d). Elephants, hippos, and rhinos are excluded from the exceptions in any cases. They are by no means allowed to be hunted without a permission by the MEFT or unless declared a problem animal (cf. REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA 1975: 38/52).

Commercial use of wildlife for trophy hunting is limited to hunting season from February 1 to November 30 each year. Trophy hunting requires a permit by the MEFT for each animal to be hunted with an additionally necessary permit for large cats like leopard, cheetah and lion, no matter whether shot on freehold or communal land. There are strict regulations on the number of animals allowed to be shot per species for trophies as well as the number and constellations of huntable big game and small game hunted on behalf of the landowner (cf. IBID 1975: 31). Every landowner is obliged to document the animals hunted on his land per year and report them to the MEFT, especially when concerning specially protected and protected game. For these reports, animals both shot and wounded count as hunted. All hunting farms must be registered and regularly reapproved by the MEFT, including checks of (game-proof) fences and population estimates on which each species trophy hunting quota is based (cf. REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA 1975: 27f/30ff/37, MEFT n.n.e, NAMIBIAN PROFESSIONAL HUNTING ASSOCIATION [NAPHA] n.n.a).

Any other kinds of sales, trade or processing of game and its derivate products like meat and skins is strictly regulated and must be licensed and permitted by the MEFT (cf. REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA 1975: 45ff). Prohibited for anyone without permission, whether landowner, living on communal land or hunting tourist, is hunting at night, more specifically *“from half an hour after sunset [...] to half an hour before sunrise”* (IBID 1975: 39), shooting and driving wildlife *“out of or from a moving motor vehicle or an aircraft”* (IBID 1975: 44) and possessing, processing or trading of specially protected and protected game

skins as well as tusks and respective derivatives from elephants and rhinoceros (cf. IBID 1975: 37/42ff, NAPHA n.n.a).

To ensure that trophy hunters adhere to the MEFT's trophy hunting regulations as well as the NAPHA's Code of Conduct, every hunt must be accompanied by a "*registered hunting guide, master hunting guide, or professional hunter*" (NAPHA n.n.a) (cf. REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA 1975: 70f, NAPHA n.n.b). NAPHA's Code of Conduct not only calls for overall respectful and fair behaviour towards landowners, employees, and the public as well as clients, officials, and the environment but especially to ensure a safe and responsible "*fair chase*" (NAPHA n.n.b). The main principles of "*fair chase*" (IBID n.n.b) encompass "*the pursuit of free wild animals*" (IBID n.n.b) that are part of a "*wild sustainable population*" (IBID n.n.b) in an "*ecological functional system*" (IBID n.n.b) with the chance to potentially escape the hunter and the sparing of "*visibly pregnant females or females with dependent young*" (IBID n.n.b).

This therefore explicitly excludes practices like "put and take" and "canned hunting", where wildlife species are either purposefully bought and overstocked for the hunting season according to pre-sold trophy requests or bred, domesticated, otherwise manipulated and/or shot in captivity or confined areas of less than 1,000 hectares (cf. REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA 1975: 30, MEFT 2012: 2, NAPHA n.n.b). Furthermore, each trophy has to fulfil a minimum of trophy quality points, which are based on the Age-Related Trophy Measurement System [ART] developed by the "Erongo Verzeichnis for African game animals" (cf. appendix IV.3). It aims at encouraging selective hunting of "*animals past their prime to ensure genetic sustainability*" (ERONGO VERZEICHNIS FOR AFRICAN GAME ANIMALS 2023: 3) by standardizing measurement methods and scores of different kinds of horns, tusks and skulls (cf. ERONGO VERZEICHNIS FOR AFRICAN GAME ANIMALS 2023, NAPHA n.n.c).

With this specific context in mind, the following chapter will now display the different field approaches and reflect on their implementation.

4. Assessing “the hunt” – on methodology

The empirical part of this dissertation is mainly based on an ethnographic approach, containing participatory observations, hanging outs and go-alongs, as well as a few additional semi-structured interviews. The term “ethnography” originates from the Greek terms *ethnos* (people, nation, tribe) and *graphia* (writing, description of) and refers to a research method as well as the written result of such (cf. HART 2009: 217f, HARPER 2014). While traditionally having been associated with sociocultural anthropology and its extensive role in colonial rule over native nations through knowledge collection and production, there has been a rising interest in ethnography from sociologists, historians and geographers focusing on understanding social processes in ways that can politically enable social change and questions of spatialities (cf. BURAWOY 2000: 1f, HART 2009: 218, KATZ 2009: 251). Criticism of “*ethnographic authority*” (ROSALDO 1986: 78), an essentialisation of culture and incarceration of natives to bounded territories not only called for critical reflection of the researcher on the co-producing effect he or she has on the culture researched on, but also for the “*necessity to `exploring the processes of production of DIFFERENCE in a world of culturally, socially and economically interconnected and interdependent spaces` ([GUPTA & FERGUSON] 1997: 43)*” (HART 2009: 218, original markings as quoted) (cf. APPADURAI 1988: 16ff, HART 2009: 218).

Following this line of thought, ethnographic-oriented research focuses on how materialities, events, places, and identities “*are constituted in relation to one another through power-laden practices*” (HART 2009: 219). In particular, it aims at “*examin[ing] the relationships between people and their environments, the material social practices of place-making, the productions of nature and the sedimentations of these relationships*” (KATZ 2009: 251) in people’s everyday life to generate deeper understandings of the specific “*situated meanings*” (WILKINSON 2013: 132) of events, phenomena, and practices as well as the “*historical, socio-cultural and political contexts in which they [originate and developed]*” (IBID 2013: 132) (cf. HART 2009: 219, KATZ 2009: 251f, WILKINSON 2013: 129). One important principle of this kind of work is that researchers are ought to learn from local members about topics, practices, and values without taking social facts or theoretical frames for granted but rather question their origins and development (cf. GARFINKEL & WIEDER 1992: 186, WENZL et al. 2019: 344f).

At the same time, acknowledging the premises of subjective perception and configuration is an additional important aspect (cf. FLICK et al. 2008: 14). The “*intersubjective traceability*” (STEINKE 2008: 324; translated by author) secures a high quality of research results, as well as the repetition of observations of and participations in similar activities and situations at different times and places throughout the field research. This ensures a wide range of insights with chances to solidify experienced deviations and consistencies (cf. BAKER 2006: 186, WILKINSON 2013: 135, KRUSE 2015: 54ff).

In the following and for the sake of a transparent overview, I will break down the different methods used, their theoretical backgrounds and my takes on them in the field separately. Wherever I can, I will try to point out and differentiate which method I used in which kind of situation. However, my general approach in the field was more intuitive and adaptive to the immediate situations and conditions, than strictly following each method on its own. In hindsight this led to a lot of mixing and merging of methods as situations kept changing and some approaches turned out to be more or less appropriate and adapted to the current context than expected. Despite everything, I made sure to comply to general codes of ethical empirical research and deal with all participants and their data in a respectful and responsible way. All recordings, where possible, were done with the “Voice memo”-App by Apple on my phone to keep the act of recording as simple and least disruptive to the situations as possible, with the prior agreement of all participants to be recorded as a pre-condition. All notes, transcripts and protocols emerging from these various ways of data collection were evaluated by using a content-structuring content analysis.

The methods further detailed in the following were implemented and appropriately adapted during two field trips in 2022 for a duration of eleven weeks in total. The initial field trip from 13th February 2022 until 23rd March 2022 was set out as a very open and exploratory approach. The main goals for this period of time were to generate a network of contacts, test the planned methods and get an overall better feeling for the situation onsite like the best ways to approach interview partners or the sensibility of research-related topics. Therefore, the focus initially lay on semi-structured interviews to get a feeling for the field, main actors and topics as well as potentially finding first gatekeepers or mediators for contacts. After this initial phase, the approach became more dynamic in the applied methods as well as the range of motion. Due to rainy season, areas in the north and especially the north-west had to be left out due to extreme floodings.

In a second field trip from 16th August 2022 until 21st September 2022, knowledge and experiences from the previous field stay were applied to implement revised and adapted field methods. With the help of maintained contacts, who offered to continue to act as gatekeepers and mediators, it was possible to reach out to actors like local communities, who had previously been more difficult to contact. At the same time, the existing basis of confidence with initial contacts allowed more in-depth and specified conversations during the second visit, enabling more intense and personal insights – especially against the background of already gathered data and theoretical developments since the initial field visit. Also, the willingness to invite the researcher to take part in less formalised or potentially critical activities was increased significantly. Another, more practical reason for the second field trip was the then dry season. It not only allowed to visit those areas flooded previously, but also fell together with tourist high season in Namibia. Therefore, more extensive and diverse participatory observations of and conversations with tourists particularly interested in wildlife-related activities could be conducted. In total, there were about 120 people involved in this field research ranging from locals to different types of tourists, short-term encounters to farm stays of several days, and people being part of one or a mix of several field methodologies.

4.1 Participant observation

Observation as a research method has been called the “*bedrock source of human knowledge*” about the “*social and natural world*” (ADLER & ADLER 1994: 377) and especially the form of participant observation has cemented its position in (ethnographic) field methodology since the late 19th century (cf. TEDLOCK 2007: 151). Traditionally situated within ethnography and anthropology, researchers would live in the community observed for an extended period of time, meaning several months to years, while actively participating in and observing the daily life of people around them (cf. TEDLOCK 2007: 151, CHARI 2009: 519, CLARK et al. 2009: 331). The aim was to produce “true” information about native’s lives. However, criticism of this claimed “truth” and self-positioning as objective observer has led to a significant modification of the method. Based on “*critical, feminist, poststructuralist, and postmodern theories*” (TEDLOCK 2007: 152), the critical and transparent reflection on the researcher’s own participation in and impact on the field has become a central element of ethnographic observational work (cf. HARAWAY 1991: 183ff, TEDLOCK 2007: 151f, CHARI 2009: 520). Additionally, participatory observation increasingly gained popularity in other disciplines as a reaction to post-positivist

challenges of established research practices and “*calls for a more socially relevant research agenda*” (CLARK et al. 2009: 331) that allowed for more involvement of research participants (see also BERESFORD 2002, HOWELL 2018). Questioning consciously and unconsciously produced power relationships between researcher and researched and – in general – following more morally and field-aware research practices allowed for the potential of outcomes to portray alternative truths or supply deeper understandings of complex social relations (cf. RAFFLES 2002: 328ff, CLARK et al. 2009: 331, CHARI 2009: 519, SELIGMAN & ESTES 2020: 177).

The benefits of participant observation as a research method have been stated very clearly in scientific literature. It offers the opportunity to witness, document and understand situations, practices, and behaviours of individuals or groups within the context of their social realities. As first-hand, inductive approach to the field, participant observations have the potential to uncover routinised, sub-conscious elements of everyday practices that tend to escape discursive descriptions e.g. in interviews or conversations in general. Especially topics that people are unwilling or unable to discuss can be dealt with in this way, the latter also hinting to the possibilities to understand the livelihoods of people otherwise unable to verbally express their experiences due to diverse medical conditions (cf. RAFFLES 2002: 330ff, CHARI 2009: 519, CLARK et al. 2009: 333f, WENZL et al. 2019: 344f). Additionally, the usually long-term fieldwork allows for growing familiarity and thus increasingly nuanced understandings of shared values and practices while allowing to track dynamics in the field over time (cf. PAIN et al. 2007: 30ff, SELIGMAN & ESTES 2020: 177).

A researcher working with participatory observation takes on a certain role within the field that can range from “*observer-as-participant*” (BAKER 2006: 175), where the researcher is only slightly involved in the observed situation, to “*complete participation*” (IBID 2006: 177) or “*complete membership*” (IBID 2006: 178), which refer to a researcher completely “*going native*” (IBID 2006: 178) or merging into their respective field. All roles and variations bring their own advantages and disadvantages, but in general one can say that the more a researcher participates in his or her field, the closer he or she gets to understanding insiders’ perspectives and the intricacies of the respective social worlds (cf. PEARSALL 1970: 342f, BAKER 2006: 177ff). At the same time, growing attachments and potential friendly relationships with people in the field also mean a loss of distance that cannot only lead to feelings of privacy violations with researcher and researched and

pressing questions of how to appropriately leave the field again, but also to stigmatisation and negative connotations of the researcher and his or her work in academia (cf. PEARSALL 1970: 342, BAKER 2006: 174ff). But, as BAKER (2006) concludes, “*the depth of that can be collected [...] more than compensates for the loss of scientific detachment.*” (IBID 2006: 178).

For this research project, about fifteen participant observations were conducted in total during two separate field trips. Most observations took place during official guided tours or as part of self-guided activities. Settings of the observations varied from cities, national parks, nature and private game reserves, heritage sites and private farmland. Due to the fact that most observations took place in rough terrain, were related to movement and/or intentionally conducted in a covert role, immediate notetaking was not manageable and even seemed inappropriate for the situation at times. To avoid diversions in participants behaviour, most data captured from these events are notes and descriptions based on memories written down immediately after the activity or event. Additionally, a reflective diary was used to capture all forms of notes on logistics and organisation, personal experiences, thoughts, and feelings as well as diverse descriptions of observations, conversations, and post-scripts (cf. COLE 2005: 65, WILKINSON 2013: 132). The diary proved to be essential for data gathering overall since most observations and conversations took place in settings that would have made notetaking and audio recordings on site impossible or disruptive.

In general, the groups were rather small (max. five people) with most of the tourists being from Western Europe or the US as well as a few South African and Namibian travellers. Most of them were couples in their mid-thirties upwards or friends in a slightly younger age range. The decisions on which tours to take part in were based on the overall aim to achieve a variety in time, place and thematic focus to ensure a necessary degree of convergence for evaluation (cf. WILKINSON 2013: 135). Most tours touched upon several topics though as, for example, a lot of wildlife-related aspects are linked to cultural aspects of understanding, treating, and living with various elements of nature.

Especially in cases of official guided tours, I started out as a covert researcher, engaging with other participants before eventually disclosing my role as a PhD student and researcher whenever conversation led to it. I tried to keep my explanations of the project short, understandable and transparent, without giving away too many details. Mostly, the reaction towards this unveiling was further interest before moving on to other topics

without any signs or expressions of discomfort. At the same time, the conversations partially steered into a certain direction that might not have been part of the tour's discussions without me.

Upon reflecting on these tours, I realised that access to the people was comparably easy as I, aside from my professional interests, could easily be accepted as "one of them" in most cases with a similar Western, privileged background (cf. ADLER & ADLER 1987: 67ff, BAKER 2006: 178, WILKINSON 2013: 132). These common characteristics often also made people feel comfortable to share their expectations, thoughts and feelings upon encountering previously imagined situations "in reality". It allowed me to observe and investigate the concurrency of pre-known sets of assumed knowledge and practices on the one hand and direct experiences on the other hand, alongside initial effects of implementation, adaptation and reconfiguration of seemingly fixed imaginations in the course of events (cf. WILKINSON 2013: 129).

Travelling partially during the touristic off-season, some tours unexpectedly turned into private tours, which was especially beneficial for more casual talks with the guides. Starting out in stereotypically defined roles of "tourist" and "guide", conversations during these one-on-one tours quickly became more engaging and open than on guided tours with several participants. Here, tourists and guides partook in a very repetitive practice of showing, asking, and answering questions about the immediately visible or expected.

This mix of "fitting into" a stereotypical position, e.g. Western tourist being driven around, and breaking it at the same time by travelling self-organised on my own as a female and in-depth interest in an array of topics, enabled me to nearly seemingly blend into the contexts of guided tours on the one hand and getting other, more varying insights from members of staff on the other hand. However, there is no denial that the rather brief encounters and superficial contacts limited the "*opportunities for gaining [deeper inside] knowledge of total situations*" (cf. PEARSALL 1970: 342) and did not suddenly erase existing power asymmetries. The remaining distance to the field though helped in the data analysis process and situational reflection (cf. BAKER 2006: 177).

The approach and experiences of self-guided activities differed slightly from those of guided tours. On the one hand, I had my own experiences of participating in a certain activity which I could observe and reflect on more intensely and at my own pace. On the other hand, I was able to designate more time to only focus on the observation of other people, which increased the details of data. By taking myself more out of the active

participation, I felt more analytical in the way I either took notes on my phone or simply followed my thoughts in that moment. Taking pictures, which had mainly served the purpose of fixating memories for myself, now turned into a research-aimed mode of recording and visualizing what I witnessed in terms of project relevant practices. Especially taking pictures of other people and what they were doing felt slightly odd sometimes and I tried my best to do cover it as to not disturb people's "normal" behaviour.

The participant observations of mediated, more exclusive activities were the result of longer periods of contact and intense multiple day stays with farmers and hunting operators during both field trips. During my stays, I was introduced to several members of the respective families as well as staff, which prepared for the possibility of more exclusive observations during my second fieldtrip. In the case of accompanying a trophy hunt, I had met a professional hunter [PH] and freelance trophy hunting guide from Namibia at one of the hunting farms during my first tour. By coincidence we met again at the same farm while on my second field trip. After some casual conversations with him and his current hunting client one evening, the latter invited me to join them the next morning to get some "real" experiences on hunting for my research project. Being well aware that my lack of knowledge also meant a potential financial and safety risk for all participants, I first checked with the PH and operators but finally accepted the offer excitedly upon their approval. It was during this very intense participant observation that I felt most insecure and at times internally conflicted about appropriate behaviour, practices witnessed and my own thoughts and feelings. However, with a little distance, this experience proved to be one of the most insightful and valuable ones in getting to know and understanding everyday practices and perspectives. At the same time, it also made it harder to keep the balance between gaining more intense knowledge and a detachment for interpretation and analysis (cf. BAKER 2006: 176ff).

In contrast to this, I took on the role as an "*unobtrusive observer*" (IBID 2006: 174) on a control drive of fences on a different farm. These control drives, initiated by the Ministry for Environment, Forestry and Tourism [MEFT], happen on a regular basis and aim to ensure certain standards and official certification of hunting farms. The farm owner had suggested I join his foreman and a government official on the tour while he was away, since it was in line with my research interest. Accompanying the two upon the farm owners initiative without other participants having any say in this, caused a quite different dynamic in contrast to the other more private experience. They behaved in no way

resentful or inappropriate and partially explained what they were looking for and why certain aspects matter. In general, however, my participation was more passive and less integrated, mainly watching the different actions from the truck bed and drawing conclusions from their conversations in a mix of English and Afrikaans. My positioning on the open truck bed made eavesdropping even more difficult, causing additional gaps in the conversations overheard aside from the lack of understanding Afrikaans. Overall, this constellation allowed for greater distance to the analysis of observations and a broader look at things but obviously came at the expense of intricacies and details of the situation and background knowledge (cf. BAKER 2006: 175).

4.2 Hanging out

The term “hanging out” or “deep hanging out” was first coined in 1998 by Clifford GEERTZ to describe a form of participant observation specifically focused on informal social interactions (cf. BROWNE & MCBRIDE 2015: 35, WALMSLEY 2018: 277). As a field method, it describes a process of physical, close immersion into the field and people’s daily lives on an informal level by simply being there, watching and taking part in everyday practices and chores as well as casually chatting or listening to stories and conversations (cf. BROWNE & MCBRIDE 2015: 35, WALMSLEY 2018: 277, VANHALA et al. 2022: 185). It allows the researcher to build relationships with people in the field and gain insights into more implicit or guarded knowledge and experiences. Therefore, “*lived realities and [people’s] everyday lives*” (BROWNE & MCBRIDE 2015: 45) can be better understood “*from within their [the actors] own frame of reference*” (IBID 2015: 35) in contrast to “simply” observing social and spatial practices from a personal distance (cf. BROWNE & MCBRIDE 2015: 35f, HEINRICHSMEIER 2020: 28, VANHALA et al. 2022: 185ff).

Besides being an ethnographic field method, hanging out is often also described as a “*sensibility*” (VANHALA et al. 2022: 184) referring to the fact that the researcher him- or herself becomes more aware of the relationships not only between people, but between people and place, material objects and other elements in their surrounding – including the researcher and his/her effects on the field itself (cf. BROWNE & MCBRIDE 2015: 35, RICHARDSON & THIEME 2018: 28, VANHALA et al. 2022: 184ff). To gain the desired insights, researchers are to “*becom[e] known as a regular*” (KAWULICH 2011: 65), meaning they put themselves out in the field, are visible and grow familiar to the people around them (cf. BROWNE & MCBRIDE 2015: 36ff, VANHALA et al. 2022: 187).

One important aspect in this timely process is to establish a personal, field-appropriate identity aside from being a researcher – also framed as “*becoming a person*” (BROWNE & MCBRIDE 2015: 43). It starts with an outward appearance that fits the setting and group and extends to aspects like meaningful engagement within the group or active participation in discussions (cf. BROWNE & MCBRIDE 2015: 36ff, VANHALA et al. 2022: 186f). These activities do not only legitimate the researcher’s presence by seeing him/her as a reliable and trustworthy participant of the social rather than an external observer that could potentially cause feelings of unease, being spied on or taken advantage of (cf. BROWNE & MCBRIDE 2015: 36ff, VANHALA et al. 2022: 186f). By putting oneself out there, potential mistrust and suspicion can be eroded and the thus generated interpersonal rapport can ease negotiations on the access to certain people, groups or institutions considerably more effective than any kind of formal request – provided that the researcher operates with openness and honesty about his underlying motives for participating (cf. BROWNE & MCBRIDE 2015: 38ff, MARTE 2018).

Such deep immersion, however, is also prone to a blurring of boundaries between the researcher and the field, potentially causing irritation when switching or mixing roles. Keeping the balance between pushing for certain, research-relevant topics and patiently “*hanging back*” (VANHALA et al. 2022: 187) to wait and see what the field offers, can prove difficult, especially in research situations that only allow for a limited duration of stay. Ultimately, the data value and reliability resulting from hanging out greatly depends on the quality of field relationships, which do take time to establish, and a general openness to take challenges within the research process as possibilities to discover something new or thought-provoking (cf. BROWNE & MCBRIDE 2015: 45, VANHALA et al. 2022: 187f). In the end, it is the combination of participants thoughts and concepts, the shared experiences of researcher and participants, the mediation of implicit knowledge and lived realities through practices as well as the personal accounts of the researcher on his influence but also emotions and thoughts while being in the field that create the value of hanging out (cf. BURAWOY 2003: 669, WALMSLEY 2018: 277).

During my two field trips to Namibia, I participated in several hanging outs, adding to the more planned and “official” participant observations – although the boundaries between methods tended to blur occasionally. For example, I often ended up staying at farms for a couple of days that I had initially requested for a semi-structured interview. Usually, the formal conversation would take place upon my arrival before continuing more

informally with game drives, daily chores, meals, chats around a fireplace or at the bar, then also involving family members, friends or other guests. During the following days I would join everyday activities and offer my help wherever it was needed.

In these farm cases, all participant parties knew about my role as a researcher which sometimes led to situations where, in a group discussion, one of my initial contacts directly asked me about my opinion on hunting, trophies and whether I actually know anything about hunting. The way, the question was posed made it feel like a test if I had been honest in earlier conversations about my claims to be curious and open-minded towards the topic of game hunting. It was obvious that a vague answer would not suffice in this case and could potentially cause the participants to close off to me. I decided to communicate honestly about my limited knowledge on hunting since I had only come to realise the magnitude of the topic (trophy) hunting during my stay in Namibia and therefore had not been on a hunt before. My aim was to take any possibility offered to get as many insights into the practices of (trophy) hunting as I had decided that I could not write about a topic without taking several perspectives into consideration. Therefore, I made clear to be open to reconsider my potential stereotypes.

My honesty and openness in this situation paid off, as I was included in a great part of daily chores and private conversations the following days and furthermore got to join a client's trophy hunt the next time I visited Namibia. After this experience, appropriate straightforwardness and sincerity when addressed directly would become a guiding principle in my future research process. It proved to be very helpful in establishing a personal identity necessary for building the desired relationships in the field (cf. BROWNE & MCBRIDE 2015: 36ff, MARTE 2018, VANHALA et al. 2022: 186f).

Aside from the farm locations, I had to slightly adapt the method of hanging out to fit the field. Since I extended my considered understanding of hunting to any kind of person who was seeking an ideal(ised) image of experiencing "the wild", I also aimed at hanging out with safari and/or self-driving tourists which were best met on campsites. The particular nature of this part of the field has it that people rarely stay at one place for more than one or two nights and only arrive or come back to their campsite shortly before dawn. Therefore, hanging outs were usually limited to a few hours in the evening. Spending several nights at the same campsite did not prove more fruitful in comparison to moving on myself, as the dynamic of getting to know and hanging out was repetitive.

What turned out to be beneficial in reducing inhibitions for initial approaches was the fact that I was travelling on my own. Especially being a young woman, this sparked quite some interest and questions that became the opener to casual chats over a Savanna (typical cider from South Africa) around a fireplace. I always disclosed my research purpose during these kinds of informal conversations and gave honest information about the topic(s) and empirical approach if requested. Overall, the reaction to this “revelation” was positive and oftentimes initiated further discussions and stories about different aspects of e.g. wildlife management, hunting ethics or personal expectations and experiences.

The people I got to meet through these short-term campsite hanging outs varied greatly in many aspects like age, gender, relation, home country and duration of travel. They were between mid-twenty and mid-sixty, male and female in rather same ratio, couples, families, or friends mostly from Central Europe and Namibia. The site of research on campsites naturally saw most people sleeping in ground tents or rooftop tents and mostly traveling in rental cars, which were predominantly 4x4 SUVs or Pickup trucks.

On a few occasions, mainly during my first field trip in tourist off-season, I got to hang out with members of staff at campsites. Again, travelling on my own came in handy to get into contact and lead to afternoons playing games, chatting casually, trying to learn the local language, and being invited to share a *braai* (Afrikaans term for barbeque) or visit their home village. Language barriers between English, Afrikaans and the local language made precise communication a bit tricky at times, but people would always find their way to tell stories or ask questions.

4.3 Go-along interview

The go-along interview is an ethnographic method most prominently described and introduced by the sociologist Margarethe KUSENBACH in her paper “Street phenomenology. The go-along as ethnographic research tool” (2003). Based on Edward S. CASEY’s philosophical take on “*how living bodies’ movements constitute our primordial sense of the environment as a diversity of places*” (CASEY 1993: 43f in KUSENBACH 2003: 455) and Edward RELPH’s geographical perspective of places as “*centres of special personal significance*” (RELPH 1976: 11), “*including not only actual [material] places but also imagined and remembered ones*” (KUSENBACH 2003: 456), KUSENBACH argues for go-along interviews as a method to capture aspects of bodily and spatial practices while

concurrently experiencing the same (cf. KUSENBACH 2003: 463, CARPIANO 2009: 263ff, O'NEILL & ROBERTS 2019: 17).

To do so, the researcher accompanies individuals on their normal routes and explores how they move through and interact with their environment on their way through observing and asking questions (cf. KUSENBACH 2003: 463, CARPIANO 2009: 265). “[A]s a hybrid [form] of interview and participant observation” (BUTLER & DERRETT 2014: 1) go-alongs pose a more active and systematic approach to access people’s practices, experiences and interpretations than hanging out, for example. At the same time, the movement and change of scenery during the go-along brings people closer to their daily practices and opens up the conversation to details and unanticipated aspects that normally would have escaped a formal, seated interview in a closed room (cf. KUSENBACH 2003: 463, CARPIANO 2009: 265f, O'NEILL & ROBERTS 2019: 17f).

Usually conducted in a “natural” (KUSENBACH 2003: 464) surrounding, go-alongs align with daily routines that take place in familiar environments and thus can capture perceptions, emotions and interpretations that are linked to people’s everyday practices but not made explicit in the specific situations or at all. It also helps to add context to the researcher’s own impressions and interpretations of the environment, while this kind of shadowing allows for rather unobstructive and at the same time close observations of social situations when the interviewed individual meets other people during the go-along (cf. KUSENBACH 2003: 464, O'NEILL & ROBERTS 2019: 17ff, WENZL et al. 2019: 349). However, no matter how “natural” the go-along is and how open-ended the structure of conversation is kept, it remains a staged social setting as the presence and questions of the researcher interfere and amend the “normal” lived experience of the interviewed individual (cf. KUSENBACH 2003: 464f).

In most cases where go-alongs are used as a research method, they are conducted in the form of walk-alongs, meaning walking around a certain area by foot while talking and exploring. The advantage here, besides the already mentioned, is the rather slow pace that gives room to both participants to be spontaneous, let things said or observed sink in before addressing them and also allows for the researcher to take notes in between to support later data analysis (cf. KUSENBACH 2003: 464f, CARPIANO 2009: 270, DREW et al. 2022: 5). As a multisensory activity, walking in particular adds a sensorial layer of observing and experiencing practices as they unfold and contribute to the feeling of being “in touch with [the] surrounding” (DREW et al. 2022: 6) – thus making the access to

bodily aspects of practices more likely (cf. PINK 2007: 240, O'NEILL & ROBERTS 2019: 18f, DREW et al. 2022: 6).

In contrast to this, go-alongs in/on vehicles, so called ride-alongs, are less popular. Due to their naturally faster pace, events or other potential stimulations pass by or are even missed more quickly, making it difficult for the researcher to keep track of the ongoing situation and clarify thoughts or interpretations (cf. KUSENBACH 2003: 465). Additionally, the driver – whether this is the researcher or the participant – has to divert his/her attention between the task of driving and navigating on the one hand and paying attention to the conversation on the other hand at the same time, which can easily cause great distraction and potential risks for everyone involved. Additionally, audio-recordings are deemed essential to capture the contents and contexts of ride-alongs properly, which requires a certain comfort level of the participants with recordings. Therefore, ride-alongs are often claimed to be less effective than walk-alongs and dealt with as feasible alternatives to walk-alongs in cases where weather or physical conditions do not accommodate for stepping outside (cf. KUSENBACH 2003: 465, CARPIANO 2009: 269).

However, other authors argue that a ride-along in a car not only reconfigures how modern society makes its way in and through the world but can be a fruitful adjustment to the research topic and sites, for example in contexts of farms and farmland (cf. THRIFT 2004: 44, DREW et al. 2022: 6). As DREW et al. (2022) describe, having farmers take the researcher on a drive around the farm is necessary to understand the scales, skills and efforts that go into working large scale agricultural land and is thus the most authentic way to experience a farmers' daily practices. The driver's knowledge of the landscape and more or less hidden routes guides relevant insights and the continuous "*shifting of worlds*" (LATIMER & MUNRO 2006: 48) through passing a variety of places. Certain things along the road can trigger different aspects of special meanings and experiences that keeps the conversation moving naturally (cf. LATIMER & MUNRO 2006: 48f, HUIJBENS & BENEDIKTSSON 2007: 145, DREW et al. 2022: 6).

By accelerating temporal and spatial scopes through driving, there is great potential to discover new and unexpected aspects that might not be directly related to the research topic but help to understand the overall context of conversations, observations, and experiences. Situations such as hopping in and out of the car every once in a while to take a short walk or look at something more specifically then support the overall atmosphere of tapping in and out of stories or certain aspects. They all contribute to the greater frame of

practices which characterise and reflect how, in this case, farmers move through, encounter, know and act on their land – something that DREW et al. (2022) called “*socialised landscape interaction*” (IBID 2022: 6) (cf. IBID 2022: 6ff).

Therefore, the car is not only a simple tool to access people’s daily practices in and experiences of the places around them or to stimulate dynamic, multidirectional, and potentially surprising conversations. The car itself can be seen as an extension of the participants’ body and thus an integral part of his/her “*embodied, sensory and affective knowing*” (PINK et al. 2019: 103) with their very own sensorial peculiarities, qualities, and affordances (cf. DREW et al. 2022: 8). During my own field research, I conducted four ride-alongs and one walk-along with previously arranged interview partners I, J, K and M.

- Livestock farmer, private (hunting) tourism operator (I)
- Private (hunting) tourism operator & cattle farmer (J)
- Private (hunting) tourism operator & NAPHA board member (K)
- Cattle farmer, (hunting) tourism operator & NAPHA board member (M)

However, throughout the two field trips, the line between ride-alongs or walk-alongs and hanging outs as well as participant observations, got blurred on several occasions, especially during game drives. As these mixed-method situations usually came about in more informal contexts, they are accounted for in the hanging outs or participant observations.

Similar to DREW et al.’s experiences, the ride-alongs were initiated by farmers themselves, who I had first approached for a more formal semi-structured interview. Since I often stayed at the farms for several days, I got multiple opportunities to join the farmers and sometimes also their staff on their drives through the farmland – whether it was to check the water pumps, fences or wildlife cameras, feed the cattle or game or dispose offal. The different purposes of the drives had a great impact on the duration as well as the topics and intensity of conversation.

While control drives mostly brought up broader aspects of farming like plot divisions, the history of the land use – often closely connected to family history – as well as future development plans, the game drives had a more exclusive focus on wildlife and its management. In many cases, the latter sparked conversations that became more emotional and personal as farmers expressed a high value and feeling of personal luxury to have the opportunity to watch “their” animals thrive on their land. Conversations on cattle and the

overall farm management were, in contrast, more tightly related to business and economic-financial thoughts – in which wildlife did also play a substantial role. Due to the structure of the farms, walk-alongs there mainly focused on farming and tourism since plots for cattle sorting, sheeps, goats or horses and accommodations for guests were quite similarly in all cases the few significant places of practice located within walking distance to the farmhouse.

The duration of my ride-alongs greatly varied upon the tasks and activities I joined. While some outings only took about 30 minutes, my longest drive lasted for more than three hours where I was invited to accompany a farmer on one of his regular control drives. No matter how different the purposes and related tasks of the drives were, it became very clear from the beginning that the car was the most normal way for people to get around for their daily chores. One of the main reasons for this is simple practicality. Where farm sizes of 10,000 hectare and more are nothing extraordinary, a vehicle is the only reasonable way to go around and get all tasks done in time. Sitting in the front of the pickups or even standing on the open bed of the Toyota Land Cruisers, the most common farm truck, and experiencing the vastness of land continuously unfold added another layer of understanding of the actual scales and sensory elements of the farmers' daily practices. Hopping on and off the truck to open and close gates, check on a water pump or standing in the middle of a plain while talking about the land around and its management significantly deepened my perspective and grasp on my participants relation to their land and the animals on it.

As impressive and insightful as especially the ride-alongs were, as difficult was their recording. Notwithstanding the pace of moving around, the inevitable bumpy dirt roads made written notes simply impossible which was why I initially decided to audio-record some of my ride-alongs as well as the walk-alongs. However, the same aspects that made the bodily and sensory experiences of the farmers' practices feel so closely linked to the surrounding, like the hopping on and off the truck, the sound of the engine and the air-stream of driving did have a negative influence on the audio quality with parts of conversations drowned in external noise or missed out due to physical distance. The latter especially played a role when I was parted from my interviewee by being on the truck bed and the front separately, which only happened in a few cases though.

Although audio-recordings of walk-alongs were slightly better in quality, opportunities often appeared so spontaneously and unplanned during the hustle of daily practices that I

did not have my phone with me to record and no time to fetch it if I did not want to impede my informant. As a consequence of these issues, I extensively reconstructed the conversations, events and locations of each go-along in my field notes from memory as soon as possible after the conduct. In some cases, days were so filled with events that I only got to properly write down my notes in the late evening before bed. During these days I noted some key words on my phone as a memory aid for the more detailed postscript later on.

4.4 Semi-structured interview

Semi-structured interviews can be characterised by a certain degree of structure through an interview guideline and are often used in studies with narrow research questions (cf. PRZYBORSKI & WOHLRAB-SAHR 2014: 126, KRUSE 2015: 209). In contrast to other qualitative types of interviews with a strict set and order of questions or, on the opposite site of the spectrum, little to no particular indicators, semi-structured interviews offer a middle ground with a rough structure for orientation through prepared questions and a high flexibility to follow a natural development of conversation at the same time with the latter being the main priority (cf. HOPF 2008: 351f, PRZYBORSKI & WOHLRAB-SAHR 2014: 126, KRUSE 2015: 203f). Additionally, this approach supports a balance between a great width of potential problematisations and reactions regarding the research topic while enabling the researcher to specify and deepen certain aspects against the background of personal or social meanings, contexts, and relevancy at the same time (cf. HOPF 2008: 354ff, PRZYBORSKI & WOHLRAB-SAHR 2014: 127ff, DENSCOMBE 2021: 245).

Interviewees are invited to voice their first, spontaneous associations and thoughts of the research topic through broadly phrased and narrative stimulating questions. In the following, more specific enquiries aim at incentivising more expansive and detailed explanations regarding meanings, (personal) contexts and relevancy – always keeping in mind to avoid a so called “*guideline bureaucracy*” (HOPF 1978: 101; translated by author) and instead enable as much self-determination for the interviewee as possible. This development is encouraged by a passive and listening-oriented behaviour of the interviewer as well as a situationally appropriate and comprehensible wording of questions (cf. HOPF 2008: 354ff, PRZYBORSKI & WOHLRAB-SAHR 2014: 127ff, KRUSE 2015: 209f/215ff).

For qualitative interview research, the choice of participants is decisive for the validity of the collected data. Therefore, a careful sampling is supposed to ensure that the broadest possible spectrum of depictions of the research topic is captured (cf. WILKINSON 2013:

136, PRZYBORSKI & WOHLRAB-SAHR 2014: 177ff, KRUSE 2015: 237f). In qualitative samplings, one typically differentiates between theoretical sampling, sampling according to set criteria and snowball sampling (cf. PRZYBORSKI & WOHLRAB-SAHR 2014: 181ff, KRUSE 2015: 248ff). The theoretical sampling focuses on minimizing or maximizing the case differences and is a heavily data-oriented dynamic process with which the case density is continuously increased based on theoretical considerations. For sampling according to set criteria, it works the other way round. Theoretically justified characteristics are set up as specific requirements for potential interview partners. The sample is then consciously put together while ensuring to reflect the heterogeneity in the field (cf. PRZYBORSKI & WOHLRAB-SAHR 2014: 181ff, KRUSE 2015: 248f).

Snowball sampling makes use of social network relations in the research field by asking prior interview partners to recommend or mediate further contacts. Thus, the research network can be expanded constantly and the number of recommendations of specific people give the researcher an additional hint on their relevance. So called gatekeepers play a key role in this system as they not only know “their” field the best but their reputation often eases the access to people less approachable to outsiders. However, it is important to keep in mind that especially snowball sampling not only has the potential to expand and diversify field contacts on a high rate, but can just as well lead to reification and strategic bias that have to be considered when analysing and interpreting the data (cf. PRZYBORSKI & WOHLRAB-SAHR 2014: 184f, KRUSE 2015: 251, SELIGMAN & ESTES 2020: 188f).

With qualitative research methods, and therefore also semi-structured interviews, the question of the necessary number of cases is not one to be answered with a definite number but rather depends on the degree of “*theoretical saturation*” (STRAUSS 1991: 21, translation by author) the available data offers. Data gathering can be called sufficient at a point where further interviews or other kinds of investigations are not expected to yield any new insights. This in turn is most likely achieved by examining the largest and smallest possible contrasts (cf. PRZYBORSKI & WOHLRAB-SAHR 2014: 186f).

Based on this dissertation project’s specific research topic and goals, the sampling according to set criteria was the first choice for deciding on initial interview partners. It allowed to explore the field in a structured way, get a better feeling for the different areas to take a closer look at – content- and participant-wise as well as spatial – and generate first contacts who could potentially become gatekeepers or open other kinds of further

research opportunities. The interview partners were chosen according to the following, research-based criteria: (a) living and/or working in Namibia, (b) working in a context of conservation and wildlife management, (trophy) hunting or wildlife-related tourism, (c) consideration of a variety of perspectives and backgrounds. First contact approaches were the result of internet research on the webpages of various national associations like the Namibian Professional Hunting Association (NAPHA), the Tour Association Namibia (TAN), the Tour and Safaris Association Namibia (TASA) and the Namibian Association of Community Based Natural Resource Management Support Organisations (NACSO). Additionally, private contacts through friends, family members and colleagues were used to acquire first interviewees in Namibia.

The feedback from a first mail contact prior to the first field trip from February 13, 2022, until March 23, 2022, was rather mixed with mostly slow or non-binding responses stating the enquiry would be forwarded to other departments within the organisation to be dealt with. After arriving in Namibia, a second round of mails was sent kindly asking for updates and mentioning the current stay in Namibia and Windhoek. This proved more successful than the first contact approach and, in several cases, generated quick and fruitful replies with specific contact details. During or after the interviews, some interview partners additionally and voluntarily took the role as gatekeeper, thus initiating a snowball sampling strategy. They acquired private contact details and introduced me in initial phone calls to people they expected to be interesting for the project and assuring further support for future stays.

Contact with interview partners forwarded from these contacts usually was quicker and more direct, mainly via WhatsApp, than those contacted independently based on internet research. The initial reaction to appointment requests varied greatly from neutral over confusion on how they could be of help to some reluctance and scepticism about the project, my intentions and personal standpoint. With some of the more sceptical contacts no appointment could be agreed on due to lack of response. Furthermore, the limited time in combination with the vast distances and bad road conditions did not allow for all of the forwarded potential interview partners to be contacted for an appointment during this first trip. By the time I returned for my second field trip from August 17, 2022, to September 22, 2022, those reluctant to be interviewed during the first field trip and contacted again did not change their opinion and declined their willingness to take part. Other contacts,

whether new or already known ones, were simply not available, especially in the tourism sector due to the touristic high season and the amount of work.

During both research trips a total of eleven semi-structured interviews with a total of thirteen different people were conducted with the following partners of which some were interviewed more than once like A and J, and were also part of different methods applied, e.g. J, K and M:

- Wildlife veterinarian for a national park and communal areas (A)
- German consulting business partner (B)
- Namibian self-employed tourism agent (C)
- Representative of the Namibian Agricultural Union [NAU] (D)
- Representatives of Desert Lions Human Relations Aid [DEHRLA] (E & F)
- Professional game hunter & hunting tourism operator & board member of Namibian Professional Hunters Association [NAPHA] (G)
- Professional game hunter & hunting tourism operator (H)
- Private (hunting) tourism operator & cattle farmer (J)
- Private (hunting) tourism operator & NAPHA board member (K)
- Representative of Save the Rhino Trust [STRT] (L)
- Cattle farmer, (hunting) tourism operator & NAPHA board member (M)
- Professional horse trainer & tourism operator (N)

The guiding questions consisted of four main topics, of which each started with an open question to generate a flow of narration before going into detail through targeted enquiries (cf. appendix IV.4). To start off the conversation, the interview partner was asked about his take on “wilderness” and what makes a landscape, place, or animal(s) “wild” for him. This question, although rather personal and intense for the beginning, turned out to be a good starting point as it set a common understanding for the following remarks about “wilderness” and was open enough for people to talk freely. It allowed to identify individual topics, focal points, and lines of thought early on to be explored further during the interview. The next thematic block regarding relations to conservation, tourism and/or hunting blended in nearly seamlessly and gave further insights into the positionality and self-understanding of tasks, responsibilities, and valuation regarding wilderness and wildlife. The adjacent topic opened a discussion about practices related to wildlife. It was

initially kept very broad to give participants the opportunity to mention and highlight those practices that first come to their mind or seem most relevant in their daily lives.

Depending on their answers, more in-depth enquiries aimed at better understanding how and why participants but also other groups of people that were mentioned before engage with wildlife, what these interactions mean to them and why there might be differences or similarities. Following this line of thought, the last part of the conversation dealt with potential and actual fields of conflict, covering controversial discussions or perspectives, expectations and interests in and around wilderness and wildlife as perceived by the participant. This allowed an insight into the range of diverse wilderness understandings as well as the experienced effects and consequences of a collision or co-existence of these and the role of power (a)symmetries. Since this was a more critical question, it was posed last to be able to get a feeling for the overall atmosphere before and build a certain basis of trust. To finish off the conversation, the participant was offered to add further remarks, perspectives or questions which also highlighted aspects personally important to him/her.

The interviews mainly took place outside on the visited farms, in cafés or restaurants while only a few were conducted indoors in offices or living rooms. The interviews had an average duration of 1,5 hours with a span between 50 minutes and 2,5 hours. Five of the interviews were carried out in German, two in English and one was a mix of German and English. If possible and after securing consent, the interviews were recorded with the “VoiceMemo”-App by Apple and transcribed with the qualitative data analysis tool MAXQDA. In some cases, however, the recording could not be used due to noisy environment or was not adequate for the situation. In these cases, notes were taken during the interview and written down in an interview transcript after the appointment. The transcription guidelines used for the transformation of recorded interviews into transcripts were based on the “*five basic rules*” (KRUSE 2015: 350ff; translation by author) of transcription and the designs of LOOS & SCHÄFER (2001: 57). In favour of better legibility, general rules of punctuation and spelling were maintained. After every interview, a post-script was written to reflect on the course of conversation and noteworthy particularities.

4.5 Content-structuring qualitative content analysis

A qualitative content analysis allows to analyse greater amounts of text by using codes from which criteria for a validated interpretation can be derived. In contrast to this, quantitative and integrative content analyses focus on the mere frequency of case-specific

categories in texts to preferably find generalisable results (cf. FRÜH 2015: 69f). Within qualitative content analysis, different variants with disparate goal settings have developed that however share the same six characteristics: “*orientation towards categories*”, “*interpretative approach*”, “*consideration of latent meanings*”, “*partial development of categories on the material*”, “*systematic, rule-guided approach*” and “*orientation on both reliability and validity*” (SCHREIER 2014: n.n.; translation by author). In this dissertation project, the priority is set on the respective semantic content of meanings that is to be presented in a contrasting way, rather than focussing on their quantity. According to this, the content-structuring type of content analysis based on KUCKARTZ’s work (2012) is suited best for the evaluation of the collected data.

The data corpus for the analysis consisted of transcripts, conversation protocols and post-scripts from ten interviews, two auto-ethnographic writings (Living Desert Adventures 02.03.2022, Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022) and two field diaries with notes on participant observations, informal conversations, and self-reflections. Working with this data, initial thematic top categories were developed based on the research question and the interview guideline by using the tools of MAXQDA. Thematic categories enable a classification or organisation of particular statements in coherent groups and focus on the meanings of what was said (cf. KUCKARTZ 2012: 31ff, SCHREIER 2014: n.n.). Based on these top categories, coding units or text passages can be identified and assigned to the former (*subsumption*). At the same time, new categories are generated inductively from the existing material. Choosing and defining coding units in form of units of sense is hereby important to maintain the initial meaning of these text passages even after extracting them from the transcript. Overlaps of single coding units due to this practice are accepted in favour of comprehension (cf. KUCKARTZ 2012: 41ff, SCHREIER 2014: n.n.).

In the further course, a category system is developed by clearly defining the top categories and, if necessary, establishing suitable subcategories. This category system serves as coding guideline and is continuously adjusted and refined in the process of coding based on the material itself (cf. STEIGLEDER 2008: 188f). As depicted in figure 4, the category system consisted of six top categories by the end of the coding process, each category containing several subcategories relating to different topics of the overarching category (cf. appendix IV.5).

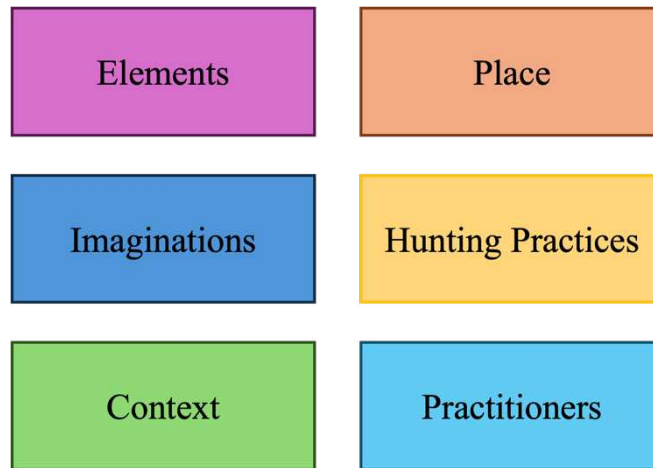


Figure 4: Top categories of the coding system
Source: own design 2024

For the subsequent evaluation and analysis of the coded material, KUCKARTZ (2012) suggests seven different methods, depending on the desired emphasis in the results. For the aspired de- and reconstruction of place-configurations through practices of hunting and images of “the wild”, an examination of the “*configurations of categories*” (IBID 2012: 120; translation by author) was chosen. It focuses on the elaboration of “*multi-dimensional relations*” (IBID 2012: 120; translation by author) between and within categories, which enables an identification and drawing of connections between different elements, practices, and images. Thereby, the research questions can be properly addressed in the conclusion and remaining open questions, knowledge gaps and further research approaches are detected (cf. IBID 2012: 118f).

4.6 Critical reflection

Notwithstanding all the preparation and caution a researcher puts in field work, from choosing the best suited and appropriate methods to actually implementing them in the field and analysing the heaps of data afterwards, critically reflecting on one's theoretical and practical approach and pitfalls is necessary in terms of transparency and validity. Different methods come with their very own advantages and challenges, as does the field itself and – quite naturally – working and researching with human beings.

Firstly, combining several methods as carried out in this project can be tricky and careful consideration had to go into deciding which method to apply in which setting, with what kind of person and why with regards to the desired or required types of data. The initial focus on semi-structured interviews at the beginning of the first field trip was mainly due to the fact, that this kind of official approach seemed – and in several cases later proved – to be the best and easiest way to get a first feeling for the field, the actors involved and fathom potential gatekeepers or at least further contacts. Although some important data could be gathered, it also became clear very early on that semi-structured interviews would not reach all the “right” people for this research topic and also could not offer the answers and insights sought after.

As authors like KUSENBACH (2003) and CARPIANO (2009) already mentioned in their works, static and sedentary interviews happen to disconnect participants from their everyday routines and practices – one of the main topics of this research project. Some aspects simply cannot and do not want to be expressed verbally by interview partners and therefore escape the narrativity of such types of conversations (cf. KUSENBACH 2003: 462, CARPIANO 2009: 267, SELIGMAN & ESTES 2020: 188f). Especially in cases where asymmetries in social, political, economic, etc. power are more difficult to avoid or eradicate, it is extremely important to create an atmosphere that allows to explore new, alternative (to the researcher) or more situationally appropriate narratives during the conversation instead of simply reconstructing certain discourses that are dominantly communicated in society (cf. BUTLER & DERRETT 2014: 7). The afore mentioned “*guideline bureaucracy*” (HOPF 2008: 358; translated by author) by using pre-formulated questions as a tick-off checklist rather than plain supportive tool, is part of this as well and can be avoided by taking on the role of a passive, open-minded listener (cf. HOPF 2008: 354ff, KRUSE 2015: 209ff).

As already mentioned, one of the disadvantages of interview research is the lack of participants (and researchers) effectively experiencing (and observing) interactions and practices within participants' "normal" environment in the moment of conversation. This is where ethnographic methods like participant observation, hanging out and go-alongs make a valuable methodological addition. The latter could be described as an intermediary or hybrid between semi-structured, sedentary interviews and actively participating in and observing the field (cf. KUSENBACH 2003: 458ff, CARPIANO 2009: 267, BUTLER & DERRETT 2014: 1). It spatialises the participants' experiences and practices expressed verbally and non-verbally, provides a wider context for voiced ideas and additional clues for conversation – also through the researchers own thoughts and impressions. However, especially walk-alongs are quite dependent on a series of external factors like weather, potential mobility and health concerns or safety risks (cf. CARPIANO 2009: 267).

Ride-alongs in or on (motorised) vehicles can compensate for these disadvantages without significant changes to the overall methodology. Also, for research topics that are not limited to places of relatively manageable size, like large-scale farms or national parks, ride-alongs are often the more viable and also authentic way of getting around (cf. DREW et al. 2022: 6). Though, the act of driving, whether done by the researcher or the participant, during an ongoing conversation poses a certain degree of distraction, which can lead from missing out on cues due to the pace of travel to safety risks for oneself and others, depending on the road/traffic situation (cf. KUSENBACH 2003: 465, CARPIANO 2009: 269).

Rough road conditions e.g. on farms, slow down the pace and therefore allow to catch up on more details in the surrounding than driving on tar roads. On the downside, this makes notetaking nearly impossible. Audio recordings after consent are therefore often the only way to capture ride-alongs. Since the audio quality is in some cases significantly impaired by sounds of traffic, engines, wind or rustling clothes, it is absolutely necessary to combine ride-alongs with post-scripts to keep track of as much details as possible and ease the later transcription and analysis of data – though realistically not all details or undertones can be captured (cf. KUSENBACH 2003: 465, DENSCOMBE 2021: 256).

The issue of recording or taking adequate notes becomes even more present during participant observations and hanging outs. In the beginning, participant observations were planned to be documented by detailed notes on site. However, the observations ended up mostly being situated in cars or on foot as I joined guided tours, game drives or a trophy hunt. Taking notes in these situations was absolutely not manageable and would have

caused noticeable irritation. The few initial audio recordings had to be deemed unusable since the distance between participants and the great amounts of in-between movement resulted in extremely bad and often intelligible recording quality. Hanging outs were additionally complicated by a lot of spontaneous activities or private situations that not only made notetaking on site or audio recordings impossible but also inappropriate. In the end, most observations and impressions were kept in extensive notes or, in a few pivotal key cases, elaborated in autoethnographic descriptions. Especially those informal hanging outs with participants and sometimes friends and family offered a lot of insights, gave contexts to prior observations, and allowed to build trusting and open relationships (cf. CARPIANO 2009: 267, WALMSLEY 2018: 284, DENSCOMBE 2021: 256).

The people met got to know about my role as a researcher in a situationally appropriate way, which initially did influence people's reactions and conversations to some degree as they were told some basic information about topics of interest. Some were inspired to tell stories about past experiences or developments of practices, others were slightly reluctant or suspicious at first (cf. KUSENBACH 2003: 464f, DENSCOMBE 2021: 256). Being a young, white female researcher in a still largely male-dominated field partially played a particular role here. There were several cases where I was not taken seriously or felt I had to prove myself first by being tested with more critical questions or closely watched to see my reaction to potentially appalling, "not-for-the-faint-hearted" situations. I quickly figured out that being honest about my opinions but also upfront about my shortcomings e.g. when it came to previous knowledge about and experience with hunting, was the best way to earn trust and respect. This way, I could convincingly show my eagerness to really learn and experience "it all" despite very clearly leaving my own comfort zone at times (cf. GOBO & MOLLE 2017: 127f).

Once this initial threshold was crossed, I was treated very warmly and openly in a majority of cases and was offered many opportunities to join daily practices. However, this also led to one of the biggest challenges I encountered during my field research: the navigation of my different positionalities, roles, and relationships with participants. With the initial semi-structured interviews, it was still manageable to establish a relaxed and open conversational atmosphere where both parties seemed comfortable to speak but remained in the rather official framing of a research situation. In these more informal moments though, esp. during farm stays, my role as a researcher became more fluctuating and faded

into the background against a more diverse and personalised identity (cf. BROWNE & MCBRIDE 2015: 43).

Having the risk of going native in mind, I struggled with this change of position regarding my research and data acquisition and how this more personal connection might influence my own takes on conversations or observations in the moment and in later analysis (cf. WALMSLEY 2018: 284, DENSCOMBE 2021: 128). In the end, I decided that I would keep “going with the flow” and, adapted to the field situation, take offers and opportunities as they came to do justice to the field and my interests at the same time. While maintaining my open and direct style of research communication, I would also allow the people to get to know me personally to reduce certain positional asymmetries and the risk of leaving a feeling of “data exploitation”.

On the one hand, this brought me to the conclusion and awareness of a heightened responsibility for my participants protection of confidentiality and taking extra care of the information disclosed and their representation in my work (cf. GOBO & MOLLE 2017: 138ff, HEINRICHSMEIER 2020: 36, DENSCOMBE 2021: 128). On the other hand, this also meant that I had to take more time to work through experiences and reflect on my own feelings, thoughts, and contributions. Acknowledging that I, too, became part of the field I was researching, led to the decision to disclose my personal notes in my analysis as well. While these closer relationships made some aspects of research practices more challenging to navigate, it was worth taking this risk for the depth of insights and unique opportunities, like joining a client’s trophy hunt (cf. WALMSLEY 2018: 284). Furthermore, it enabled an easier process of snowball sampling due to the highly networked communities and the already established reputation through my initial contacts. This way, I was able to review and condense certain impression I had already gathered, contributing to a sustainable and validate data basis. At the same time, I was aware to avoid the pitfall of getting stuck within one network of similar contacts with perspectives and experiences akin to the already known ones only re-validating itself.

The more time I spent in the field, I realised that I had to adjust my methods. In conversations with other researchers who had worked in Namibia prior to my first field trip, I had been made aware of existing weariness and negative connotations of local contacts towards European researchers exploiting them for data. During my time in the field, I was reminded of this several times, either through utter reluctance to talk to me at all or scepticism upon meeting about my actual intentions. This made some interview and

participative situations rather difficult (cf. GOBO & MOLLE 2017: 122ff, HEINRICHSMEIER 2020: 37f).

I therefore decided to work more exploratively and drive around the country to increase the spatial and participant diversity. By changing settings e.g. from farms to campsites, I got to meet different kinds of people that were not only engaged in different practices, but at the same time also encountered great similarities in practices in completely contrasting settings, connected with varying expectations and participation backgrounds (cf. PRZYBORSKI & WOHLRAB-SAHR 2014: 184). Especially encounters with other tourists on campsites were much more informal and easier in terms of access, since everyone was in a very similar situation and engaging in similar activities – from the daily setting up of the tent and cooking on a little gas stove, to driving on bumpy roads and navigating unknown terrain.

As a solo traveller I stood out from most campers who were travelling at least in twos. It quickly turned out to be a major advantage to get in contact with people as it caused curiosity and often led to invitations to join people around the campfire for chats and drinks or activities like game drives. Even when I did not meet too many tourists during my first field trip, I got the chance to chat with tour guides, campsite and lodge staff instead who had a bit time on their hands and engaged in vivid and surprisingly open and personal conversations. Nevertheless, I am aware that, despite all openness in conversation, staff encounters were to a varying degree shaped by a power asymmetry between me as a paying guest and tourist who would move on the next day, and the members of staff whose salary depends on guests.

Moving around the country a lot meant that I often did not get to spend a lot of time with the same people and that my periods of observation, participation and hanging out were limited to a few hours each time. Authors like KUSENBACH (2003) would probably criticise this as “hit-and-run ethnography” or no ethnographic approach at all, since the little time spent with the participants only allows so much insights into their practices, experiences and thoughts. As much as I agree that it is challenging to get into contact with new people nearly every day anew and certainly, the conversations and understandings of perceptions, imaginations and values do not necessarily reach the level of depth as they do in longer stays, it was a justifiable and field-appropriate adaptation of methodology. An existential part of the participants I wanted to get in touch with were tourists. But staying on only one or two selected campsites for a longer period of time would not have done

justice to their most prominent practice of travelling around for their desired experience. Joining this practice of continuous travel recognised it as a key element of people's hunt, for to really understand the challenges and charms, meaning, and role within hunting practices I needed to experience it myself. On a more theoretical level, it also allowed me to pay credit to the presumption of practices being connected over time and especially places (cf. WENZL et al. 2019: 343).

No matter how close a relationship with a participant was and how much I felt at ease with someone or not, I had to be wary of selective narratives and political or personal agendas or intentions being infused into individual conversations. To figure out existing networks, practices, belief systems or imaginaries and ideologies it was important to not fall into the trap of simply replicating them instead of understanding and analysing them in their respective context. Therefore, I had to read between the lines and connect various conversations, observations and experiences among and with each other, thus building a complex but substantially more complete picture of relations and backgrounds (cf. WALMSLEY 2018: 284, SELIGMAN & ESTES 2020: 188ff, DENSCOMBE 2021: 246). Some participants even openly stated their hopes and wishes for this research project to make their voices heard and directing future government decisions. And while I would like to see my work be of positive influence for people's struggles and worries, I tried to communicate that I cannot and also do not want to guarantee a certain desired direction of results or advocacy. However, by publishing the dissertation in English and aiming at an open access solution, I want to make access barriers as little as possible.

Talking about language, this was another challenge that did influence my access to people and data. As a former German colony, a surprising amount of people in Namibia still speak German fluently or as their mother tongue, which lead to several interviews and less formal conversations being conducted in German. For transparency and the aforementioned publication in English, quotes and interpretations had to be translated into English, whereby slight variations of meanings and undertones could appear. In other cases, English was the chosen language of communication. Being a second language for some participants and myself, this might have had an influence on the choice of words and the possibility to express exactly what one wanted to say (cf. WALMSLEY 2018: 284). For other languages like Afrikaans and especially community languages e.g. Khoekhoegowab, Oshiwambo or OtjiHimba, I required a translator or had to ask to switch to English, since I do not speak those. By the time I left the field I had gotten used to

Afrikaans a little bit, which allowed me to pick up on a few bits and pieces, but more than rough contextual understanding was not manageable.

Other external factors that challenged research plans and required flexibility and spontaneity included the seasonality of tourism and weather in Namibia. During the first field trip in February and March 2022, it was rain season which meant only few tourists on campsites and other, normally popular sights. However, this enabled great opportunities to interact with operators and employees in the tourism industry, since they had more time on their hands with me sometimes happening to be the only person at a campsite or on a tour. Moreover, I could travel very freely without having to worry about pre-booking of campsites or crowded national parks. Unfortunately, the rain season in 2022 was extremely heavy which led to whole areas with anticipated contacts literally being washed away, making them completely inaccessible for the entire duration of the first trip.

In general, the planning of appointments and required routes was at times quite a tricky challenge as distances in Namibia are far, official roads can become adventurous 4x4-tracks and the constant and valuable extension of contacts and meetings came at the cost of time-consuming detours within a tight time schedule. The second field trip in August and September 2022 was therefore a necessary and fruitful addition as the field and some contacts as well as customs, possibilities, and challenges were already known, which eased planning a lot. Travelling during dry season allowed to reach places and contacts that had to be cut from the travel schedule of the initial field trip and encounters with other groups of actors, especially tourists, were significantly more frequent. On the other hand, locals working in the tourism sector were less available this time due to the higher workload and the planning of routes and accommodation had to be done with slightly more foresight to avoid being rejected due to overbooking.

Overall, the two field trips contained a lot of learnings methodologically, personally and on a more general level. Several adaptations had to be made to the initial research plan which I accounted for in this and the previous chapters to make my research process and decisions as transparent as possible. Most of the hurdles were overcome by applying an approach of open communication, eagerness to learn and reflective adaptation to the field and shortcomings of the first field trip could be compensated during the second field trip.

5. Practicing “the hunt” – from imagining to reminiscing “the wild”

The following chapters display some of the major practices performed by people hunting “the wild” in Namibia. They are sorted based on five main phases of a traditional hunt not only serving a structural purpose but also to bridge seemingly natural gaps between groups of actors and showcase the inherent interwovenness of practices across their carriers. For easier reading purposes, the practices are presented in a rather linear manner. However, they are to be understood as inherently interconnected, co-influential and fluently transitioning into each other with each outlined practice being an integral, but not all-inclusive part of circular processes of reconfiguration. Each chapter focuses on the different elements that have proven to be most influential, prominent, and striking during the field work and how their performance together impacts configurations of “the wild” and its place(s). The practices, elements and perspectives are not to be considered exhaustive but rather aim at highlighting the complex structures and consequences of practices of hunting “the wild” as a desire.

5.1 Imagining “the wild” – images & expectations



Figure 5: Herd of blue wildebeest, Etosha NP
Source: own photograph 09.2022

“Animals play an important role, most tourists come to Namibia or Southern Africa because of them, but more and more also come because of the landscape with its wide open spaces and the possibility to drive forever and rarely seeing a human being”

(C; translation by author)

Remarks like these or similar were the most common answer by people when asked what images tourists have in mind when coming to Namibia. One of the central aspects this quote highlights is that a hunt does not only start with the heading out into the field, but already at home, in people’s minds where they imagine what they want to see and decide where to go for this. The predominant imaginations of “the wild” encountered in Namibia heavily rely on two main components: landscape and wildlife, both complementing each other (cf. C, H, L). Wild landscapes are deemed to be “vast” (L), “untouched” (G;

translation by author), sometimes even “*paradise-like*” (I; translation by author). The natural characteristics of Namibia with a variety of so-called “wild landscapes” such as open plains, grass- and bushland and deserts as well as the low population density exactly play into this image of remoteness typically associated with “the wild” (cf. KIRCHHOFF & VICENZOTTI 2017: 314, C, L). The “right” or ideal place imagined for “the wild” is first and foremost linked to its material characteristics in terms of landscape. Its purpose is to provide the right backdrop for the expected experiences and specific landmarks can carve out the uniqueness and distinctiveness of such (cf. GREGORY 1994: 203, CROUCH 2004: 91f, SHOVE et al. 2012: 132ff).

Humans are a critical factor in imaginations of “the wild” and at best not visible at all, which also includes infrastructure, housing, or any other kind of land use. Ironically, “the wild” is still supposed to be accessible, although the degree of tolerance for required infrastructure and its condition varies greatly (cf. D, G, L, field diary 10.09.2022). Following this line of thought, the hostility and barrenness of Namibia’s desert landscapes theoretically resemble the ideal “place to hunt” as they symbolise the epitomic opposite to “the human” (cf. URBANIK 2012: 158, CASTREE 2013: 24, KIRCHHOFF 2017: 21). And while especially Namibia’s biggest and worldwide oldest desert, the Namib, with the famous camelthorn trees in Deadvlei is regarded as one of the most characteristic sights in the country, most tourists prioritise wildlife encounters over iconic landscapes when thinking of the “ideal wild” (cf. SCHLOTTMANN & GRAEFE 2023: 6f).

When it comes to wildlife the focus is, on the one hand, on big herds of mainly game and migratory species like zebras, wildebeest and various antelopes freely roaming the landscape. On the other hand, the so called “Big Five”, including lion, leopard, rhino, elephant and buffalo, are specific species valued in particular and thus almost naturally central elements of imaginations and resulting expectations of what to see (cf. B, C, H, I, L). During their visit, tourists expect wildlife to be anywhere they go and plan their routes accordingly. Some critical comments from locals as well as other tourists negatively referred to this kind of attitude as treating the country “like a zoo” and pointing out that many Europeans’ expectations and images were simply irrational and wishful thinking (cf. A, B, C, D, J, L, field diary 14.02./06.03./20.08./02.09./04.09.2022).

These stereotypical imaginations of “the wild” in Africa with endless landscapes, the “Big Five” and vast amounts of other iconic wildlife species continuously crossing one’s sight impressively showcase the mutual dependency of imaginations, practices and places. In

contrast to what popular, homogenising narratives, Africa is a huge continent spanning several climate zones and an even greater variety of e.g. landscapes and habitats. Only some countries, like Namibia, South Africa, Botswana or Kenya and Tanzania actually cater to this specific Western ideal by and large. Therefore, they are more likely to become the “place of realisation” and cater to the various associated practices like guided game drives or trophy hunts, campsites even in the most remote areas or strokable “wild-life” in sanctuaries (cf. MASSEY 1991: 28f, GIERYN 2000: 473f). Such practices and infrastructures would be way less relevant or even obsolete for locals, if it was not for Western imaginations presenting a blueprint that can be projected onto a certain “real” place whose characteristics fit or can be fitted accordingly (cf. GIERYN 2000: 472f, EASTHOPE 2004: 136, SHOVE et al. 2012: 135). This can for example be seen in the stereotypical expectations of safaris that are imagined to consist of spectacular encounters with an innumerable amount of iconic wildlife species in vast, uninhabited landscapes. At the same time, accommodations must live up to high luxury standards with all different kinds of amenities taken care of by staff mainly pictured to be of colour only – thus continuing to recreate colonial idealisations into modern day (cf. EASTHOPE 2004: 136, SHOVE et al. 2012: 105, DRIVER 2014: 246).

When asked about the suspected origin of these particular imaginations, most blamed them on the increasing spread of idealised and romanticised images of “the wild” through visual mass media such as (fictional) movies and documentaries – a “*Disneyfication*” (D). Additionally, meticulously crafted and orchestrated posts and pictures on social media as well as the way of covering wildlife-related content by Western news agencies do their great deal in (re-)configuring and worldwide distributing a very specific, Western-centric image of “the wild” (cf. GREGORY 1994: 204, RYAN 2000: 217, DRIVER 2014: 246). Especially reports on practices that do not align with the dominant Western idealised norms and values, such as trophy hunting, poaching, and culling oftentimes solidify the righteousness of said meanings and values of “the wild” by ethically judgmental coverage (cf. A, D, H). Against this, the aesthetically pleasing, emotionally poignant and promising versatility of “the wild” is displayed in mass and social media as a desirable place or “playground” for everybody (cf. A, C, D).

What most people do not realise though is that the (re-)configuration of this specific idealisation of “the wild”, especially in a Southern African context, is directly tied to colonial times. Since then, the picturing of deserted landscapes with an abundance of wild animals

at Western people's disposal for pleasure, recreation and adventurous escape from everyday life has been a common practice of continuous distribution and stabilisation (cf. D'HAUTESERRE 2004: 237f/242, WHATMORE 2014: 156f, KIRCHHOFF & VICENZOTTI 2017: 320). While the common acceptance of some practices such as trophy hunting greatly declined with growing societal valuation of conserving living wildlife instead of displaying dead specimen, the main elements of vast, rough, and remote landscape inhabited only by herds of free-roaming, iconised wildlife species still dominate people's imaginations.

“Free roaming wildlife because wildlife in a lot of areas are in fences [...] and the openness [...] the vast[ness] [...] if you go into the desert [...] you'll be driving out there for a day without seeing another car sometimes [...] you just explore on the long way to go” (L)

One reason for this could be that, despite or exactly because of continuous developments in e.g. technology, industry, economy, society, politics, etc., some core meanings ascribed to “the wild” have not considerably changed at all, influencing the different approaches to hunt it. Most prevalent in this regard are references to “adventure” with notions of actively challenging or confronting oneself with the unknown and the unexpected to get out of one's comfort zone. Adventurers regularly picture themselves “diving into” situations of defiance – be it rough-terrain driving, desert hiking or remote camping (cf. LORIMER 2015: 151, C, H, field diary 24.02./02.-04.03./12.03./14.03./22.03./07.09./09.09./11.09./15.09.2022). To others, imaginations of encounters with “the wild” are part of recreation. Thus, anticipated practices to let them come to reality are more directed towards comfortability and aesthetics with occasional, predictable spikes of adrenaline such as guided game drives and visits to wildlife sanctuaries – the latter being discussed further in chapter 5.3 (cf. G, H, M, field diary 14.02./15.02./02.03./11.-13.03./20.03./04.-06.09./08.09./10.09./12.09.2022).

“Freedom” is another aspect closely connected with imaginations of “the wild”. While “being free” mostly refers to animals and is equated with “being wild” and the related characteristics, the connotation of “feeling free” is more dominant and related to oneself with visions of escapism and independence from everyday constraints of work and social life (cf. L, G, H, field diary 24.02./02.-04.03./10.03./20.03./20.08./06.09./09.09.2022). Closely connected to meanings of freedom, but simultaneously linked to adventure is the meaning of “the wild” as place of serenity. The visible or seemingly absence of humans,

human made materialities and especially sounds is one of the most important elements of this variant. Seekers of serenity in “the wild” prefer to go the unbeaten path, like adventurers, but imagine themselves dwelling and gazing somewhere remote rather than focusing intensely on moments of intense excitement (cf. C, J, K, field diary 03.03./07.03./10.03./13.-15.03./20.03./21.08./04.-05.09./09.09./15.09.2022). Overarching is the notion of “the special” and “the rare” that is featured in all meaning variations, highlighting not only the taken for granted dichotomy between “human” and “nature” but also the naturalised differentiation between “the daily” and “the seldom”, “the known” and “the foreign” which makes “the wild” so desirable to seek experiencing it (cf. G, H, I, J, L, field diary 24.02./03.03./09.03.2022, Living Desert Adventures 02.03.2022, Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022).

As indicated in the beginning, the imagined physical characteristics of a place of “the wild” seem to be rather unitarily. When it comes to specific images of where to go to hunt and find “the wild”, it gets more blurry though. For a good proportion of international tourists, the ideal place for “the wild” is defined as “Africa”, indiscriminate and widely unaware of the huge variety of countries, cultures, climates, landscapes, and wildlife habitats across this whole continent (cf. B, C, D, J, M, field diary 06.03./09.-10.03./16.03./01.09./04.09.2022). In their imagination, “the wild” is everywhere and everywhere the same in Africa, with some even remarking they had not heard of Namibia as a country nor known any details about its geographical location, climate or flora and fauna before going on this trip.

“He [hunting client A] only searched on the internet for hunting operators where he could hunt oryx and zebra. [...] [J & K] had exactly what he was looking for: fair offers, good reviews and the contact was nice. Up until this point he didn’t even know where Namibia was on the map and all his mates he told about it where like ‘huh, where is that?’” (field diary 09.03.2022; translation by author)

Other tourists did choose to come to Namibia on purpose, either because stories and pictures or videos they had heard and seen resembled their ideal of “the wild” or/and they figured Namibia’s status as one of the safest and easiest countries for European travellers in Southern Africa to be an important feature. Also, the convenience of language with English and even German being relatively common amongst Namibians was another important parameter to choose Namibia as the place to chase their desires (cf. field diary

01.03./15.09.2022, Living Desert Adventures 01.03.2022). Along with this aspect of safety and convenience comes that, while some tourists seek absolute remoteness and detachment from any kind of human influence in their designated place of “the wild”, many still expect it to be reachable rather comfortably on (tarred) streets (cf. field diary 24.02./04.03./20.08./09.09.2022).

It are mainly those seeking adventure and freedom, who calculate or even seek more rough road conditions like deep sand, river crossings and alike – at times overestimating the power and capabilities of their vehicles, which will be discussed in chapter 5.2 in more depth. Another paradox is that tourists expect wildlife to be anywhere they go and express getting as close as possible as great part of their desire, but when asked about the potential of “surprise visits” of such animals at their campsite or lodge do not consider this to be the “right” situation or place for such an encounter – a topic more thoroughly examined in chapter 5.3. It can be said though that imaginations of “the wild” and related expectations on experiences and practices heavily build on a “not-in-front-of-my-tent” attitude with conditions of encounter to be determined by humans and humans only (cf. EVANS & ADAMS 2016: 216, PÜTZ & SCHLOTTMANN 2020: 98).

Following these insights, actual knowledge about “the wild” and the place sought after only seems to penetrate dominating imaginations on a limited level, although quite some differentiations can be made here. On one side of the extreme are those whose imaginations are still highly based on persisting colonial images, passed down through time and by distributive practices of classical mass media and marketing advertisements – a process well described by SHOVE et al.’s “*circuits of reproduction*” (2012: 97) (cf. CROUCH 2004: 91f, GREGORY 1995: 455ff, D’HAUTESERRE 2004: 237f/242). Their knowledge on “the wild” in general and Namibia specifically as their place of hunting boils down to narratives and visuals of wide open grass plains inhabited by the “Big Five” as well as other iconic species like cheetah, zebras, wildebeest, giraffes and “some antelopes” which they put on a literal checklist to be ticked off at sight (cf. LORIMER 2015: 52f, C, field diary 01.03./16.03./14.-15.09.2022). They neither know about the majority of desert landscape with a resulting lower wildlife population density as in the popular “Southern Africa” documentaries, nor care about habitats with certain species only living in some areas or not in any part of the country visited at all – like the buffalo who can only be found in Namibia’s Caprivi strip and on the Waterberg plateau. A lack of proper contextual knowledge therefore sets expectations unable to be matched and bearing the risk of

causing frustration, anger, and disappointment during the journey, often taken out on the local guides and tour operators (cf. B, C, D, I, L, M, field diary 16.03.2022).

Also, least of the game safari tourists are aware that their desired “Big Five”, a must on each of their game drive checklists and valued as the most iconic and emotionally laden species to be encountered in “Africa”, originate in highly despised colonial trophy hunting practices. Lion, leopard, rhino, elephant, and buffalo were and still are some of the most dangerous and difficult animals to hunt and encounter. With the increasing shift from trophy hunting tourism to wildlife-watching and other forms of non-lethal hunting tourism, the perception of acceptable practices of accessing these icons has changed dramatically. However, the concept and high valuation of said “*flagship species*” (H) has remained a central part of the Western desire to experience “the wild” (cf. LORIMER 2015: 39). It is also these iconic species that are very emotionally charged by non-lethal hunting tourists in particular as there is a greater imagined connection already apparent due to prior exposition and acquired “knowledge” based on documentaries, movies or the like (cf. IBID 2015: 51, D, H). The involved emotions lead to a highly critical and at times extreme judgement of practices based on alternative images or values of wildlife like trophy or sustenance hunting, with a clear resistance to at least try and understand the local context of practices or other perspectives, values, and ideals overall (cf. D, H, I).

On the other side of the spectrum, one can find people with rather extensive situated knowledge on “the wild” in Namibia like individual and less common species of wildlife, their looks, tracks and habitats. But also, knowledge beyond wildlife like the advantages and challenges of travelling in dry or rain season and how to properly prepare for a long road trip into remote areas plays an important role as well as the skills to e.g. change tyres, drive on various terrain, light a fire and detect snakes and scorpions (cf. field diary 12.03./15.03./08.09.2022). Or, as one person phrased it: “*You gotta be street-smart.*” (field diary 12.03.2022). These additional competences are by no means all exclusive and most are picked up by interested travellers very quickly and can therefore be considered rather easy to decode and greatly mobile (cf. DUGUID 2005: 114, SHOVE et al. 2012: 48ff). In these cases, practices of hunting tend to diversify and intensify people’s perspective on “the wild” and how to approach and experience it.

When it comes to wildlife knowledge, trophy hunting tourists show the highest degree of distinctive knowledge from all tourists, given that their whole travel usually is dedicated to very specific images of wildlife species as desirable and required prior experience in

the aspired practices. Simultaneously, these tourists' knowledge appears to be some kind of specialised "island knowledge" as many of them do not deem any other kind of information relevant aside from "their" wildlife species when planning the trip (cf. M, field diary 09.-10.03./01.-03.09.2022). Once on site, some change their mind and interest in getting to know more of the country, its landscape and engaging in other activities aside from trophy hunting is sparked. Being in and experiencing the broader context of "their wild" can act as a catalyst to enrichen the initial imagination as well as expanding the desire of experience to more and renewed aspects of "the wild".

"he only planned to stay here for seven days for the hunt and to go straight back home again. But after seeing the country and hearing all my stories, he really wants to come back one day and maybe take a car to the coast to see more of the country after another hunt." (field diary 09.03.2022; translation by author)

The empirical data shows, that the desirable imagining of "the wild" as described above is not only limited to (Western) tourists but fundamental elements such as vast landscape, prevalent wildlife and feelings of freedom and awe are shared among many locals, too (cf. SAID 1978: 54, GREGORY 1995: 476, DESBIENS 2017: 3524f, C, D, G, H, J, K, field diary 04.09.2022). Especially with farmers however, there is a rationalizing twist. Despite all appreciation and valuation of their daily surroundings, questions of economic viability and responsibility for all animals – whether it was cattle, sheep, or wildlife – overpower the more emotional perspective common in most tourists (cf. I, J, K, M). For example, setting huge parts of the farmland aside for wildlife only is seen as a luxury not everyone can afford. Therefore, "the wild" and wildlife in particular is accepted and cared for as long as it has economic value – either through life trade, meat sales, game drives or trophy hunts (cf. LORIMER 2015: 50).

"[If] the game would not bring me any value like moneywise [it's] wasted land. I have like 7.000 hectares with wild animals but you don't generate any out of it. So I could use it for sheep or for whatever but obviously I do generate money by catching them and selling them alive. [...] I think hunting must be there because as I say if there's no value given to the animals then there is no use keeping those animals. And [...] you cannot make quicker money than with hunting actually." (M)

In some cases, “the wild” and its perception of being something desirable in a Western sense is not present or does not seem applicable to people’s consideration of their surroundings at all. To them, neither landscape nor wildlife resemble anything “special” as it is simply seen as their normal, daily home grounds and wildlife species without particular meaning just like deer or wild boar in Europe – thus creating co-existing and sometimes conflicting narratives (cf. MASSEY 1991: 28f, CRESSWELL 2009: 174f, PIERCE et al. 2011: 58ff). In regions with a high rate of wildlife conflicts like crocodiles at the Kunene river, lions and elephants in Kaokoveld and Damaraland, baboons at the Waterberg Plateau or a generally higher predator population density, that which is desired as part of “the ideal wild” rather becomes an – at times dangerous – nuisance to daily life (cf. LORIMER 2015: 153f, A, A2, C, D, E, G, J, K, M, field diary 15.03./22.08./02.09./08.-09.09.2022).

As already indicated in earlier paragraphs, imaginations of “the wild” heavily influence and spark certain practices of hunting it as an object and experience of desire. Therefore, the following chapter will focus on practices of stalking as the begin of the “actual” hunt in place.

5.2 Stalking “the wild” – tracking & watching

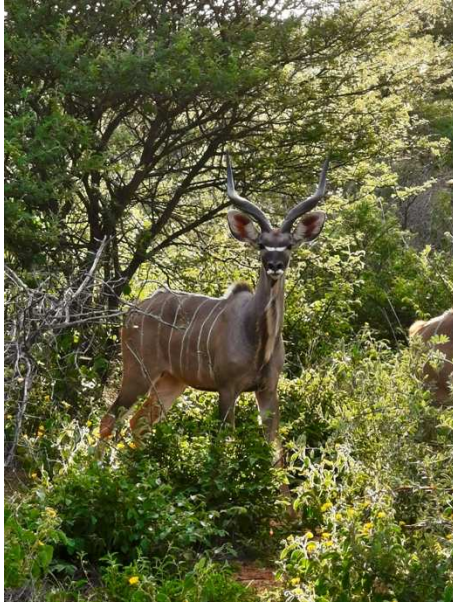


Figure 6: Kudu bull, Waterberg Plateau
Source: own photograph 03.2022

“the searching for animals on safari, the learning and understanding of tracking [...] makes one feel more engaged. Tension and excitement rise because you never know if and what you will find on a tour. Every sighting is also a surprise exactly because you are not in a zoo.”

(C; translation by author)

Stalking usually starts off the hunt for “the wild” on site and can roughly be described as a combination of searching, tracking, and watching. The specific ways of doing so are greatly dependent on the afore discussed images of “the wild” and thus determine what exactly people are stalking and which clues and tracks they are going to follow. Whether

it is for purposes of wildlife-watching, trophy hunting or the search for a specific landmark or sight, people on a stalk display an array of similar behaviours and practices.

Almost immediately, people fall silent, and their views start to scan the surrounding. This behaviour could be described as near “*cosmopolitan knowledge*” (SHOVE et al. 2012: 48) as it happens near automatically, sometimes even without knowing what exactly to look out for but there is this feeling of “you will know it when you will see it” (cf. C, field diary 13.03./20.08./04.-05.09./08.09./12.09./15.-18.09.2022, Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022). Within this temporary community of “stalkers”, some more or less unspoken rules are established that define the frame of activities and behaviour allowed or accepted for the period of this particular stalking practice (cf. GIDDENS 1984: 25, GIERYN 2000: 473). Some of these rules are safety related and therefore particularly mentioned by guides or other “officials” like staying seated at all time and not move excessively or talk loudly. This is particularly important when watching predators like lions as their hunting technique is based on singling out potential prey from a larger, cohesive unit – whether this is an antelope straying away from its herd or a tourist standing up and chatting in a safari car (cf. field diary 16.03.2022). Other rules aim at increasing the chances of sighting by staying undetected or at least not be perceived as a threat by wildlife like slow driving speed, keeping a respectable distance or turning off the engine while watching them and reducing speech to a minimum with a low voice (cf. field diary 11.03./13.03./16.03./04.-06.09./12.09.2022).



Figure 7: Watching elephants at the waterhole in Okaukuejo, Etosha NP

Source: own photograph 09.2022

The whole atmosphere during a stalk is a constant up and down of silently watching and taking in the nature with all senses like wind rustling through dry bush and grass, bird songs or other animal calls, especially those quieter, seemingly more secretive ones like grunts, purrs, and squeaks, and an excited tension of when, where and what one is going to find (cf. C, field diary

10.03./21.08./04.-05.09./09.09./16.-17.09.2022, Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022). Some campsites in national parks or on private guest farms and lodges specifically make waterholes, like in figure 7, easily and safely accessible for tourists as specific places where

chances of spotting and conveniently watching wildlife are particularly high (cf. field diary 12.-14.03./18.03./20.03./20.08./ 28.08./04.-05.09./18.09.2022). These operators purposefully work to cater to or “realise” and stabilise the idealised Western imagination of “the wild” by materially configuring and fixating a place to fit the image (cf. GREGORY 1995: 453ff/463, PIERCE et al. 2011: 59, SHOVE et al. 2012: 132ff).

Some offer specific night-time lighting, a reddish light which makes the pitch-black scenery at night visible to the human eye without disturbing or blinding the wildlife, as can be seen in figure 8. These night-time stalks feel particularly intimate as they reveal a side of wildlife that usually remains hidden and presents itself as quiet, calm, and vulnerable moment. Man-made sounds like chatter, rattling or camera clicks are, especially at night-time, perceived as completely “*out of place*” (CRESSWELL 2009: 176) and inappropriate. As they do not fit into the feeling of self-immersion, peaceful and secretive stalking, people are being shushed and scowled mainly by their fellow travellers if they do not oblige to these norms (cf. field diary 13.03./20.03./04.-05.09.2022). This form of tangible social control clearly aims at reinforcing and “protecting” the ongoing configuration of place by ensuring a standardised performance of this particular stalking practice (cf. RECKWITZ 2003: 292, SHOVE et al. 2012: 70ff).



Figure 8: Spotted hyena during a night game drive, Etosha NP

Source: own photograph 03.2022

The atmosphere while actively searching and tracking is often subtly tense, and it even seems like a competition of who will see something or be somewhere first. This especially applies to group tours and the shared anticipation and excitement seems to create a short-term community amongst the participants, all with the one goal to be the first to detect “the wild” (cf. GIERYN 2000: 473, C).

“That tension and excitement of ‘being on the hunt’ is back [...] Trying to hear the slightest sound or detect the smallest movement aside [...] of us stalking through the bush, I can feel my senses straining. There are no hints or tracks so far, but it seems like all of us are ‘back at it again’” (Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022)

“It has gotten dark now, only once in a while the moon pierces through the cloud cover. The guide stops the car and shines his red flashlight around while we are all trying hard to spot something in the sparsely illuminated night. [...] Suddenly, the guide points into the distance, adjusts the light and whispers ‘lions’. Immediately everyone is bright awake, leaning into the direction of the light beam and squinting the eyes trying hard to find the supposed lions.” (field diary 13.03.2022; translation by author)

The usually playful competition can degenerate quickly though. Whether it is on game drives where news of a gathering of animals, resulting in dozens of cars rushing to this spot to get the best views and pictures or a queue of about 30 cars lined up in front of the Namib-Naukluft National Park gates in the early morning, exemplary depicted in figures 9 and 10. All kinds of rules and regulations, be it official speed limits, staying on designated tracks and roads or respectful and responsible behaviour towards fellow travellers and nature seem to be thrown out of the window for the “perfect” experience and an iconic shot (cf. field diary 05.09./12.09./14.-15.09.2022).



Figure 9: Cars gathering at a waterhole, Etosha NP
Source: own photograph 09.2022



Figure 10: Car queue on the way to Deadvlei, Namib-Naukluft NP
Source: own photograph 09.2022

Situations like the ones described above often reveal the key elements of people’s imaginations that are the main drivers of their actions and pursued rather ruthlessly to “tick their boxes” (cf. LORIMER 2015: 52f). People commonly refer to themselves as being or feeling like in a “bubble” (field diary 05.03.2022) during the experience – a state described as “becoming-predator” by authors like Jamie LORIMER (2015: 43). This

contains notions of detachment and full immersion into the situation “– *like being in a flow*” (field diary 07.09.2022), often combined with feelings of pleasant thrill, tension and serenity, like an escape from “the real world”:

“I haven’t had a sip of water since I got up earlier this morning and now it feels like it’s getting close to midday. I can’t tell the exact time. [...] I don’t miss checking it [the time and my phone] at all. Besides, I know that the time doesn’t matter right now and it somehow feels very liberating. No need to be somewhere at a certain time or answer someone’s message.” (Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022)

What is perceived as a disruption of this tunnel-like state, greatly depends on one’s aspirations. For people following e.g. a desire for long tours on gravel roads the engine sound can be an essential, even soothing component of their overall experience and the varying, partially difficult road conditions are part of the sought after personal challenge (cf. field diary 24.02./02.03./04.03./06.03./10.03./14.03./21.03./07.09./11.09./17.09.2022). For these kinds of hunters, having to stop or slow down their pace every few meters, whether for other objects along the road or to take pictures, feels rather disruptive – something that is a natural part of for example game drives or picture trophy hunters (cf. field diary 28.02./04.03./14.03./16.03./04.-07.09./14.09.2022). For wildlife-watching, trophy hunters or other kinds of tourists seeking and requiring silence and seemingly human absence for their hunt, however, the afore mentioned sound of a car engine as well as other man-made sounds or roads and a greater amount of cars and people can have a highly disturbing effect (cf. field diary 05.09./15.09./17.09.2022, Living Desert Adventures 02.03.2022, Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022), as two examples from the field show:

“We come across one of the typical farm drive lanes. Two tyre-wide tracks of sand with a short strip of grass between. It feels weirdly out of place after walking through plain bush and grassland for the past about 2 hours where the only tracks were those thin lines beaten by game and our foot tracks. The illusion of being completely alone in no-man’s-land cracks a little [...]” (Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022)

“When I arrive at the waterhole, I am quite shocked. [...] The whole roadside is blocked with one car next to each other. Behind this wall of cars I can only surmise the waterhole with an occasional head of a giraffe popping up above them. As I am standing there, [...] a springbok walks past behind the cars,

unnoticed from all the other people staring at the waterhole. It looks so bizarre I have to laugh. This is definitely not what I had in mind when I left for a self-drive safari this morning – instead of watching wildlife I have a first-row seat to people fighting for the tiniest view slots at a waterhole.” (field diary 05.09.2022; translation by author)

No matter the type of disruption, being confronted with elements that do not fit the imagination – therefore being “*out of place*” (CRESSWELL 2009: 176) – for many people can feel rather abrupt, especially without knowledge or orientation of the surrounding area and can lead to moments of surprise and disappointment. Simultaneously, this shows how places withstand being fixed in one meaning but rather encompass a variety of references linking them to different, at times contesting configurations (cf. MASSEY 1991: 28f, EASTHOPE 2004: 137, SCHMID et al. 2019: 105).

“We [tour guide, two tourists and author] are standing on top of one of the characteristic dunes with which the Namib [desert] directly borders the South Atlantic Ocean, only separated by the road between Swakopmund and Walvis Bay. The view down the coastline is pretty surreal but even more surreal is the slow realisation that the whole time we haven’t been far off [the city Swakopmund] although it felt like a completely different world.” (Living Desert Adventures 02.03.2022)

“Somehow it seems to me as if I had been on the road with this car for way longer and are right now shortly emerging from my ‘roadtrip-bubble’ back into ‘the real world’” (field diary 05.03.2022; translation by author)

Binoculars are essential tools used by tourists, hunters, and guides alike as they enable people to investigate sights from a greater distance and in detail. They compensate the comparatively bad eyesight humans have in contrast to most wildlife species, which are especially sensitive to movement. Even more important is the opportunity to feel close to the desired object and take in details which would otherwise be lost to distance – whether this relates to animals or landscapes. For most people, being able to see specific characteristics or behaviours of individuals as if up close, increased the felt connection and created moments of awe (cf. LORIMER 2015: 154ff, field diary 10.03./12.09.2022). Especially when it comes to wildlife-watching, binoculars allow people to see things that would otherwise stay hidden like one tourist described the surprise discovery of her first leopard:

“She tells me how she was just sitting there in the car scanning the grassland with her binoculars [...] Suddenly, she recognised some movement out of the corner of her eye [...] Through her binoculars, she could clearly see the straight back line and tip of a tail from a big leopard, smoothly but swiftly making its way through the tall grass. At some points, she lost him and had to anticipate where he might have moved and managed to re-discover him a few more times until he disappeared. ‘It was so captivating, I held my breath the whole time [...] He melted into the grass so well, without the binoculars I wouldn’t have spotted him at all’” (field diary 05.09.2022; translation by author)

This also shows the feelings of excitement that come with the spotting and watching as well as the role of knowing how to use binoculars, adjust the settings quickly and predicting animal behaviour to be able to follow movements through difficult terrain. The latter becomes particularly relevant for trophy hunters. Watching and identifying the specific animal they want to shoot is essential for the success, especially when hunting for herd animals. During a participant observation of a trophy hunt for a black wildebeest bull, the trophy hunting client and the PH were in continuous, quiet exchange about a herd of about 20 black wildebeest we were watching while hiding behind a tree. Each herd member’s sex and age was determined upon sight according to physical characteristics like size, built, width and abrasion of horns and their facial hair – I learnt that black wildebeest have a mohawk-like stripe of hair on their forehead which becomes more poignant with age and males. The attention to detail, amount of wildlife knowledge and patience that went into this resembled no other observation before (cf. Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022).

“no safari ever brought me closer to these wild animals before [...] Sure, there are walking safaris but you rarely stalk this extensively and carefully or take such a long time to watch the animals, their behaviour and identification. [...] when hunting you take your time and concentrate on individual animals instead of a great variety or more specular sights.” (Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022)

Taking such a close look at binoculars, their use and meaning exemplarily reveals the interconnectedness of different carriers not only across certain practices, like stalking “the wild” and getting up close and in touch as discussed in chapter 5.3, but more particularly despite seemingly incompatible ideologies regarding the intention of hunting. No matter

the ultimate goal or defined success of a hunt for “the wild”, using binoculars to get up close, and see the desired in more detail, is part of consumptive and non-consumptive hunting practices alike, thus linking those conflicting perspectives through their shared material element(s) (cf. SHOVE et al. 2012: 114, LORIMER 2015: 150).

Aside from binoculars, cars are another element deemed essential for many stalking activities. There are usually very specific expectations on what type of car it should be or what it should look like – and for the most times, these stereotypes are being reasonably reproduced during the practices of stalking. Whether people take part in guided safari tours or are self-driving with rentals or their own cars, it are all 4x4 SUVs or pickups with a huge majority of white Toyota Hilux as the “classic” model and Toyota Land Cruiser for guided tours and farms or higher paying tourists (cf. field diary 21.02./06.03./09.03./18.03./17.08./05.-06.09./08.09.2022). For those tourists going camping, one or two foldable rooftop tents are placed on top of the cars additionally.

SUVs used for commercial safari drives only are typically modified open Toyota Land Cruiser with little metal steps on each side to reach three to four ascending rows of seats and coloured in a camouflaging khaki-green or beige, featured e.g. in figure 9 (cf. field diary 03.03./11.03./13.03./16.03./08.09./15.09.2022). Alternatively, there are also variants with a closed cabin and extra-large windows like in figure 11 (cf. field diary 02.03./12.09.2022). On private farms the seat rows are usually removable benches hooked into the metal rims of the cargo bed, so the car can otherwise be used for daily farm chores, as shown in figure 12 (cf. field diary 07.03./09.03./18.03./22.-23.08./31.08./02.09./18.09./20.09.2022, Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022).



*Figure 11: Safari car with closed cabin, Cape Cross Seal Reserve
Source: own photograph 09.2022*



*Figure 12: Toyota Land Cruiser on a farm
Source: own photograph 08.2022*

The car as an element of practice enables people to cover great distances in a rather comfortable and time-efficient manner, including the transportation of tools, hunted game, personal belongings, food and drinks – whatever is needed for the specific type of hunt. Since a great part of the desired “wild” requires a remote and often dramatic or rough landscape, 4x4 cars are often a necessary requirement to get to the “ideal places of ‘the wild’” (cf. field diary 24.02./03.-05.03./14.-15.03./07.09./09.09.2022). Aside from the best possible aesthetic match with the imaginations already discussed in chapter 5.1, these places determine with their physical characteristics and conditions the accessibility of the desire places and the performability of stalking practices (cf. GIERYN 2000: 473f, SHOVE et al. 2012: 132f).

Especially during rainy season, dry rivers flood and wash away the gravel roads, leaving only wide strands of deep sand, sticky mud and washed-out rock beds or even cut off whole areas from being reachable by car (cf. field diary 26.02./04.-05.03./12.03./14.-15.03./19.03./07.09./09.09.2022). While many tourists see this as great part of their adventure travel, their lack of knowledge and skills on how to navigate such difficult situations regularly cause issues with cars getting stuck, even drowning in rivers too deep to cross or engines bursting into flames in attempts to push out of deep sand (cf. field diary 22.02./26.02./03.03./12.03./15.09.2022).

To some tourists, driving a certain kind of car has an additionally important meaning, though. It is a significant component of their imagination of “the wild” and how the hunt

for it must look, feel and be like. Therefore, the material element “car” becomes a symbol of their whole hunt and the values and ideals behind it: being flexible and “free”, constantly on the road, living a comparatively simple lifestyle with returning moments of excitement, serenity and empowerment and spending a lot of time outdoors when not driving – from cooking and eating to chatting in the evening around a campfire and searching for shooting stars in the night sky or sleeping with the wind breezing through the mosquito net of the tent – a little bit like being “wild” themselves (cf. field diary 28.02./02.03./04.-06.03./12.03./14.03./21.03./07.-09.09.2022). The car becomes their temporary home that allows people to keep on hunting but also a personalised extension of their own (self-)experience (cf. PINK et al. 2019: 103, DREW et al. 2022: 8). Because of this, “their” car is for example integrated into pictures as well. In contrast to any other random car, this specific car melts into the ideal of a hunt for “the wild” and thus is an essential and often aestheticized motif as examples show in figures 13 and 14.

An interesting, rather sub-conscious observation that surfaced while revisiting field notes one evening was that with nearly all groups of people I met who were traveling as self-drivers, in a majority of cases it were the male members of these groups that were driving exclusively – a small hint to the persistence of patriarchal and colonial stereotypes of “*manly adventurer[s] and hero[es]*” (RYAN 2000: 206) that aim at dominating nature (cf. RYAN 2000: 205, MANGAN & MCKENZIE 2010: 139f, MOORE 2017: 187).

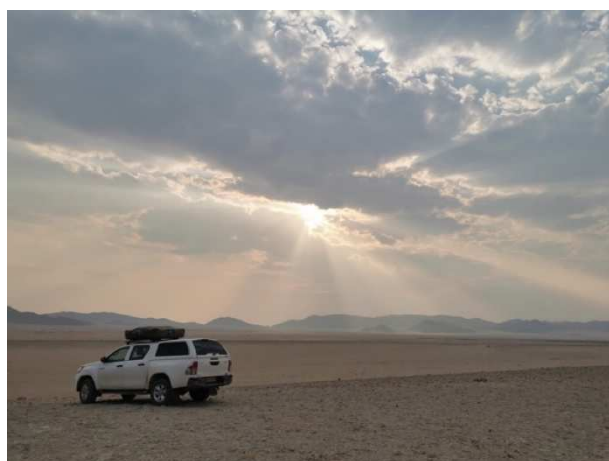


Figure 13: Toyota Hilux in the Namib Desert, Garub
Source: own photograph 09.2022



Figure 14: Sunrise in the side view mirror, Epupa
Source: own photograph 09.2022

For several people, however, stalking by foot is perceived as the “original”, only proper but also more challenging way of stalking (cf. G, H, J, M, Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022). Walking through a landscape puts less limits to the terrain accessible, the most influential one being one’s own fitness level. The rather slow pace and immediacy of one’s surrounding allows to explore and take in the details around to a much greater extent than on a drive (cf. KUSENBACH 2003: 464f, CARPIANO 2009: 270, DREW et al. 2022: 6, G, M, field diary 03.03./11.-12.03./21.03./15.09./17.09.2022, Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022). It though does limit the range of motion and being this close and “ground level” to the desired “wild” can also lead to a missing out due to a lack of more overview.



*Figure 15: Oryx tracks, Sesriem
Source: own photograph 09.2022*

At the same time, it enables less skilled or trained people to pick up on some knowledge about their surrounding and on-the-ground practices important for stalking like reading and understanding tracks. Often passed down by local guides, one can learn to identify and match hoof and paw prints, such as in figure 15, droppings, and other signs of wildlife activities to certain species with the experts being able to even determine other aspects like speed of movement or recency of the tracks (cf. PINK 2007: 240, BUTLER & DERRETT 2014: 7, DREW et al. 2022: 6, field diary 04.03./14.-15.09.2022, Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022).

In trophy hunting, blood tracks are additionally important in the follow-up search of injured animals, especially when they are part of a herd. Drip marks indicate the direction and speed of the designated individual when hoof prints on the ground are only wild chaos. Also, certain undergrounds like grass, leaves and stones make tracking of tracks extremely difficult, while blood can still be traced as long as the wound is big and fresh enough. The characteristics of the blood itself can give the hunters more information about the condition of the animal as well, as one PH explained to me:

“the colour and consistence of the blood differs, depending where the animal was hit. Light red blood with a foamy consistency hints to a hit of the lungs, just like in our case. Darker, thicker blood is associated with muscles shot and if the blood contains an intense bad smell, the stomach or other parts of digestive intestines were hit.” (Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022)

Knowing what to look out for and how to interpret certain tracks allows people to be more invested and feel like being an actively contributing part of the hunt, thus enhancing emotions of excitement, awe and the personal value of such an experience, often resulting in feelings of humbleness and being grounded. At the same time, this heightened awareness of one’s surrounding can also make people prone to slightly negative feelings of alertness and nervousness as they realise how exposed and vulnerable they are “out in the bush” (cf. C, G, M, field diary 02.03./12.03./08.09./15.09.2022, Living Desert Adventures 02.03.2022, Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022). Knowledge and its passing on based on one’s own experience prove to be an essential element of stalking practices that also creates further links to other practices of hunting. By emotionally enhancing the experience of stalking, the insights gained consolidate and specify the way people continue and later also mediate their hunt, as their narrations become increasingly more vivid and dense – aspects discussed further in the following chapters (cf. DUGUID 2005: 114, SHOVE et al. 2012: 48f/55f).

While feelings of excitement, tension, and adrenaline are most common in “stalkers”, limitations such as time restrictions on game drives, certain areas not being accessible e.g. due to weather or road conditions and animals being out of sight or losing track of them can cause just as much irritation and frustration when nothing or not “the right” as in expected things are happening. In conversations it was pointed out how many people start arguing with guides, trying to convince them to keep on searching or complain about their “poor” tracking skills and demanding to get a refund for the “unsuccessful” tour (cf. A, C, D, I, J, M, field diary 16.03.2022). Alternatively, and particularly common in trophy hunting, people do not stop searching and can spend hours on end trying to find new promising tracks which can become very strenuous as some excerpts from a participated trophy hunt show.

“We make our way back to the last trace of blood we found and start looking again. By this time, I start feeling tired [...] The cool air from the morning is gone and the sun starts to burn down on us, cluelessly trudging through the

bush. [...] One type of grass has light feathery ends with reddish tips and by now I can't count anymore how often I have fallen for these reddish spots. [...] it becomes clear that the increasing amount of grass on the ground makes it close to impossible to track specific hoof tracks and the wound seems to have stopped dripping blood [...] Frustration and a feeling close to bafflement rise again while we make our way back to the small plain [...] the longer we walk, the more it starts to feel like looking for the needle in a haystack. [...] I can see frustration, cluelessness, and tiredness on their [PH and hunting client] faces. The PH is under pressure, as the client and I depend on his experience [...] At the same time, for the client this is also an ego thing. I remember a little chat we had in the car before leaving where he said that stakes and expectations on him are higher now that he has someone else watching him [...] there is nowhere else to search or – put correctly – too much area to search for too little people and time without any clues.” (Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022)

These kinds of situations are not unusual for a trophy hunt, and the PH confirmed that a hunt is sometimes called quits unfinished, meaning without finding the animal again, although in general they do everything to find the injured animal. The decision to call off a hunt mainly depends on two factors: daylight and the hunting client. With nightfall, strolling through the bush becomes too dangerous and is also illegal in terms of hunting. Otherwise, it is upon the client to decide if he wants to continue searching, knowing very well that he will have to pay for the injured animal even if he cannot retrieve the trophy. Often, this is also based on the PH's assessment of probability to find the animal which can be cut short in too wide-open spaces and a lack of visible animal activities (cf. Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022).

With stalking practices, the relevance of situated knowledge and skills as well as the influence of place characteristics become particularly important as they greatly determine the possibilities and limits of successfully realizing central aspects of imaginations of “the wild” (cf. MASSEY 1991: 29, SHOVE et al. 2012: 48ff). As already hinted at, the intentions of stalking, especially by foot, often correlate with a desire to get as close to and connected with “the wild” as possible, which is why the following chapter will deal with specific practices of “getting in touch”.

5.3 Getting in touch with “the wild” – petting, driving & camping



Figure 16: Petting a "tame" cheetah, private sanctuary near Etosha
Source: own photograph 09.2022

“[...] he raised the cheetahs and encourages me to pet them. [...] I am a bit sceptical but also extremely curious. Being so close to a predator is fascinating. Although they seem so relaxed, I am still quite nervous as I approach the cheetah and slowly reach out my hand to touch it. The fur is surprisingly coarse [...] I get more comfortable as the cheetah remains calm and even purrs. [...] When it starts licking my wrist, I hold my breath for a second [...] The tongue feels surprisingly rough and in the end [...] I have a mark like a hickey on the inside of my wrist.”

(field diary 06.09.2022; translation by author)

Moments like those described above are a prime example of people's desire to get as close as possible to “the wild”. Being able to literally touch those “icons of ‘the wild’” that can otherwise only be observed from a distance or on a screen is seen as the ultimate moment of immersion and connection, often referred to as a “*magic moment*” (field diary 15.02.2022) (cf. LORIMER 2015: 149f, field diary 15.02.2022/06.09.2022, SCHLOTTMANN & GRAEFE 2023: 6). The physical touch, actually feeling the fur of an animal, fine desert sand running through one's fingers, rough wind tearing on hair and clothes or cold ocean waves washing around one's feet, adds another dimension to people's experience (cf. LORIMER 2015: 150). It extrapolates emotional attachments to particular objects but also places as the whole situation is inscribed more deeply into one's memories through these physical anchor points. What used to be an imagination becomes as “real” as it can get through the involvement of all senses – seeing, smelling, hearing, and feeling (cf. LORIMER 2015: 52ff/149f, field diary 28.02./03.03./21.03./06.09./12.09./15.09.2022, Living Desert Adventures 02.03.2022, Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022, SCHLOTTMANN & GRAEFE 2023: 6).

Especially when it comes to close wildlife encounters, some people report feelings of immediate connection with the individual. Sometimes, these emotions blur people's perceptions and situational awareness so much that they confidentially transfer experiences from this short encounter under supervised conditions to any potential encounter in “the

wild” (cf. LORIMER 2015: 150). During a guided tour, one tourist told the story of how she visited a wildlife sanctuary in South Africa where one could pet hand-raised cheetahs. She described the animals as very calm and kind and that she instantly felt a deep personal connection. Our guide made an effort to politely, but determinedly mention how these animals, no matter how tame they appear, remain to be predators with respective instincts and thus should always be considered a potential risk for humans. Despite this, she believed she would also be able to handle a wild cheetah in case of an encounter and that it would rather seek her out for protection than attack her (cf. field diary 15.02.2022).

In general, wildlife sanctuaries are places where people, mainly tourists, go on purpose to see very specific species with a high personal value to them – in most cases predators and/or rare, shy or nocturnal species whose probability of sighting is otherwise deemed low (cf. A, M, field diary 14.02./16.03.2022, SCHLOTTMANN & GRAEFE 2023: 6). Many of them focus on either releasing animals back into the wild after nursing them to health and independence or, if the latter is not possible, keeping them in grand enclosures with secured food supply and vet care. Some see this as a great option for conservation and also research on certain species from which the wild populations can profit (cf. LORIMER 2015: 142f, C, field diary 14.02.2022) while for others, sanctuaries are nothing more than modern zoos where animals serve “*a lifelong prison sentence just because they are animals*” (A; translation by author). Additionally, there are several private wildlife sanctuaries, where one can also often find cubs, whose mother was killed or which were found abandoned and which are raised by hand. Growing used to human presence or even touch, particularly in cases of charismatic species, greatly increases their “*encounter value*” (LORIMER 2015: 154) which can be commodified and thus makes these animals perfect attractions for tourists who desire to experience ultimate closeness to “the wild”. Therefore, there are also a lot of illegal sanctuaries who want to profit from these kinds of tourists – a practice highly criticized and increasingly controlled by the MEFT (cf. A, D, M, field diary 14.02./06.09.2022).

"In Namibia there are a lot [of sanctuaries] that are operated illegally [...] They often arise by chance when e.g. a farmer shoots a cheetah and afterwards discovers '[...] it got cubs'. Since no one wants to admit this, the small ones are raised by hand because they are 'so sweet'. However, this only lasts until they get bigger [...] As a solution the animals are being locked in chicken coops or 20x20m cages to make money of them as tourist attractions.

[...] The MEFT is taking action against these illegal sanctuaries now and regularly seizes animals from them. [...] The animals from such a seizure are either relocated to legal sanctuaries or killed [...]" (A)

The life of animals in sanctuaries and the high demand for them by tourists, for the most part, create a great paradox between hunting ideal imaginations of “the wild” as untouched and uncontrolled by humans on the one hand and visiting places with obviously dependent animals used to human touch to fulfil their desire of getting as close as possible on the other hand. When in question, the urge for intimate haptic encounters and seemingly personalised relations with “wild” animals wins over the (perceived) authenticity of human absence (cf. LORIMER 2015: 150). This way of thinking parallels the paradox of the American “frontier” mentioned in chapter 2.1. The initial image of desire, “wild nature”, got lost in the process of striving to “own” it only to result in actions trying to partially replicate it, in this case through the establishment of national parks. (cf. KUPPER 2008: 2f, TUCK 2010: 640ff).

Asked about this, most tourists came to the conclusion that, for them, it is the species itself they regard as “wild” as well as the theoretical potential of especially predators to switch back into their natural instincts anytime, eventually showcased by their behaviour during feeding sessions (cf. field diary 14.02./06.09.2022). The sheer imagination and glimpses of what these animals could do and how they would behave in “the wild” as well as prioritizing physical touch over “authentic wildness” made most visitors of sanctuaries claim their desire for a specific species satisfied (cf. LORIMER 2015: 150, field diary 14./15.02./06.09.2022, SCHLOTTMANN & GRAEFE 2023: 6).

However, many people are shocked when wild animals show unwanted, particularly aggressive behaviour directed towards tourists in unexpected or unwanted situations like elephants tackling safari cars on game drives or fake charges by lions (cf. B, field diary 14.02.2022). Only few people regard this as absolutely fair, stating that no matter how close we as humans want to get, there is a right for animals to show when we are too close for their comfort: *“We are standing right in their living room, it is only natural and understandable that some get upset”* (B; translation by author).

The specific value ascribed to a species also plays an important role in the tolerance of wildlife encounter. The more prestige or charisma an animal obtains, the more accepted are different kinds of behaviour while less prestigious species like scorpions, snakes, jackals, or hyenas are rarely tolerated at all (cf. LORIMER 2015: 157f). However, any

desire to get “in touch” with wild animals ends as soon as it happens without people’s consent or not under their conditions. The best example are baboons which are highly appreciated by many tourists to watch but become a menace and at times an actual threat when visiting campsites and rummaging through bins or unlocked cars and tents on their search for food (cf. C, field diary 11.-12.03./02.09./04.09./15.09.2022). This shows a very clear “not-in-my-backyard”-philosophy, where the “backyard” or “place of humans” is a unilateral configuration, constantly adapted to people’s likings and going hand-in-hand with the expectation of any kind of “wild” knowing and tolerating these boundaries (cf. URBANIK 2012: 170f, LORIMER 2015: 164, PÜTZ & SCHLOTTMANN 2020: 98).

In this sense, camping poses great opportunities as well as potential challenges for people striving to get in touch with “the wild”. Whether travelling with a ground tent or a rooftop tent, camping is one of the most common and affordable, but also characteristic types of accommodation in Namibia aside from lodges and farm stays with solid built rooms or bungalows. It taps into several stereotypical imaginations of “the wild” with desires of adventure, getting out of one’s comfort zone and simultaneously offers a taste of freedom and what it means to “live with ‘the wild’” – an image that can be traced back to colonial travel reports in particular (cf. D’HAUTESERRE 2004: 237/242, DELOUGHREY & HANDLEY 2011: 9ff, LORIMER 2015: 151). Setting up the tent every evening and packing it back together in the morning requires certain skills and tricks on how to fold the tarpaulin and where to stand, when to push or drag and where there is always some space to stuff surplus fabric (cf. e.g. field diary 28.02./02.-04.03./04.-05.09.2022).

Most rental car companies will show the basics of rooftop tent set up once at handover, but most of the learning and figuring out one’s best way to handle this happens by repeatedly performing and slightly altering the ever same moves until they become so routinised and ritualised over time that one does not actively think about them anymore – a practice *par excellence* (cf. SCHATZKI 1996: 89, RECKWITZ 2002: 249, SHOVE et al. 2012: 7/22ff, field diary 21.02./28.02./04.09./09.09.2022). Another important skill that is specifically demonstrated at most bigger rental car companies is the changing of tyres as it will most definitely be needed, though not as regularly as setting up the tent.

However, watching a skilled staff member setting up the jack and explaining the different steps to change a tyre in a garage does not really prepare for the moment one gets stuck in the middle of nowhere with an actual flat tyre. Crawling on the ground and underneath the car to correctly position the jack or jumping on the wheel cross to loosen the

mechanically tightened wheel nuts are definitely another, although less obvious way of getting in touch with “the wild” and thus challenging oneself (cf. field diary 06.03./19.03./16.09.2022). Furthermore, learning how to organize the trunk, where to put which bags so one does not have to unload or crawl into the car every other time, where to store plastic containers for food and water so they do not get jolted around on rough gravel roads and leak, or to accept that there is simply no way to protect any part of luggage from the fine red desert dust which will travel all the way back home no matter how often one tries to clean the bags and trunk (cf. field diary 27.02./04.03./17.03./22.03./08.09./14.09.2022). To phrase it in SHOVE et al.’s words, *“some kinds of know-how can only be acquired [...] if there is a base [...] of existing competence on which to build.”* (2012: 57). A lack of such foundation either has to be made up by trial and error or might also lead to an incomplete de-codification of said know-how.

As already hinted at in chapter 5.1, to some, camping in itself with setting up the tent, hearing nature sounds at night and sitting around a campfire in the evening is already adventurous and close enough to “the wild”. They seek out campgrounds with higher level amenities like a small shop for last-minute groceries and alcoholic beverages, solid and water operated (private) ablution blocks or campsites with outdoor barbecue and



Figure 17: Camping at a higher-end campsite, Uis
Source: own photograph 03.2022

sunroof, similar to figure 17. The campsite is supposed to be a safe space to relax and treat yourself to some good food and drinks after the excitements of spending the day in “the wild” – for them it is a vacation after all (cf. e.g. field diary 28.02./02.03./05.03./ 15.03./19.03./ 10.09./ 15.-16.09. 2022).

This discrepancy – place of “the wild” without any human influence but safety from “surprise encounters” during rest or night-time – presents itself in the ambivalent valuation or tolerance of fences as well. While at daytime during game drives, stalks, or off-road drives, they pose a highly disruptive potential as they “burst the bubble” of emergence into the adventure (cf. L, field diary 24.02./12.03./04.09./12.09.2022, Trophy Hunt

03.09.2022). In national parks or game reserves however, fences at the outer borders or around campsites and amenities are more widely accepted as necessary border to demarcate the place of “the wild” from the “place of humans”. It is expected to keep (most) wildlife out of “human places” and secure rather carefree stays, particularly during night time, as well as keeping wildlife in designated areas to be at easier disposal for aspired encounters (cf. URBANIK 2012: 154f, field diary 12.03./04.09./06.09./15.09.2022).

Especially in the northern, communal parts of Namibia, one can also find local campsites directly connected to a small village. This kind of campsite usually comes with the opportunity to visit the village, learn about everyday life, and buy self-made souvenirs. The proximity to the village provides people with a feeling of safety as they are not completely alone “in ‘the wild’”. At the same time, the rather rudimentary amenities with lack or limited availability of running water for showers or toilets, power and other kinds of convenient infrastructure play into the overall image of surviving in “the wild” (cf. field diary 07.-09.09.2022). The fluent transitions and lack of visible boundaries between village, free-roaming livestock and wildlife reinforce the imagination of “being in the midst of it” while feeling less like a touristy intruder but more like a level-eyed visitor of the local community (cf. field diary 08.-09.09.2022). In contrast to many other cases where wildlife adds to the value of an experience or view, the lack of visible wildlife in a rather rough and dry landscape not only implies a little bit more safety but also contributes to the perceived adventurous hostility of the surrounding in a sense of “*even animals cannot or do not want to live here [without the care of humans]*” (field diary 09.09.2022).

For others however, the campground is supposed to feel as full part of “the wild”, a holistic experience that pushes one far out of the comfort zone. Those tourists seek out local campgrounds in remote areas where campsite owners and a few members of staff are the only ones permanently on site – if at all. Often accessible via extremely rough roads only that are sometimes not more than faint drive lanes and requiring at least an SUV-type of car, these campgrounds typically turn out to be the most remarkable ones. It is this uncertainty, at times slight scepticism and questioning of one’s decision for this campground, that in the end is rewarded with great surprises and experiences unimagined before – much like the tense anticipation, partial frustration and final feeling of success or reward when stalking “the wild”.

Whether it are unobstructed views over a wide landscape, as in figure 18, creative solutions for amenities like bucket showers, see figure 19, or being nestled into a dramatic

landscape, awe and gratefulness quickly overshadow earlier doubts. Nevertheless, especially when being the only person on a campsite, slight feelings of insecurity, vigilance and a heightened awareness of the surrounding remain (cf. field diary 04.03./14.03./21.03./09.09.2022).



Figure 18: View over the Aba Huab river bed from campsite
Source: own photograph 03.2022



Figure 19: Bucket shower at Camp Aussicht
Source: own photograph 09.2022

While camping is mostly related to aspects of adventure and challenging oneself, many people find it simultaneously peaceful and decelerating. The stark contrast to most people's everyday life at home living in solid houses or apartments, having everything pre-set up and immediately at hand but also being inside most of their time, whether at work or during leisure, contributes to people's feeling of living an imaginary or bringing it to "reality" (cf. CASTREE 2005: 137, KIRCHHOFF & VICENZOTTI 2017: 317ff, SCHLOTTMANN & GRAEFE 2023: 6, field diary 02.03./04.-05.03./14.03./22.03./06.09./09.09./14.-15.09./17.09.2022). And while great parts of the gained knowledge and skills fall into oblivion or at least lose their status as routinised when going back home, the theoretical knowledge of how to do those things feels special to many campers and is an essential extension of their reconfiguration (cf. field diary 04.03./19.03./22.03./04.09./06.09./09.09.16.09.2022).

"I wake up in the morning from the first rays of sunshine piercing through the mosquito net of my rooftop tent. I take a deep breath of the crispy fresh morning air and open the mosquito net. From my elevated position I stare at the rising sun that bathes the surrounding feathery grassland in reddish-

golden light. Underneath me in the sand next to my car I can see a mix of animal prints, proofs of a busy night at the campsite of which I can actually identify a few by now – mainly gemsbok and probably a jackal or two. [...] As I get ready to leave and take down my tent, I realise how much I enjoy this new daily life, these habits and skills I will probably never need at home, but here they give me a feeling of confidence and routine and even after this short time, it all feels so natural and normal.” (field diary 04.03.2022; translation by author)

As described, the desired degree of “getting in touch with ‘the wild’” varies greatly from rather short but very particular and intense “*moments of enactment*” (SHOVE et al. 2012: 7) to more subliminal but consistent and multi-faceted exposures to “the wild”. In most cases though, specific places are consciously chosen according to their pre-configured and -existing characteristics to fulfil the respective criteria and expectations (cf. MASSEY 1991: 28f, GIERYN 2000: 473f). As part of this, shooting “the wild” to fixate such moments of connection and deep immersion is essential.

5.4 Shooting “the wild” – cameras & rifles



Figure 20: Taking a picture of a Namib dune gecko, Dorob NP
Source: own photograph 03.2022

“I lay down in the desert sand and put up my phone camera real close to the [Namib dune] gecko. I try to reproduce the great pictures and perspectives that [name of guide] just showed us [...] The pictures turn out really cool and I am happy to take such unusual pictures back home – selfmade!”
(Living Desert Adventures 02.03.2022; translation by author)

Shooting “the wild” for many is the highlight and ultimate goal of all previously discussed practices of hunting. While traditionally associated with the use of a rifle or other kinds of weapons to kill animals, shooting very much also refers to photography and the use of

cameras. They not only share a very similar language like “‘loading’, ‘aiming’ and ‘shooting’” (RYAN 2000: 207), they both aim at staging and fixating particular animals, natural phenomena, or moments to be at disposal in the future as material(ised) trophies or souvenirs (cf. chapter 5.5, RYAN 2000: 207ff, KOWALSKY 2010: 5, MARVIN 2010: 111). Simultaneously, all excitement, tension and adrenaline built up earlier, especially during stalking, is (temporarily) released – at least until the next hunt begins. This reflects DELEUZE & GUATTARI’s (1988/2000) take on desire and the hunt for the desired as not revolving around “owning” a specific object (or person), but rather referring to an ever-evolving and reconfigured ensemble of emotions and experiences that can never be fully satisfied and therefore continues to persist or resurge (cf. DELEUZE & PARNET 1988, DELEUZE & GUATTARI 2000: 25ff, TUCK 2010: 640f).



Figure 21: Hunting client and PH preparing to shoot
Source: own photograph 09.2022

As mentioned, rifles and cameras are the most necessary materials required to shoot one’s “wild”, which both come with demands in terms of knowledge and skills on how to use them. In contrast to rifles, the basic knowledge for using a camera, especially as part of a mobile phone, can nowadays be regarded as “‘cosmopolitan knowledge’” (SHOVE et al. 2012: 48), as it has become such an integral part of many people’s daily practices. The general setup of the devices is very much alike, so the vast majority of people knows how to take a picture, regardless of the manufacturer or model. This does not necessarily apply to weapons like rifles, guns or bow and arrow (anymore) as they increasingly disappeared from modern day daily practices, a result of changed societal perception of necessity and safety, followed by tightening of gun laws in many Western countries.

However, when it comes to “the perfect shot” with more professional equipment and higher aesthetic and qualitative demands, the operation of cameras and rifles requires a similar degree of specialized knowledge and training of skills, from choosing the right settings and finding the right perspective or angle to split-second decisions when to shoot your shot, displayed in figures 21 and 22 (cf. field diary 15.03./12.09./15.09.2022, Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022). Other tools such as binoculars, rifle-scopes or camera zoom can help in these situations to get a clearer view of the target and choose the designated spot to aim at (cf. field diary 07.03./10.03./15.03./05.09./12.09.2022, Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022).



*Figure 22: Photographer aiming at a group of seals, Cape Cross Seal Reserve
Source: own photograph 09.2022*

Here one can see the complex interplay of different kinds of elements of practices amongst and between each other. The example of weapons shows how closely linked and co-dependent material, competences and meanings of a specific practice are. Changes in some of the integrated elements – like meanings – can lead to a lack of performance which can then increase the risk of vanishing of knowledge in particular and even a whole practice more generally (cf. SHOVE et al. 2012: 28/114). The parallels with the operation and goals of photography at the same time highlight the volatility and adaptability of said elements. In the way that materials like binoculars, competences like choosing the right moment to “shoot your shot” or meanings of a “perfect shot” and emotions of excitement and pride are indiscriminately shared between or merge in camera and trophy hunting it becomes obvious how the style of camera hunting could be seen as a “modernised”, culturally adapted and historically situated alteration from trophy hunting (cf. IBID 2012: 35f/55f/122).

For trophy hunting, aiming and hitting “the right spot” is particularly elementary, not only for the reward of a trophy but also for ethical reasons. In contrast to photography, where missing a shot might be vexatious but without too serious consequences, trophy hunters usually only have one shot which has to make the final cut, otherwise the animal is gone in flight with a potentially gruesome injury. Therefore, knowing the anatomy of the respective animal hunted and where to aim at for an immediate and painless death, is a question of ethics to avoid causing an animal elongated pain and suffering through an imprecisely placed shot (cf. NAPHA n.n.b, J, M, Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022).

Predators like leopards and lions, but also elephants, buffalos and rhinos add a safety aspect as they tend to attack hunters when wounded – thus the categorization as “Big Five”, the five most dangerous animals to hunt (cf. G, M). A lot of the required anatomical knowledge for a “perfect shot” can be transferred from one species to another, even across continents – an ideal case of mobility of knowledge as a competence through (re-)contextualised decodability (cf. SHOVE et al. 2012: 48ff). For example, deer in Europe and antelopes in Africa have very similar anatomical structures when it comes to the positioning of the heart, the main target. For species with anatomy unknown to the hunter or the characteristics of the necessary ammunition, it is the local professional hunter [PH] and hunting guide who explain the specificities and pass down the knowledge based on existing experiences (cf. IBID 2012: 48f, J, M, field diary 02.09.2022, Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022).

Living up to this “gold standard” of hunting with a single, “perfect” shot is partially also a matter of money and the hunter’s sense of pride. A failed hit, either by a complete miss or only wounding game, requires a potentially long and strenuous follow-up search that can put quite some pressure on a hunter, as I experienced during a trophy hunt where we lost track of the welded game:

“I look over at the hunting client. He looks agitated and frustrated. The PH tells me, this is the most tense situation for a hunter, if he missed a shot and can’t find the animal rather quickly. The hunting client himself says, he really feels bad for this situation [...] for the client this is also an ego thing. I remember a little chat we had in the car before leaving where he said that stakes and expectations on him are higher now that he has someone else watching him” (Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022)

The success of a follow-up search highly depends on the knowledge of the local guides of animal's behaviour on the run and when injured, the ability to discover and interpret different types of tracks like hoof prints, blood drippings or markings on bushes and in the grass. Additionally, the surrounding physical features from the ground conditions to vegetation density and vastness or clutter of landscape greatly determine the chances of successfully tracking and recovering the trophy. Hard, dry soils or thick grass- and bush-lands, for example, make it extremely hard to find and follow tracks or discover movements while softer, sandy grounds show markings better and only loose vegetation provides greater oversight with simultaneous possibilities for cover. Based on this example, the co-dependency between practices and (physical) places becomes obvious. While all kinds of elements of practice are applied in this situation, particularly the knowledge and skills to properly track an animal, physical characteristics do limit or at least complicate their most effective performance (cf. MASSEY 1991: 28f, GIERYN 2000: 473f). This creates additional friction as the surrounding landscape might fit perfectly into one's ideal imagination of where to hunt 'the wild'; at the same time it is this exact ideal that is now seemingly complicating the ultimate fulfilment of the hunt: gathering a trophy (cf. KNORR-CETINA 2002: 65f, CRESSWELL 2009: 170, SHOVE et al. 2012: 132ff).

If a wounded animal cannot be recovered until dawn, the hunter not only has to return with the conscience of leaving an injured, likely suffering animal out to fend on its own because he could not hit the target properly. He also has to pay the full fee without getting anything (material) in exchange, since the farm owner has to expect the animal to succumb to its injuries and therefore not be available for another hunter (cf. Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022). Dealing with frustration after a missed shot, often with preceding times of long and patient stalking or waiting in sometimes uncomfortable conditions like heat or rain, crouched down or holding one position on rustling leaves is an inherent aspect and skill of hunting without which a successful shot is considerably harder (cf. G, H, M, Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022).

Leopard hunting was the example nearly every hunting guide agreed on to be the "*most boring [hunts] there are*" (M) – and the one that clashes the most with client expectations. It mainly consists of setting up baits of meat and offal to lure a leopard and carefully patrol these baits day in day out until signs of leopard activity can be detected. From then on, hunting client and guide hide in a camouflage pop-up blind all day not allowed to speak or move until the leopard returns for the bait and can be shot then. One move or

sound too early can chase the leopard away for good as they are very sensitive to any irregularities or disturbances (cf. M, field diary 02.09.2022). Compared to “normal” stalling as described in chapter 5.2 with constant movement and alternating phases of excitement and calm content, Leopard hunting becomes strenuous and exhausting rather quickly. This lack of compatibility between the imagination of an adventurous experience with the desired animal right at disposal – likely unconsciously based on colonial narratives – and the actual practice causes tension between clients and guides on a regular basis, sometimes leading to an early end of a hunt (cf. D’HAUTESERRE 2004: 242, WHATMORE 2014: 156f, KIRCHHOFF & VICENZOTTI 2017: 320, M).

This, however, does not only apply to trophy hunting but, to more or less degrees, to photographers as well. Especially professional photographers would wait for certain moments or animal appearances for hours alike, sometimes using the same type of pop-up blinds as hunters as well and relying on the knowledge of local guides for the best spots and occurrences of phenomena or behavioural patterns of specific animals (cf. field diary 15.03.2022). One photographer phrased that, while it is his job to take pictures and endure these at times strenuous moments, being able to experience these moments and share them with people who might be interested in “the wild” but not have the possibility or means to travel themselves is a great motivation for him:

“I have the privilege to see and experience all these things. With my work I would like to bring the diversity and beauty of this world closer to those people who do not have these opportunities. If I can make people happy and inspire them, that’s the greatest thing for me.” (field diary 15.03.2022; translation by author)

While the motifs chosen by photographers on the hunt are mostly “real”, meaning the picture is taken from an actual situation in the physical location depicted, getting the “perfect shot” of “the wild” nearly always involves some kind of manipulation – from plays with perspective, distance and zoom, light and shadow or intentional sharpness and blur to more alternating tools like cropping, filters, and retouching. In one or the other way, these techniques all aim at capturing what is considered characteristic and aesthetically pleasing, but also controversial and confrontative essences of “the wild” – thus accentuating specific elements of one’s own imagination. Other, less desired elements like fences or crowds of people are deliberately concealed or cut out to not disturb the idealised image of “empty” and “original” nature (cf. KUPPER 2008: 6, PÜTZ & SCHLOTTMANN

2020: 100, field diary 14.02./01.-03.03./14.-15.03./20.-21.03./05.-06.09./12.09./15.09./17.09.2022, Living Desert Adventures 02.03.2022, SCHLOTTMANN & GRAEFE 2023: 7f).

Sometimes, places like wildlife sanctuaries or at the Cape Cross Seal Reserve build specific infrastructure with elevated platforms or closed-off footbridges to enable people to get as close as possible to the desired animals – or at least create such an illusion in their pictures (cf. field diary 14.02./12.09.2022, SCHLOTTMANN & GRAEFE 2023: 2). Such material adaptations of nature seem small but are significant examples for the way practices shape the environment they are situated in to correspond to dominating imaginations (cf. MASSEY 1991: 25f, SHOVE et al. 2012: 108/133f). Thereby, the colonial myth of “the wild” is continuously reconfigured over time and space (cf. D’HAUTESERRE 2004: 237f, SHOVE et al. 2012: 114/134, WHATMORE 2014: 157). Along with this comes the reproduction of stereotypes and presumptions for one’s own potential visit to “the wild”. They are being stabilised and mediated beyond those able or willing to make their own experiences as “*dominant projects*” (SHOVE et al. 2012: 135) – thus highlighting the relevance of power, mediation and compatibility of imagination and “reality” in the complex interplay of practices, imaginations and places – an aspect dealt with more thoroughly in chapter 5.5 (cf. GREGORY 1995: 455ff, D’HAUTESERRE 2004: 237f/242, WHATMORE 2014: 156f).



Figure 23: Camelthorn tree in Deadvlei, Namib-Naukluft NP
Source: own photograph 03.2022

Just like with other practices mentioned before, getting close and/or in touch with “the wild” as described in chapter 5.3 is an important aspect of any kind of shooting as well. Some extreme cases can be observed in the Namib-Naukluft National Park at the Deadvlei, a dried-out pan in the Namib desert with the remains of several camel thorn trees conserved as skeletons thanks to the ex-

tremely dry desert climate. The dark trees against the backdrop of the beige pan, the red of the possibly largest sand dune in the world “Big Daddy” and the crystal blue sky, which are depicted in figure 23, have become one of the most characteristic and visited tourist sights and photo spots of the country and widely aestheticized on social media platforms

with about 70,600 entries for the #deadvlei alone on Instagram (20.05.2024) (cf. SOS-SUSVLEI 2024).



*Figure 24: Tourists shooting in Deadvlei, Namib-Naukluft NP
Source: own photograph 09.2022*

To recreate this idealised “wild, empty desert image”, people go out of their way to eliminate other tourists from their pictures. As a result and depicted in figure 24, one can find different pairs and groups of people occupying one tree each across the Deadvlei, all orienting their cameras towards the dunes in the back, kneeling and lying on the ground, twisting and turning the camera (and themselves) to find just the right angle to cut out all the people around doing the very same thing (cf. field diary 15.09.2022). In this scenario, it becomes very clear that the physical place, Deadvlei, and its characteristic landscape is literally a stage of performance and self-portrayal. The withered camel thorn trees were used as props to orchestrate and compose picture motifs that would be easily recognised and localised by others due to their iconic status. Aesthetics, self-portrayal and the desire to get “the perfect shot” was prioritised above anything else, deliberately ignoring official prohibitions like the touching and climbing of the trees clearly posted on several signs in a range of different languages to protect this iconic “wild” (cf. C, field diary 15.09.2022).

This example very clearly shows the reciprocity of (re-)configurations of imaginations, social practices, and places. Circulated images of the Deadvlei inform certain practices on site that aim at recreating the “template” and therefore adjust the physical place to a certain stage in a literal sense to be able to share one’s own, slightly customised version as a new template for others. Simultaneously, the number of trees with just the right angle is limited and continued touching and climbing will have long-lasting effects on the persistence of these “key props”, thus potentially requiring changes to the circulated images of the Deadvlei (cf. GIERYN 2000: 472f, SHOVE et al. 2012: 102ff/134, PÜTZ & SCHLOTTMANN 2020: 100).

This example very clearly shows the reciprocity of (re-)configurations of imaginations, social practices, and places. Circulated images of the Deadvlei inform certain practices on site that aim at recreating the “template” and therefore adjust the physical place to a certain stage in a literal sense to be able to share one’s own, slightly customised version as a new template for others. Simultaneously, the number of trees with just the right angle is limited and continued touching and climbing will have long-lasting effects on the persistence of these “key props”, thus potentially requiring changes to the circulated images of the Deadvlei (cf. GIERYN 2000: 472f, SHOVE et al. 2012: 102ff/134, PÜTZ & SCHLOTTMANN 2020: 100).



Figure 25: Trophy picture with black wildebeest
Source: own photograph 09.2022

This kind of “staging ‘the wild’” can also be observed in trophy hunting (cf. SCHLOTTMANN & GRAEFE 2023: 7f). Hunters arrange the hunted game in a specific way, usually a lying position with all four legs tucked under the body and the head propped up to show the horns, as figure 25 shows. The hunter positions himself behind, often half-way kneeling and one hand on the ani-

mal or holding the upwards pointing rifle. If necessary, any larger traces of blood, for example around the entry wound or around the muzzle, are wiped away or hidden behind grass to create an aesthetically more pleasing sight (cf. Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022). Just like the self-staging tourists in the Deadvlei, different camera angles are used to highlight specific aspects like the length or width of the horns or the size of the animal hunted.

One topic that was very striking during all kinds of shooting practices – especially in comparison to other hunting practices – was a rather clear differentiation in behaviour based on gender. For trophy hunting, this might not come as a surprise. The field is still very male-dominated – whether this refers to hunting guides or clients – as well as the associated values, skills and characteristics (cf. RYAN 2000: 205ff, LÓPEZ MAESTRE 2015: 108, GOLDBERG 2021: 6f. GROSSMAN et al. 2022: 46f). However, slight shifts in this distribution are becoming visible as more and more female tourists, predominantly from the US, are getting involved in trophy hunting. According to hunting farm operators and PH’s this mostly depends on the country of origin of tourists and their (cultural) relation to rifles and hunting in general, making the US one of the forerunners for female trophy hunters (cf. J).

In non-consumptive hunting, the gender distribution is more balanced. Still, some interesting observations could be made with regard to the shooting of pictures. Women were disproportionately often the focus of a photograph, while men usually stood behind the camera taking shots, sometimes giving instructions on poses or movements. Although these shootings seemingly happened on request or at least with the consent of the women, the overall dynamic did show conspicuous resemblance with the traditional image of “‘*Man the hunter*’” (LÓPEZ MAESTRE 2015: 89) and it’s “prey” woman – a parallel often

found in literature dealing with love, sexual desire and lust (cf. e.g. LUKE 1998, LOPÉZ MAESTRE 2015/2020).

Whether people physically take parts of “the wild” with them or “only” use their camera to shoot at it, the photographs taken are just as much regarded as trophies as the coat or head of an animal – a topic further elaborated in chapter 5.5. More so, one can also find two extremes of people in lethal and non-lethal shooting. On the one hand are those whose behaviour resembles those of “drive-by shooters”. They try to shoot everything that moves simply for the sake of shooting without real interest in background information and an apparent ignorance for rules or guidelines.

“some people see their [kudu] face and shoot it, they know nothing about it. They don’t know what family they build, they don’t know anything about their movements or whatever. [...] So first kudu bull in his life and you boom. And it’s dead. [...] this was actually now really senseless because what experience worth this? You just got to kill an animal” (M)

In safari and self-drive or -guided tourists, this has for example led to people regularly leaving tracks to go off-road wherever they want, disturbing wildlife in their retreat zones and creating traffic jams at popular wildlife spots like waterholes (cf. G, field diary 05.-06.09./15.09.2022). Other practices in trophy hunting like “put’n’take”, where huge numbers of game species are bought according to demand and introduced into fenced areas in an abnormal population density only to be shot within one hunting season, aim at artificially catering for international trophy hunting demands regardless of management sustainability or carrying capacity (cf. D, G, I). Canned hunting, feeding or petting sessions in wildlife sanctuaries and also checklists à la “Top 10 Things To Do in Namibia” (e.g. NAMIBIA TOURS & SAFARIS 2024) all aim at making “the wild” as conveniently disposable as possible to shoot, thereby covering tourists’ strives for configuring a certain self-portrayal and social status based on the iconic status or mass of their trophies – whether in forms of animals or pictures (cf. RYAN 2000: 207ff, URBANIK 2012: 154f, D, E, G, field diary 01.09./04.-06.09./15.09.2022).

On the other hand, there are people who focus more on the experience as a whole and regard “the perfect shot” as icing on the cake of an overall Trophy Hunt. Taking a shot becomes a much more conscious and well-thought of choice and it is not about shooting in itself but about capturing and fixating a moment that is special to someone and is composed of the interplay of the setting and atmosphere, emotions and meanings as part of a

personal story (cf. G, H, M, field diary 03.03./06.03./15.03./20.-21.03./04.-05.09./09.09./12.09./15.09./17.09.2022, Living Desert Adventures 02.03.2022, Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022). From a lethal hunter's perspective, MARVIN phrases this difference in valuation as follows: “[t]he kill is that which ends the hunt; to have hunted is the thing, to have been able to get into a position to take the shot.” (2010: 115) – an attitude that can be transferred to any other kind of hunting. For these people, it is about the process of hunting, the steps that brought them to the final achievement that carries the most value (cf. H, M, field diary 03.03./15.03./21.03./04.-05.09./15.09.2022, Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022). In anyone encountered, there was a strong desire to share the experiences and achievements with other people who understand the context of these situations, which is why campfire stories play a vital role in hunting.

5.5 Mediating “the wild” – campfire stories, trophies & the untold



Figure 26: Campfire
Source: own photograph 03.2022

“We are sitting around the fireplace where [name of one of the women] has lit a fire and is grilling mutton for dinner. As the sun goes down, the two recount how the whole campsite was flooded just a month ago with the river ripping up pipes from the sanitary facilities [...] The damaged pipes are particularly painful as they had just been renewed after a herd of migrating elephants had dug them up on their search for water and it takes ages to transport them from Windhoek to the campsite, not even talking about the costs.” (field diary 14.03.2022)

Storytelling while sitting around a campfire at night is a rather universal practice of any hunt, whether staying on a campsite, at a lodge or a farm and regardless of being a local, a hunting, safari, or self-drive tourist. The centrepiece of this practice, the campfire, is lit at dawn and often used for *braai* (afr.: barbecue) first before stoking up the flames again to get a blazing campfire. The combination of campfire and *braai* is very common on campsites where people must care for their dinner themselves and the outdoors becomes kitchen, dining and living room simultaneously (cf. field diary 12.03./14.03./04.09./08.09.2022). A traditional *braai* features mainly meat in a huge variety from classic beef, mutton and *boerewors* (afr.: farmers sausage) to all kinds of game like zebra, warthog, kudu, springbok, eland or gemsbok (cf. field diary 09.-10.03./12.03./14.03./01.-04.09./18.09./20.09.2022). On farms and lodges, *braai* is mostly separated from the campfire which allows the hosts and their staff to prepare the meal, usually with self- or locally farmed ingredients, while guests can already gather around the campfire and enjoy some chats and drinks (cf. field diary 06.-07.03./01.-03.09./18.09./20.09.2022).

This leads to another important element of evening practices: drinks, mostly alcoholic. Cocktails like Gin Tonic or Rock Shandy, the Namibian national drink, are mostly reserved for the sundowner, while the popular cider Savanna Dry, local beers or sometimes wine are consumed throughout the evening (cf. field diary 02.-03.03./06.-10.03./16.03./18.03./20.-21.03./31.08./01.-03.09./07.09./

05.09./10.09./18.09./20.09.2022). The Rock Shandy has a particular tie to Namibian history as it originated in colonial times. Made of lemonade, soda and especially Angustora-Bitter it was said to prevent or at least limit the severity of the course of Malaria infections – a hypothesis never scientifically proven, but the Rock Shandy remained an evening staple, therefore subconsciously stabilising and transferring a colonial element of practice into popular, non-political use (cf. GREGORY 1995: 456/476, CROUCH 2004: 87f). These drinks are usually accompanied by *biltong*, air-dried beef or game meat cut into stripes or flakes, either pure or sometimes seasoned with some pepper or chili flakes (cf. field diary 06.-10.03./18.03./31.08./01.-05.09./08.09./18.09./20.09.2022).

Meat is obviously another important element, whether as a meal or a snack in the form of *biltong*. The latter comes as perfect food for long road trips with limited cooling capacities, handy to consume and being more nutritious than crackers (cf. field diary 04.09./07.09./09.-10.09./14.-15.09./17.-18.09.2022). Aside from the potentially primal feeling of chewing raw dried meat, giving into that “original manly adventurer” attitude, consuming game meat in general is ascribed a high value, by tourists as well as locals (cf. RYAN 2000: 206ff, LÓPEZ MAESTRE 2015: 108, GOLDBERG 2021: 6f). For tourists, most of the different types of meat are rarely available in Western countries, aside from ostrich. It contributes to a feeling of authenticity and rootedness in a sense of consuming that which is naturally available and visible every single day – a perspective that could be compared to Jamie LORIMER’s mentioning of “‘*becoming-predator*’” (2015: 43).

The qualities of being “free-range” meat, derived from animals living outside and moving all year round with threats of natural predators and resource scarcity, increase this valuation as they fit perfectly into the ideal image of wildlife (see chapter 5.1) and hardly differ for game or livestock meat (cf. D, I, M, field diary 03.03./08.-10.03./18.03./01.-03.09./18.09./20.09.2022). The living conditions of livestock in Namibia are more comparable to those of game than livestock in most Western countries, being outdoors year-round on vast *kamps* and mainly having to fend for themselves aside from additional feedings and water troughs, which are also accessible to wildlife. Therefore, local farmers with ties to e.g. Germany explained that they hardly ever eat meat when in Germany as they neither like the taste nor the way most of the animals are raised and treated (cf. D, field diary 09.03./18.03.2022).

For (trophy) hunters, consuming game meat has another, more individual meaning as it is customary at farms with hunting clients to prepare the meat they hunted for dinner.

They therefore have a very personal connection to the food served and literally know what the exact individual they consume looked like, how it behaved and also how and when it died (cf. D, M, field diary 08.-10.03./01.-03.09.2022). As some expressed it, it evokes primal feelings of providing for a group or community and relating back to the origins of hunting with humans as one of many natural predators within “the wild” instead of some separate entity (cf. DENKER 2019: 6f, GROSSMAN et al. 2022: 22ff, G, H).

“humans are somehow a part of nature [...] and whoever is or wants to be in nature [...] plays a role in it [...] sometimes as a predator [...] and sometimes as [prey] if you want to put it trivially” (H; translation by author)

Sitting around a campfire with a group of people and telling stories about one’s experiences “out there in the wild” has a strong community building effect – whether one is already travelling in a group, as a pair or by oneself (cf. DENKER 2019: 6f, GROSSMAN et al. 2022: 22ff). Especially campsites have a very open dynamic where people start talking to their neighbours while setting up the tents, meeting in the washrooms or exploring the campground. At some point, someone lights a campfire and by the end of the night a whole bunch of people who did not know each other a few hours ago, sit together and share their personal experiences and stories – forming a temporary community before dispersing again the next morning (cf. GIERYN 2000: 473. field diary 12.03./15.03./17.03./04.09./08.09.2022).

The shared experience(s) and desire of being on the hunt for “the wild” builds a common foundation for people to start off conversations. Main topics are the route already travelled as well as still ahead, the types and amounts of animals encountered and the ticked off and remaining boxes on photography and trophy checklists. The qualities of trophies of whatever kind are measured by rarity of species, stereotypical or distinctive features of animal or landscape along with background stories that are perceived special in terms of particularly adventurous, emotional, strenuous, intimate, or dangerous moments and situations. This not only applies to stories about animal encounters, but very much so to experiences with difficult road and car conditions like deep sand and flat tyres, and feelings of loneliness, serenity, self-efficacy and connectedness in a sense of being part of it all and not just an external observer (cf. field diary 06.-07.03./12.03./14.-15.03./17.-18.03./20.08./31.08./01.-04.09./08.09./14.09./ 18.09./20.09.2022).

The stories told emotionally connect people, their feelings and desires with physical objects, landscapes, animals, and localisable places, thus reconfiguring and distributing

those specific contextualised compositions that make up people's desires (cf. DELEUZE & PARNET 1988, DELEUZE & GUATTARI 2000: 40, TUCK 2010: 639). For many people, telling stories about their experiences present a way to process what they witnessed during the days and weeks of travelling. With an audience that knows the circumstances people are travelling in, have a feeling for the country, situations, or encounters and share similar values, goals, and experiences, a lot of people reported feeling somewhat connected and understood instantly. In a sense of "we're all in the same boat", many stories that would sound exaggerated or pretentious in a different context, are received as totally normal around the campfire as many people can relate to the situations. As DELEUZE & GUATTARI pointed out, desire is also a process of (re-)producing the very same social reality it is embedded in, therefore can campfire conversations be seen as creating a sort of comfort zone and free space for each to express feelings, thoughts, and plans (cf. DELEUZE & GUATTARI 2000: 26/30f, TUCK 2010: 641, field diary 06.03./12.03./03.-04.09./08.09.2022).

Furthermore, people pass on practical information like where to find particular species or landforms best, where to experience certain phenomena like "the best sunrise/sunset" or the blooming Namib desert and what to watch out for like areas with no mobile reception or really bad road conditions (cf. field diary 03.03./12.03./16.03./04.09.2022). This is a clear sign that the fundamental elements of people's selective imagination of their ideal experience of "the wild" are not as unique as one might think. They rather share the same cultural (colonial) origin and have been circulated over centuries through different types of media and practices so much so they have become naturalised (cf. GREGORY 1995: 462ff, JESS & MASSEY 1995: 140, DESBIENS 2017: 3524ff).

In some national parks like the Etosha National Park, this kind of exchange between people is encouraged by the park management. At reception, anyone can enter details of their animal sightings e.g. species, number of individuals, exact place of sighting and time of day into a public book to give others hints where and when to look for specific animals, potentially identifying and making use of behavioural patterns and territories – a perfect example of LOSSAU's "*principle of localisation*" (2013: 656; translation by author). Rhinos, however, are the only species explicitly excluded from these logbook entries due to their endangerment status and susceptibility to poaching (cf. field diary 12.-14.03./04.-06.09.2022).

Aside from the social exchange and information character, the stories told also serve the purpose of gloating over one's experience and receiving social acknowledgement. This is sometimes difficult to differentiate from the afore mentioned social exchange and sharing experiences as they tend to blur. Intentional gloating, however, is much more tailored to present the person in a certain positive, advantageous, or heroic way than a simple story of experience (cf. field diary 15.02./10.-11.03./21.03./02.-03.09.2022). In trophy hunting, these narrations can be rather blatant with quotes like *"One single perfect shot and it was down."* (field diary 02.09.2022). Statements like this are what non-lethal hunting tourists and a majority of Western society have in mind and heavily criticise when talking about trophy hunting. A lot of local hunting operators in conversations equally voiced their lack of understanding for such attitudes in trophy hunting guests and posed this as one of the main reasons why they try to avoid having their lethal and non-lethal hunting guests meet if they offer accommodation and activities for both (cf. G, I, M).

However, this kind of behaviour is also common amongst other types of tourists who boast about close and "eye-to-eye" encounters with iconic wildlife and the instant unique and personalised connection with them, the one time they discovered tracks or an animal earlier than any other person including the local trained guide, or their profound experience in off-road driving and being able to target any sand or river bed after one week on well-maintained gravel roads (cf. field diary 14.02./08.-12.03./16.03./01.-04.09. 2022). Regardless whether people gloat over the animals they shot, the pictures they took or the special skills and knowledge they hold, "the wild" is a stage for them to present themselves in a very colonial sense as dominating nature with its only value being the degree of "image credibility" derived from handed down symbols and meanings (cf. WHATMORE 2014: 157, SCHLOTTMANN & GRAEFE 2023: 13ff). It is also an active practice of place-taking that fundamentally shapes "the wild" for those storytellers and others listening or seeing the pictures according to people's imaginations and continues to conceptualise "the wild" in a historically rooted way (cf. WHATMORE 2014: 156f, GOLDBERG 2021: 7ff, GROSSMAN et al. 2022: 95).

However, the stories do not end at the campfire but continue back home where trophies are ascribed a great importance. Trophies are not limited to the results of taxidermy but are re-placed material pieces of "the wild", whether these are shoulder mounts and game skins, canvas-sized pictures or collections of stones and seashells, that are intentionally curated as parts of a *"memory cabinet"* (GROSSMAN et al. 2022: 278). As *"embodiment[s]"*

of memory” (KOWALSKY 2010: 5), they resemble important anchor points of keeping memories and stories alive, or as MARVIN phrased it:

“The work of the souvenir only begins when it is removed from that place and when immediate experience is replaced by memory. [...] But such objects do not speak for themselves; they must be activated, brought to life, either through the thoughts and reminiscences of the owner or when the owner explains their significance to others.” (MARVIN 2010: 111).

Through the trophies, not only stories are revived but also the feeling of being close to “the wild”, an important practice of a hunt discussed in chapter 5.3 in more detail. In lethal trophy hunting, so-called shoulder mounts dominate the palate of different forms of trophies (cf. J, Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022). Here, the head of an animal is reconstructed in full fur down to the shoulder as it *“best conveys the essence of that animal, [...] it is the part that is the most expressive and individual. [...] A fine trophy head should communicate the spirit and essence of the animal.”* (MARVIN 2010: 114).

A similar tendency can be found in photographs, where close-up shots of animals’ heads and faces, like in figure 27, are popular to elicit feelings of closeness and intimacy to “the living wild”, one of the main desires for people going on a hunt (cf. LORIMER 2015: 52ff).



Figure 27: Close-up shot of a Namib dune gecko, Dorob NP
Source: own photograph 03.2022

In our continuously digitalising and mobile world, social media platforms like Instagram or travel blogs play an increasingly important role in reminiscing “the wild”. They allow people to share their pictures and stories to a much wider audience, therefore simultaneously extending the reach of their configurations of “the wild” (cf. RYAN 2000: 217, URBANIK 2012: 145f, SHOVE et al. 2012: 54ff). Pictures are accompanied by texts which set the context for interpretation and are built around the concept of purposefully ascribing these pictures, practices, and experiences to a specific, localisable physical place (cf. GREGORY 1994: 204, LOSSAU 2013: 654, DRIVER 2014: 246). Certain platforms, like Instagram, even offer a function to virtually pin posts to the respective places on a digital

map which allows users to immediately explore the new “place of desire” virtually and stabilising these idealised imaginations (cf. GIERYN 2000: 472f, GREGORY 2012: 151, DRIVER 2014: 236ff/246).

The combination of visual and narrated trophies, whether in physical, digital, or oral form, powerfully allows people to stabilise and continuously (re-)configure their own memories with all relating emotions, meanings, and aspects of self-identity on the one hand (cf. RYAN 2000: 205, MANGAN & MCKENZIE 2010: 139f, MOORE 2017: 187). On the other hand, those being exposed to these kinds of combined configurations build a much more complex and in-depth imagination about the practices, places, and experiences displayed (cf. SCHLOTTMANN & GRAEFE 2023: 7). Since they are already handed snippets and building blocks for their own configuration, they are served a template without actually having to experience the featured situations themselves (cf. GREGORY 1995: 453ff/463, GIERYN 2000: 472f, SHOVE et al. 2012: 122).

What is just as much part of these storytelling practices is the presentation of local guides and other staff members – or, more specifically, the intentional leaving out of them and their contributions. On the one hand, staff like guides, trackers, taxidermists and alike are an essential element of realising and stabilising the imagination of ideal hunting practices in “the wild” – especially in a Southern African, former colonial context. Staff members are usually generalised as “locals” and especially tour guides are expected to have extensive situated knowledge and skills like tracking which are suspected to come “naturally” to them and ought to be shared with tourists to actively involve them in activities e.g. on game drives or during tours (cf. field diary 11.03./13.03./15.-16.03./11.09.2022, Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022). Therefore, guided experiences are anticipated to always be successful, meaning spectacular, close-up or action-laden sightings and stalks of any animal desired, extraordinary trophy game or the visit of exclusive scenic sights as “hidden gems”. Missing out to live up to these expectations can lead to frustration and questioning of staff’s abilities and dedication to deliver “appropriate” value for the tourists’ money (cf. I, M, field diary 11.03./16.03./02.09.2022, Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022).

On the other hand, a lot of the work, skills and knowledge guides, trackers and other staff have and do in the process of hunting that is decisive for the actual realisation and successful fulfilment of people’s imaginations, is either appropriated and portrayed as pre-known or completely left out of success stories. Whether it is about identifying and assigning animals’ tracks, knowing behavioural patterns or hidden lookouts and how to get

there safely, any kind of hunter of “the wild” profits from local knowledge and practical skills passed down to them but rarely credits the people they learnt this from in their narrations around the campfire or later at home (cf. RYAN 2000: 217f, ROTHFELS 2002: 65ff, C, field diary 01.-04.09.2022, Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022). Moreso, the amount of training and work that goes into the successful hunt before and after the client’s experience is often marginalised or simply not acknowledged, also because a lot of this happens behind the scenes and people do not really seem to care as long as the end result is to their liking (cf. C, field diary 01.-03.09.2022).

This applies even more to female staff on farms and lodges who mainly work around the house like cleaning the rooms, doing laundry and preparing meals. While these tasks do not directly impact the hunting practices, their work is nonetheless essential for guests to feel comfortable and relaxed during their stay – and if it is the “little” things like a previously makeshift patched trousers that returns from laundry seamlessly mended or the full lunch waiting on the table when being sick although it’s the cook’s break and no one else is having lunch (cf. field diary 23.08./25.-29.08.2022). However, since they are hardly visible and involved in direct interactions with guests, they are barely ever mentioned in stories.



*Figure 28: Farm worker skinning a black wildebeest for a shoulder mount
Source: own photograph 09.2022*

One striking example for this practice of “leaving-out” came at a trophy hunt, where, after the animal had been shot the following steps on the way to transform the dead animal into the desired trophy was done exclusively by farm staff. While they did the “dirty work” of breaking open, skinning, taking off the head and gutting the animal, as in figure 28, the client stood next to them, watching with a cold drink. Without a question, the skinning skills were exceptional, leaving no meat on the skin which was explained to me as important for a good trophy quality later on in the taxidermy process (cf. field diary 09.03.2022, Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022). In an

earlier conversation on my previous visit, I had been told, that this is a classic division of labour in Southern African trophy hunting since the hunters are still paying guests on holiday and therefore only get to do the “fun part”. At home, most of them would have to

break and gut their game themselves (cf. field diary 03.09.2022, Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022).

Although this was definitely a valid reason, why the client might not have to do this “dirty” work, the situation left an impression of strong asymmetrical power hierarchies between (Western) hunting clients and local staff. In later talks about this hunt or the awaiting trophy, this exceptionally skilled work was not mentioned with one word, but the story revolved all around the client’s success – also downplaying that he did not hit the target right in the first place and we had to search for the welded animal, again with the support of two local trackers and a PH, for a good three hours (cf. field diary 03.09.2022, Trophy Hunt 03.09.2022). Other examples came also from game drives where people complained about not having seen a certain animal after tracking for hours and encountering a diversity of other (rare) species in the meantime or being annoyed that they had to wait two days for a substitute vehicle after wrecking their engine in an attempt to climb dunes in the middle of the desert and being lucky enough for being towed back to their campsite (cf. B, C, M, field diary 03.03./16.03./15.09.2022).

Mediating “the wild” therefore is an important practice of hunting. Whether in the field, back home or online, storytelling in particular contributes to the exchange of elements of practice, imagination and place. It stabilises existing configurations and builds a basis for a community of carriers to strengthen and further expand their distribution while simultaneously being used by individuals as a way to secure their own social positioning within the very same network (cf. RECKWITZ 2003: 292, CROUCH 2004: 88f, SHOVE et al. 2012: 70ff). To those consuming or being exposed to distributed configurations, the images depict “the truth, how it really is” with all the characteristics to expect. From vast landscapes and an abundance of wildlife, feelings of freedom and serenity, adventure and self-efficacy to (material) elements like rifles or rooftop-tents, they are all linked to certain practices and specific, localised imaginations (cf. SHOVE et al. 2012: 114, LOSSAU 2013: 654, DRIVER 2014: 246). As a result, people who decide to head out and hunt down “their wild” do so by going on game drives or trophy hunts in countries like Namibia, Tanzania or South Africa which are commonly presented in these contexts. They already arrive with set expectations and literal checklists of animals and motifs they want to see and shoot as well as activities like off-road driving and close-up encounters with predators that are all perceived as “typical” must-haves based on the shared images and stories their

imaginings originate from (cf. C, D, E, G, field diary 01.03./16.03./ 01.09./04.-06.09./14.-15.09.2022).

This goes hand in hand with the exclusion of other people from certain practices, especially those that play a huge part in realising these imaginary configurations like staff on (hunting) farms, lodges, and the like. They are only rarely recognised by Western tourists but still expected to “be there” for the comfort of the guests as essential, stereotypical element of these imaginings; thus making the social hierarchies implied tangible in place (cf. GREGORY 1995: 460ff, GIERYN 2000: 473ff, LOSSAU 2013: 656f).

Trophy hunting and photography hunting are a good example that shows how dominant projects can control the prioritisation and accessibility of practices, but also how this balance of power can shift. Initially, trophy hunting was a dominant project in Europe that was reserved for (self-proclaimed) elites of society and later transferred to the colonies as well (cf. RYAN 2000: 205ff, KNOLL 2004: 9f, GOLDBERG 2021: 7ff). It limited local population's access to and right over land and so-called game species for farming and sustenance meat supply, partially even prohibiting hunting by “peasants”. Thus, the mobility of elements of practice like rifles or bow and arrow, the knowledge and skills how to use them properly was restricted and the practice was loaded with meanings of power and elitism (cf. RYAN 2000: 217f, ROTHFELS 2002: 65ff). However, as societal norms and values changed over time, trophy hunting lost its elitist status and became more and more disregarded as “outdated” and “unethical” (cf. NIXON 2011: 159ff, GISSIBL 2016: 209, GROSSMAN et al. 2022: 66f).

Instead, non-lethal hunting forms with cameras like game drives or photography safaris came to the rise, especially in now former colonies in Southern Africa or India and dominate tourism activities there today. Although trophy hunting is condemned by many Western tourists, not only do both practices still exist in parallel but more importantly so do certain elements. Using SHOVE et al.'s (2012: 128f) suggestion to trace specific elements through time and space helps, for instance, to discover and deconstruct remains of (colonial) hunting practices and imaginings most non-lethal tourists are unaware of and that are conflicting to today's societal norms and values. Like the “Big Five”, a nowadays essential on anyone's game drive checklist, easily identified as charismatic icons or “*flagship species*” (LORIMER 2015: 39) but unknown to most a classification originating in colonial trophy hunting and the utmost expression of (Western) man's domination over “wild nature” (cf. RYAN 2000: 205).

Trophies, whether taxidermied, sculpted, painted, printed, narrated, or digitally displayed, are and have always been essential elements of mediating “the wild”. Since colonial times, different kinds of media have been used to create and physically anchor images of “the ideal wild”, loaded with meanings, stereotypes and desires localised somewhere else away from home and waiting to be conquered by men (and nowadays women, too) (cf. DRIVER 2014: 235f/239/246, DESBIENS 2017: 3529, SCHLOTTMANN & GRAEFE 2023: 15). Therefore, the question can be raised whether practices of tourists on photo safaris really do differ so significantly from those of hunters and if the publicly dominating clear differentiation of “good” and “sustainable” safari tourism against “bad” and “egoistic” hunting tourism can be sustained. With regard to gender, there are hints that in different phases of hunting there do seem to be at least some distinctions on the way, degree and intention of participation. The shooting phase in particular shows empirical evidence that, despite all political and cultural developments towards gender equality, the behavioural expectations and allocation of roles within this hunting practice are still dominated by male-coded perspectives with “the prey” – be it “the wild” or women – in the focus of the man’s shot.

6. “The wild” – (re-)configured by hunting

The preceding analysis shows that the ways people practice the chase of their desire to see and experience a “realised” imagination of it, share remarkable similarities. In the present case, the specific images configured by the desire for “the wild” greatly determine the actual target as well as the chosen setting and particular practices. While the details of each person’s hunt differ, depending on their specific intentions and definition of a “successful hunt” e.g. using a camera to shoot a trophy picture or a rifle to get a mounted trophy of a dead animal, stalk through thick bush or drive on rugged gravel roads, the general approach is however rather repetitive: imagine, stalk, get in touch, shoot, mediate. The expectations on what must happen where and how to create a feeling of success and satisfaction in the end are closely linked to the external input, especially visually, through dominant practices of circulation in media, personal narrations as well as intrinsic ideals, values, and motivations. Foundational elements of an idealised Western image of “the wild” like vast, seemingly uninhabited landscapes with an abundance of wildlife offering experiences of adventure, thrill, serenity, and self-efficacy all at once, are thus continuously (re-)configured, circulated, and stabilised through the very same practices that were initially based on said imaginations.

The result is an imagination of experiencing “the wild” that is intertwined with aspects of materialities, knowledge, emotions and meanings which sets the basis of valuation for the prospected hunt to bring this desire into reality. This desired “wild” is portrayed as a place for adventure and serenity that is as remote as possible from human influence without being inaccessible to the usage and fulfilment of human urges of exposure and self-efficacy. It is as “real” as it is imagined, being anchored in material locations and characteristics while at the same time being interpreted, manipulated, and represented physically and imaginatively to fit into a specific, socially predetermined frame. Despite changes of societal values, this particularly framed “wild” as well as the perception of hunting as the appropriate way to satisfy one’s desire, remains at the basis of this imagination. The continued presence of traditional hunting practice elements in socially adapted and diverged practices of hunting is evidence of the mobility and dynamic of practices and their elements within and outside their initial contexts of performance. The continued persistence of traditional lethal (trophy) hunting as one approach to experience “the wild” simultaneously demonstrates the indiscriminate share of elements between practices and imaginations with very different ideological values and backgrounds, and, particularly in terms of trophy hunting vs. non-consumptive tourism in Southern Africa, how these shares play out in “real life” competition and rivalry in places where they collide.

The additional conceptualisation of “hunting” as a compilation of practices aiming at chasing a socially configured desire and its materialised imagination at a predestined place, enhances the perspective of analysis. Initially originating from observations in the field and developed further on a more theoretical basis, it particularly sheds light on aspects of desire in configurations of “the wild” while simultaneously offering a structuring frame for the interpretation of the field data. As the analysis shows, this frame is adaptable and transferable to practices outside a traditional hunting context. Aside from the here still dominant connection of hunting and nature, the more conceptual approach to hunting proposed offers the potential to be transferred to a great variety of other topics and fields of research that deal with desire and the strive for its fulfilment. It can fruitfully contribute to a continued development of already existing work on love and lust and, for example, be extended onto other (im)material desires such as safety in border and migration studies, definition of social status through social media or the yearning for eternal youth.

The overall results prove that tying theories of geographical imaginations, social practices and place together forms a coherent and enriching triangular theoretical frame with all

three parts interlocking, strengthening and balancing each other. Using the example of hunting “the wild”, it was demonstrated how processes of (re-)configuration of imaginations, practices and places are influenced by far more complex subliminal interrelations than their daily and routinised performances initially suggest. The transfer and extension of SHOVE et al.’s (2012) itemisation of elements into materials, competences and meanings to geographical imaginations and places enables a greater understanding of imaginations’ implications of values and expectations for diverse practices and physical places while simultaneously targeting specific practices or individual elements in the analysis. Focusing on these multifaceted interplays allows to uncover and emphasise co-relations and patterns of (re-)configuration largely unattended so far, like the parallels in practices of lethal and non-lethal hunters on their chase for “the wild”. This also includes the interwovenness of values and expectations among each other as well as with historic European colonial ideals that seem to continue to persist changes of time with a notable loyalty to place.

The topic of (post-)colonialism has been touched upon throughout the whole work and the preceding results suggest that “hunting ‘the wild’” can be understood as a “*dominant project*” (SHOVE et al. 2012: 135). It is constantly expanded, diversified, and perpetually adjusted in response to external and internalised impulses by the repeated performance of intrinsically interwoven elements of imaginations, practices and places that continue to blend inherently colonial ideals into presumably “neutral”, decolonised world views. As the scope of this work did not allow to follow this line of thought further, future research could investigate the details of internalised values of hunting, their ideological backgrounds and the significance for social power asymmetries within the trophy hunting industry. One part of this could be a closer look at those practices of hunting that purposefully target the “realisation” of Western imaginations like game fencing and breeding, put’n’take or canned hunting and the implications for local people who have to live with the effects of this on a daily basis. On a different note, following up on empirical hints towards differences in gender roles while hunting also offers great potential for future research. By applying a gender-focused approach to revisit the hunting phases and practices investigated, social hierarchies and persisting patriarchal structures in combination with historical-colonial roots could be analysed to further benefit questions of gender equality, the origins of imaginations of women and examine parallels between the male-gaze on women and “the wild”.

Along with this comes the recognition that what most Europeans refer to as “the wild” is neither perceived nor valued the same everywhere else in the world. It could therefore be interesting to conduct more in-depth research on the diversity of configurations of “the wild” and equivalent concepts, the ideals and values behind them as well as the resulting practices – including those cases where what Western people consider “the wild” is not conceptualised in such a particular sense at all. From a perspective of e.g. land management or conservation, it could be very important to analyse different (non-)configurations of “the wild” and their related meanings and implications of practice to the respective people, as a coming together of varying understandings at one physical place, like a national park, can harbour high risks of conflict.

It could therefore be worth to switch perspectives and investigate the dynamics of local imaginations, social and place-making practices with the related meanings, associations and (in)appropriate behaviours with regards to “the wild”. Approaches from more-than-human geography could offer another perspective by taking “practices of being hunted” into consideration to enhance the understanding of the effects of various hunting practices on “the prey” in different contexts as well as the pro and reactive implications of “prey practices for the hunter. Combined with a (neo-)extractivistic approach, the understanding of “the wild” could be further expanded to resources like raw minerals, oil, diamonds or land and thus tackle ongoing processes of a “new scramble for Africa”.

In a more general appeal and independent from research fields and disciplines, the theoretical reflections and empirical discussions encourage to reflect on one’s own practices, whether in personal or professional life, and be more aware of the imaginations everyone reconfigures, distributes, stabilises, and changes on a daily basis.

III Bibliography

- ADLER, Patricia A. & ADLER, Peter (1987): Membership roles in field research. In: Qualitative research methods, Volume 6. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.
- ADLER, Patricia A. & ADLER, Peter (1994): Observational techniques. In: DENZIN, Norman K. & LINCOLN, Yvonna S. (eds.): Handbook of qualitative research. Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 377-392.
- ALKEMEYER, Thomas, BUDDE, Gunilla & FREIST, Dagmar (2013): Selbst-Bildungen. Soziale und kulturelle Praktiken der Subjektivierung. Bielefeld: Transcript.
- APPADURAI, Arjun (1988): Introduction: Place and Voice in Anthropological Theory. In: Cultural Anthropology, 3(1), 16-20.
- BEINART, William (1990): Empire, Hunting and Ecological Change in Southern and Central Africa. In: Past & Present, 128, 162–186.
- BAKER, Lynda M. (2006): Observation: A Complex Research Method. In: Library Trends, 55(1), 171-189.
- BALOGH, Péter & GÁL, Zoltan & HAJDÚ, Zóltan & RÁCZ, Szilard & SCOTT, James W. (2022): On the (geo)political salience of geographical imaginations: a central European perspective. In: Eurasian Geography and Economics, 63(6), 691-703.
- BÉDARD, Jean H., HARRIS, Lyal B. & THURSTON, Phillips C. (2013): The hunting of the snArc. In: Precambrian Research, 229, 20-48.
- BERESFORD, Peter (2002): User involvement in research and evaluation: Liberation or regulation? In: Social Policy and Society, 1(2), 95-105.
- BERGER, Peter L. & LUCKMANN, Thomas (1966): The Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge. Garden City: Anchor Books.
- BITTERLI, Urs (1986): Alte Welt – neue Welt. Formen des europäisch-überseeischen Kulturkontakts vom 15. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert. Munich: C. H. Beck.
- BOLTANSKI, Luc (2010): Soziologie und Sozialkritik. Frankfurter Adorno-Vorlesungen 2008. Berlin: Suhrkamp.
- BOTHA, Christo (2005): People and the Environment in Colonial Namibia. In: South African Historical Journal, 52(1), 170-190.

- BOURDIEU, Pierre (1976): Entwurf einer Theorie der Praxis auf der ethnologischen Grundlage der kabyllischen Gesellschaft. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- BOURDIEU, Pierre (1984): *Distinction: A social critique of judgement and taste*. London: Routledge.
- BOURDIEU, Pierre (1987): *Sozialer Sinn. Kritik der theoretischen Vernunft*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- BOURDIEU, Pierre (1990): *The Logic of Practice*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- BREITKREUZ, Jan (2015): *Auswirkungen von Landnutzungen – Vergleichende Analyse unter Nachhaltigkeitsaspekten am Beispiel Namibias*. Dissertation. University of Trier, Department VI Geography/Geosciences. Trier. Online at: https://ubt.opus.hbz-nrw.de/opus45-ubtr/frontdoor/deliver/index/docId/682/file/Auswirkungen_von_Landnutzungen_Breitkreuz.pdf (15.06.2024).
- BROWNE, Brendan Ciarán & MCBRIDE, Ruari-Santiago (2015): Politically Sensitive Encounters: Ethnography, Access, and the Benefits of “Hanging Out”. In: *Qualitative Sociology Review*, XI(1), 35-48.
- BULLER, Henry (2008): Safe from the Wolf: Biosecurity, Biodiversity, and Competing Philosophies of Nature. In: *Environment and Planning A*, 40, 1583-1597.
- BUNDESZENTRALE FÜR POLITISCHE BILDUNG [BPB] (2020): Namibia feiert seine Unabhängigkeit. 20.03.2020. Online at: <https://www.bpb.de/kurz-knapp/hintergrund-aktuell/203118/namibia-feiert-seine-unabhaengigkeit/> (15.06.2024).
- BURAWOY, Michael (2000): Introduction. Reaching for the Global. In: BURAWOY, Michael, BLUM, Joseph A., GEORGE, Sheba, GILL, Zsuzsa, GOWAN, Teresa, HANEY, Lynne, KLAWITER, Maren, LOPEZ, Steve & O’RIAIN, Sean (eds.): *Global ethnography: Forces, connections, and imaginations in a postmodern world*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1-39.
- BURAWOY, Michael (2003): Revisits: An Outline of a Theory of Reflexive Ethnography. In: *American Sociological Review*, 68(5), 645-679.
- BUTLER, Mary & DERRETT, Sarah (2014): The Walking Interview: An Ethnographic Approach to Understanding Disability. In: *The Internet Journal of Allied Health Sciences and Practices*, 12(3), 1-8.

- CAMBRIDGE DICTIONARY (2014): hunting. Online at: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/hunting#:~:text=%2F'h\u00e4n.t\u00f9%2F,deer%20hunting> (15.06.2024).
- CAPROTTI, Federico (2008): Technology and geographical imaginations: representing aviation in 1930s Italy. In: *Journal of Cultural Geography*, 25(2), 181-205.
- CARPIANO, Richard M. (2009): Come Take a Walk with Me: The “Go-Along” Interview as a Novel Method for Studying the Implications of Place for Health and Well-being. In: *Health & Place*, 15(1), 263-272.
- CASEY, Edward S. (1993): *Getting Back Into Place: Towards a Renewed Understanding of the Place-world*. Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- CASTREE, Noel (2005): *Nature. Key Ideas in Geography*. New York: Routledge.
- CASTREE, Noel (2013): *Making Sense of Nature*. New York: Routledge.
- CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY [CIA] (2023): *The World Factbook*. Namibia. Online at: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/namibia/#people-and-society> (15.06.2024).
- CHARI, Sharad (2009): participant observation. In: GREGORY, Derek, JOHNSTON, Ron, PRATT, Geraldine, WATTS, Michael J. & WHATMORE, Sarah (eds.): *The dictionary of Human Geography*. 5th edition. Malden/ Oxford/ Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 519-520.
- CLARK, Andrew; HOLLAND, Caroline; KATZ, Jeanne & PEACE, Sheila (2009): Learning to see: lessons from a participatory observation research project in public spaces. In: *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 12(4), 330-345.
- COLE, Stroma (2005): Action Ethnography: Using Participant Observation. In: RITCHIE, Brent W., BURNS, Peter & PALMER, Catherine (eds.): *Tourism Research Methods. Integrating Theory with Practice*. Wallingford/ Cambridge: CABI Publishing, 63-72.
- CONRAD, Sebastian (2012): *Kolonialismus und Postkolonialismus: Schlüsselbegriffe der aktuellen Debatte*. Published by: BUNDESZENTRALE FÜR POLITISCHE BILDUNG [BPB] Online at: <http://www.bpb.de/apuz/146971/kolonialismus-undpostkolonialismus?p=all> (15.06.2024).

- CONSERVATION NAMIBIA (n.n.): Conservation Hunting in Namibia – Socio-economic benefits. Online at: <https://conservationnamibia.com/factsheets/conservation-hunting.php> (15.06.2024).
- CRESSWELL, Tim (2004): Maxwell Street. Place: A short Introduction
- CRESSWELL, Tim (2009): Place. In: International encyclopedia of human geography, 8, 169-177.
- CRESSWELL, Tim (2014): Place. In: CLOKE, Paul, CRANG, Philip & GOODWIN, Mark (eds.): *Introducing Human Geographies*. 3rd edition. London/New York: Routledge, 249-261.
- CREWS, Frederick (2001): *Postmodern Pooh*. New York: North Point Press.
- CROUCH, David (2004): Chapter 7. Tourist Practices and Performances. In: LEW, Alan A., HALL, C. Michael & WILLIAMS, Allan M. (eds.): *A Companion to Tourism*. Malden/ Oxford/ Carlton: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 85-95.
- CUNNINGHAM, Keith A. (2022): The Hunter's Oath. In: GROSSMAN, Dave, MILLER, Linda K. & CUNNINGHAM, Keith A. (eds.): *On Hunting. A Definitive Study of the Mind, Body, and Ecology of the Hunter in the Modern World*. Savage: BroadStreet Publishing Group, 119.
- DARWIN, Charles (1859): *On the origin of species by means of natural selection, or, the preservation of favored races in the struggle for life*. London: John Murray.
- DAVIES, Gail (2000): Science, Observation and Entertainment: Competing Visions of Post-war British Natural History Television, 1946-1967. In: *Ecumene*, 7(4), 432-460.
- D'HAUTESERRE, Anne-Marie (2004): Postcolonialism, Colonialism, and Tourism. In: LEW, Alan A., HALL, C. Michael & WILLIAMS, Allan M. (eds.): *A Companion to Tourism*. Malden/ Oxford/ Carlton: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 235-245.
- DE LA FUENTE, Eduardo, GIBSON, Margaret, WALSH, Michael J. & SZYPIELEWICZ, Magdalena (2022): Introduction to thinking place: Materiality, atmospheres and spaces of belonging. In: *Thesis Eleven*, 172(1), 3-15.
- DE LAS CASAS, Bartolomé (1981): *Historia de Las Indias*. Volume 3. 3rd edition. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Economica.

- DE MONTAIGNE, Michel (1953): *Essais*. German translation & commentary by Herbert Lüthy. Critically reviewed new edition. Zurich: Manesse Verlag.
- DE MONTESINOS, Antonio (1511): n.n. Online at: https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active_learning/explorations/spain/spain_montemonte.cfm (01.06.2025).
- DE SATGÉ, Rick (2021): *Namibia – Context and Land Governance*. Online at: <https://landportal.org/book/narratives/2021/namibia> (15.06.2024).
- DELEUZE, Gilles & GUATTARI, Félix (1994): *What is philosophy?* New York: Columbia University Press.
- DELEUZE, Gilles & GUATTARI, Félix (2000): *Anti-Oedipus. Capitalism and schizophrenia*. 10th reprinted edition. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- DELEUZE, Gilles & PARNET, Claire (1988): *L'Abécédaire de GILLES DELEUZE: D comme Désir* (HD). Upload: April 18, 2020. Online at: <https://tube.futuretic.fr/w/7yE71JPtTad4ibb3uzJJHZ> (25.03.2025).
- DELOUGHREY, Elizabeth & HANDLEY, George B. (2011): Introduction. Towards an Aesthetics of the Earth. In: DELOUGHREY, Elizabeth & HANDLEY, George B. (eds.): *Postcolonial Ecologies. Literatures of the environment*. New York: Oxford University Press, 3-39.
- DENKER, Kai-Uwe (2019): Die Ursprünge der menschlichen Entwicklung und der Prozess der Menschwerdung. In: DENKER, Kai-Uwe (edt.): *Erongo Verzeichnis für afrikanisches Jagdwild*. Omaruru: self-published, 5-9.
- DENSCOMBE, Martyn (2021): *The Good Research guide. Research methods for small-scale social research projects*. 7th edition. London: Open University Press McGraw Hill.
- DESBIENS, Caroline (2017): Imaginative geographies. In: *International Encyclopedia of Geography*. Chichester: Wiley & Sons Ltd., 3524-3529.
- DIOGO, Rui (2022): *Meaning of Life, Human Nature, and Delusions. How Tales about Love, Sex, Races, Gods and Progress Affect Our Lives and Earth's Splendor*. Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AG.
- DREW, Georgina, SKINNER, William & BARDSLEY, Douglas K. (2022): The 'drive and talk' as ethnographic method. In: *Anthropology Today*, 38(3), 5-8.

- DRIVER, Felix (2014): Imaginative Geographies. In: CLOKE, Paul, CRANG, Philip & GOODWIN, Mark (eds.): *Introducing Human Geographies*. 3rd edition. London/ New York: Routledge, 234-248.
- DUGUID, Paul (2005): "The art of knowing": social and tacit dimensions of knowledge and the limits of the community of practice. In: *Information Society*, 21(2), 109-118.
- DUNCAN, James & DUNCAN, Nancy G. (2001): Sense of Place as a Positional Good: Locating Bedford in Place and Time. In: ADAMS, Paul C., HOELSCHER, Steven & TILL, Karen E. (eds.): *Textures of Place: Exploring Humanist Geographies*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 41-54.
- EASTHOPE, Hazel (2004): "A Place Called Home" In: *Housing, Theory and Society*, 21(3), 128-138.
- EK, Richard (2006): Media Studies, Geographical Imaginations and Relational Space. In: FALKHEIMER, Jesper & JANSSON, André (eds.): *Geographies of Communication. The Spatial Turn in Media Studies*. Gothenburg: Nordicom University of Gothenburg, 45-66.
- ERONGO VERZEICHNIS FOR AFRICAN GAME ANIMALS (2023): Age Related Trophy Measurement System Manual. Online at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JjyrjM7TT0PD9JuBvOodDAm-gau56qis5/view?pli=1> (15.06.2024).
- EVANS, Lauren A. & ADAMS, William M. (2016): Fencing Elephants: The hidden politics of wildlife fencing in Laikipia, Kenya. In: *Land Use Policy*, 51, 215-228.
- EVERTS, Jonathan (2016): Connecting Sites: Practice Theory and Large Phenomena. In: *Geographische Zeitschrift*, 104(1), 50-67.
- EVERTS, Jonathan (2022): Praxistheoretische Zugänge für eine Mehr-als-menschliche Geographie. In: STEINER, Christian, RAINER, Gerhard, SCHRÖDER, Verena & ZIRKL, Frank (eds.): *Mehr-als menschliche Geographien. Schlüsselkonzepte, Beziehungen und Methodiken*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 71-86.
- EVERTS, Jonathan, LAHR-KURTEN, Matthias & WATSON, Matt (2011): PRACTICE MATTERS! Geographical inquiry and theories of practice. In: *Erdkunde*, 65(4), 323-334.

- EVERTS, Jonathan & SCHÄFER, Susann (2019): Praktiken und Raum. In: SCHÄFER, Susann & EVERTS, Jonathan (eds.): Handbuch Praktiken und Raum. Humangeographie nach dem Practice Turn. Bielefeld: transcript, 7-19.
- FENDLER, Ute & GREILICH, Susanne (2006): Afrika in deutschen und französischen Enzyklopädien des 18. Jahrhunderts. In: LÜSEBRINK, Hans-Jürgen (edt.): Das Europa der Aufklärung und die außereuropäische koloniale Welt. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 113-137.
- FLICK, Uwe, VON KARDORFF, Ernst & STEINKE, Ines (2008): Was ist qualitative Forschung? Einleitung und Überblick. In: FLICK, Uwe, VON KARDORFF, Ernst & STEINKE, Ines (eds.): Qualitative Forschung. Ein Handbuch. 6th edition. Reinbek: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 13-29.
- FRÜH, Werner (2015): Inhaltsanalyse. Theorie und Praxis. 8th revised edition. Constance/Munich: UVK Verlagsgemeinschaft mbH.
- GARFINKEL, Harold (1967). Studies in Ethnomethodology. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
- GARFINKEL, Harold & WIEDER, D. Lawrence (1992): Two incommensurable, asymmetrically alternate technologies of social analysis. In: WATSON, Graham & SEILER, Robert M. (eds.): Text in context: contributions to ethno-methodology. London: Sage Publication, 175-206.
- GEERTZ, Clifford (1998): Deep hanging out. In: The New York review of books, 45(16), 69.
- GEISELHART, Klaus, WINKLER, Jan & DÜNCKMANN, Florian (2019): Vom Wissen über das Tun – praxeologische Ansätze für die Geographie von der Analyse bis zur Kritik. In: SCHÄFER, Susann & EVERTS, Jonathan (eds.): Handbuch Praktiken und Raum. Humangeographie nach dem Practice Turn. Bielefeld: transcript, 21-75.
- GEULEN, Christian (2021): Geschichte des Rassismus. 4th, updated edition. Munich: C.H. Beck oHG.
- GIDDENS, Anthony (1984): The Constitution of Society. Outline of the Theory of Structuration. Cambridge: Polity Press.

- GIDDENS, Anthony (1988): Die Konstitution der Gesellschaft. Grundzüge einer Theorie der Strukturierung. 1st German edition. Frankfurt am Main/ New York: Campus Publishing.
- GIERYN, Thomas F. (2000): A Space for Place in Sociology. In: Annual Review of Sociology, 26, 463-496.
- GISSIBL, Bernhard (2016): The Nature of German Imperialism: Conservation and the Politics of Wildlife in Colonial East Africa. New York/ Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- GOBO, Giampietro & MOLLE, Andrea (2017): Doing Ethnography. 2nd edition. London/ Los Angeles/ New Delhi/ Singapore: SAGE Publications.
- GOLDBERG, Eric J. (2021): In Manner of the Franks. Hunting, Kinship, and Masculinity in Early Medieval Europe. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- GOODMAN, Michael K. (2004): Reading fair trade: political ecological imaginary and the moral economy of fair trade foods. In: Political Geography, 23(7), 891-915.
- GOUDIE, Andrew & VILES, Heather (2015): Landscapes and Landforms in Namibia. Dordrecht/Heidelberg/New York/London: Springer Science+Business Media.
- GRAICHEN, Gisela & GRÜNDER, Horst (2005): Deutsche Kolonien. Traum und Trauma. Berlin: Ullstein.
- GREEN, Reginald Herbold (2023): History of Namibia. In: Encyclopedia Britannica, 31.05.2023. Online at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-Namibia> (15.06.2024).
- GREENBLATT, Stephen (2007): Learning to Curse. Routledge Classics: New York.
- GREGORY, Derek (1994): Geographical imaginations. Cambridge/ Oxford: Blackwell Publishers/ Basil Blackwell Ltd.
- GREGORY, Derek (1995): Imaginative geographies. In: Progress in Human Geography, 19(4), 447-485.
- GREGORY, Derek (2007): Das Auge der Macht. In: BELINA, Bernd & MICHEL, Boris (eds.): Raumproduktionen. Beiträge der Radical Geography. Eine Zwischenbilanz. Munster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 133-155.

- GREGORY, Derek (2012): *Dis/Ordering the Orient: Scopic Regimes and Modern War*. In: BARKAWI, Tarak & STANSKY, Keith (eds.): *Orientalism and War*. New York: Columbia University Press, 151–176.
- GRISWORLD, Wendy (2008): *Regionalism and the Reading Class*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- GROSSMAN, Dave, MILLER, Linda K. & CUNNINGHAM, Keith A. (2022): *On Hunting. A Definitive Study of the Mind, Body, and Ecology of the Hunter in the Modern World*. Savage: BroadStreet Publishing Group.
- GUPTA, Akhil & FERGUSON, James (1997): *Beyond “Culture”: Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference*. In: GUPTA, Akhil & FERGUSON, James (eds.): *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*. Durham: Duke University Press, 33-51.
- HAMADEH, Nada, VAN ROMPAEY, Catherine & METREAU, Eric (2023): *World Bank Group country classifications by income level for FY24 (July 1, 2023 – June 20, 2024)*. In: *World Bank Blogs*. Online at: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/new-world-bank-group-country-classifications-income-level-fy24> (15.06.2024).
- HARAWAY, Donna J. (1991): *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women. The Reinvention of Nature*. New York/Milton Park: Routledge.
- HARPER, Douglas (2014): *Etymology of ethnography* In: *Online Etymology Dictionary*. <https://www.etymonline.com/word/ethnography> (15.06.2024).
- HART, Gillian (2009): *ethnography*. In: GREGORY, Derek, JOHNSTON, Ron, PRATT, Geraldine, WATTS, Michael J. & WHATMORE, Sarah (eds.): *The dictionary of Human Geography*. 5th edition. Malden/ Oxford/ Chichester/: Wiley-Blackwell, 217-219.
- HARVEY, David (1993): *From space to place and back again*. In: BIRD, Jon, CURTIS, Barry, PUTNAM, Tim, ROBERTSON, George & TICKNER, Lisa (eds.): *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change*. London: Routledge, 3-29.
- HARVEY, David (1996): *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*. Massachusetts/Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- HEIDEGGER, Martin (1962): *Being and time*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

- HEINRICHSMEIER, Rachel (2020): *Ageing identities and women's everyday talk in a hair salon*. New York: Routledge.
- HIGH COMMISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA [HCRN] (n.n.): *A Brief History of Namibia*. Online at: <https://www.namibiahc.org.uk/history.php#:~:text=Namibia%2C%20then%20known%20as%20South,1920%20League%20of%20Nations%20mandate>. (15.06.2024).
- HINCHLIFFE, Steve (2007): *Geographies of Nature. Societies, environments, ecologies*. London: Sage.
- HIRSCHAUER, Stefan (2014). Intersituativität. Teleinteraktionen und Koaktivität jenseits von Mikro und Makro. In: *Zeitschrift für Soziologie, Special Issue*, 109-133.
- HOFSTADTER, Richard (1949): Turner and the Frontier Myth. In: *The American Scholar*, 18(4), 433-443.
- HOPF, Christel (1978): Die Pseudo-Exploration – Überlegungen zur Technik qualitativer Interviews in der Sozialforschung. In: *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, 7(2), 97-115.
- HOPF, Christel (2008): Qualitative Interviews – ein Überblick. In: FLICK, Uwe, VON KARDORFF, Ernst & STEINKE, Ines (eds.): *Qualitative Forschung. Ein Handbuch*. 6th edition. Reinbek: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 349-360.
- HOWELL, Signe (2018): *Ethnography*. Online at: <http://www.anthroencyclopedia.com/entry/ethnography> (15.06.2024).
- HUIJBENS, Edward & BENEDIKTSSON, Karl (2007): Practicing highland heterotopias: Automobility in the interior of Iceland. In: *Mobilities*, 2(1), 143-165.
- JESS, Pat & MASSEY, Doreen (1995): The Contestation of Place. In: MASSEY, Doreen & JESS, Pat (eds): *A Place in the World? Places, Cultures and Globalization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 133-174.
- JOHNSON, Mark (1987). *The body in the mind. The bodily basis of meaning, imagination, and reason*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- KAKUJAH-MATUNDU, Omu & KAVEZERI, Selma Tuemumunu (1997): Overview of the Agricultural Sector in Namibia. In: *Farmworkers Project Research Report Series*, 4. Online at: https://www.lac.org.na/projects/lead/Pdf/farmworkers_4.pdf (15.06.2024).

- KALTHOFF, Herbert, CRESS, Torsten & RÖHL, Tobias (eds.) (2016): Materialität. Herausforderungen für die Sozial- und Kulturwissenschaften. Paderborn: Fink.
- KATZ, Cindi (2009): fieldwork. In: GREGORY, Derek, JOHNSTON, Ron, PRATT, Geraldine, WATTS, Michael J. & WHATMORE, Sarah (eds.): The dictionary of Human Geography. 5th edition. Malden/ Oxford/ Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 251-252.
- KALVELAGE, Linus, REVILLA DIEZ, Javier & BOLLIG, Michael (2023): Valuing Nature in Global Production Networks: Hunting Tourism and the Weight of History in Zambezi, Namibia. In: Annals of the American Association of Geographers, 113(8), 1818-1834.
- KAWULICH, Barbara B. (2011): Gatekeeping: An Ongoing Adventure in Research. In: Field Methods, 23(1), 57-76.
- KERSLAKE, Christian (2010): Desire and the Dialectics of Love: Deleuze, Canguilhem, and the Philosophy of Desire. In: DE BOLLE, Leen (ed.): Deleuze and Psychoanalysis: Philosophical Essays on Deleuze's Debate with Psychoanalysis. Volume 9. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 51-80.
- KERTÉSZ, András (2004): Die kognitive Metapherntheorie als metalinguistisches Unterfangen. In: Sprachtheorie und germanistische Linguistik, 14(1), 39-60.
- KING, Roger J.H. (2010): Hunting. A Return to Nature? In: KOWALSKY, Nathan (ed.): Hunting. Philosophy for Everyone. In Search of the Wild Life. Chichester/Oxford/Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 149-160.
- KIRCHHOFF, Thomas & TREPL, Ludwig (2009): Landschaft, Wildnis, Ökosystem: Zur kulturbedingten Vieldeutigkeit ästhetischer, moralischer und theoretischer Naturauffassungen. Einleitender Überblick. In: KIRCHHOFF, Thomas & TREPL, Ludwig (eds.): Vieldeutige Natur. Landschaft, Wildnis und Ökosystem als kulturgeschichtliche Phänomene. Bielefeld: transcript, 13-66.
- KIRCHHOFF, Thomas (2017): Sehnsucht nach Wald als Wildnis. In: Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte, 67(49-50), 19-24.
- KIRCHHOFF, Thomas & VICENZOTTI, Vera (2017): Von der Sehnsucht nach Wildnis. In: KIRCHHOFF, Thomas & KARAFYLLIS, Nicole C. (eds.): Naturphilosophie. Ein Lehr- und Studienbuch. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 313-323.

- KNOLL, Martin (2004): Hunting in the eighteenth century: an environmental history perspective. In: *Historical Social Research*, 29(3), 9-36.
- KNORR-CETINA, Karin (2002): *Wissenskulturen. Ein Vergleich naturwissenschaftlicher Wissensformen*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag.
- KOHL, Karl-Heinz (1981): *Entzauberter Blick. Das Bild vom Guten Wilden und die Erfahrung der Zivilisation*. Berlin: Medusa Verlag.
- KONETZKE, Richard (1963): *Entdecker und Eroberer Amerikas. Von Christoph Kolumbus bis Hernán Cortés*. Frankfurt a.M./ Hamburg: Fischer-Bucherei.
- KOOT, Stasja, INGRAM, Verena Jane & BIJSTERBOSCH, Mariska (2020): State paternalism and institutional degradation at Treesleeper Eco-camp: Community-based tourism and the loss of sovereignty among Bushmen in Namibia. In: *Development Southern Africa*, 37(3), 432-445.
- KOWALSKY, Nathan (2010): Picking Up the Trail: *An Introduction to Hunting – Philosophy for Everyone*. In: KOWALSKY, Nathan (edt.): *Hunting. Philosophy for everyone. In Search of the Wild Life*. Chichester: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 1-8.
- KRUSE, Jan (2015): *Qualitative Interviewforschung. Ein integrativer Ansatz*. 2nd revised and extended edition. Weinheim/ Basel: Beltz Juventa.
- KUCKARTZ, Udo (2012): *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse, Methoden, Praxis, Computerunterstützung*. 3rd, revised edition. Weinheim/ Basel: Beltz Juventa.
- KUPPER, Patrick (2008): Nationalparks in der europäischen Geschichte. Online at: Themenportal Europäische Geschichte. https://www.europa.clío-online.de/Portals/_Europa/documents/B2008/E_Kupper_Nationalparks.pdf (14.06.2024).
- KUSENBACH, Margarethe (2003): Street phenomenology. The go-along as ethnographic research tool. In: *Ethnography*, 4(3), 455-485.
- KYRATZIS, Sakis (2007): The Semantics of Desire. Exploring Desire, Love and Sexuality through Metaphor. In: SAUNTON, Helen & KYRATZIS, Sakis (eds.): *Language, Sexualities and Desires. Cross-Cultural Perspectives*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 96-117.
- LATIMER, Joanna & MUNRO, Rolland (2006): Driving the social. In: *Sociological Review*, 54(1), 32-53.

- LATOURE, Bruno (2000): When things strike back: a possible contribution of “science studies” to the social sciences. In: *British Journal of Sociology*, 51(1), 107-125.
- LÄNGIN, Bernd (2004): *Die deutschen Kolonien. Schauplätze und Schicksale 1884-1918*. Hamburg: Mittler.
- LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE (2019): *Illegal fencing on communal land in Namibia. The law in brief*. Online at: http://www.lac.org.na/projects/lead/Pdf/fencing_law_leaflet_2019.pdf (15.06.2024).
- LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE (n.n.): *ProBono Information about Namibia’s Law. The infamous “Red Line”: Why does Namibia have a veterinary cordon fence?* Online at: https://www.lac.org.na/news/probono/ProBono_64-RED_LINE.pdf (15.06.2024).
- LIPKIN, W. Ian (2010): Microbe Hunting. In: *Microbiology and Molecular Biology Reviews*, 74(3), 363-377.
- LOOS, Peter & SCHÄFER, Burkhard (2001): *Das Gruppendiskussionsverfahren. Theoretische Grundlagen und empirische Anwendung*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- LÓPEZ MAESTRE, María D. (2015): ‘Man the hunter’: a critical reading of hunt-based conceptual metaphors of love and sexual desire. In: *Journal of Literary Semantics*, 44(2), 89-113.
- LÓPEZ MAESTRE, María D. (2020): Gender, Ideology and Conceptual Metaphors: Women and the Source Domain of the Hunt. In: *Complutense Journal of English Studies*, 28, 203-218.
- LORIMER, Jamie (2007): Nonhuman Charisma. In: *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 25, 911-932.
- LORIMER, Jamie (2015): *Wildlife in the Anthropocene. Conservation after Nature*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- LOSSAU, Julia (2013): Postkoloniale Ansätze: Zum Verhältnis von kultureller Identität und Raum. In: GEBHARDT, Hans, GLASER, Rüdiger, RADTKE, Ulrich & REUBER, Paul (eds.): *Geographie. Physische Geographie und Humangeographie*. Heidelberg: Spektrum Academic Publishing, 653-660.

- LUKE, Brian (1998): Violent Love: Hunting, Heterosexuality, and the Erotics of Men's Predation. In: *Feminist Studies*, 24(3), 627-655.
- LÜSEBRINK, Hans-Jürgen (2006): Von der Faszination zur Wissenssystematisierung: die koloniale Welt im Diskurs der europäischen Aufklärung. In: LÜSEBRINK, Hans-Jürgen (edt.): *Das Europa der Aufklärung und die außereuropäische koloniale Welt*. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 9-18.
- MANGAN, James A. & MCKENZIE, Callum C. (2010): *Militarism, Hunting, Imperialism-Blooding the Martial Male*. Oxford: Routledge.
- MARTE, Lidia (2018): Rich Points and Deep Hanging Out. In: *Anthropology News*. 05.04.2018. Online at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/AN.815> (15.06.2024).
- MARTIN, Peter (1993): *Schwarze Teufel, edle Mohren*. Hamburg: Junius.
- MARVIN, Garry (2010): Living with Dead Animals? Trophies as Souvenirs of the Hunt. In: KOWALSKY, Nathan (edt.): *Hunting. Philosophy for everyone. In Search of the Wild Life*. Chichester: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 107-118.
- MASSEY, Doreen (1991): A global sense of place. In: *Marxism Today*, 38, 24-29.
- MASSEY, Doreen (1995): The conceptualisation of place. In: MASSEY, Doreen & JESS, Pat (eds.): *A Place in the World? Places, Cultures and Globalisation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 45-85.
- MEGERLE, Heidi Elisabeth (2019): Wildnis und Landschaft. In: KÜHNE, Olaf, WEBER, Florian, BERR, Karsten & JENAL, Corinna (eds.): *Handbuch Landschaft*. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien, 675-690.
- MENDELSON, John, SHIXWAMENI, Louise & NAKAMHELA, Uda (2012): An overview of communal land tenure in Namibia: Unlocking its economic potential. In: *Bank of Namibia Annual Symposium*. Online at: <https://www.bon.com.na/CMSTemplates/Bon/Files/bon.com.na/d2/d2d1748a-1e9f-4b9a-8291-94c8589e52d7.pdf> (15.06.2024).
- MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY & TOURISM [MEFT] (2008): *National Policy on Tourism for Namibia*. Online at: <https://www.meft.gov.na/files/files/National%20Policy%20on%20Tourism%20for%20Namibia.pdf> (15.06.2024).

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY & TOURISM [MEFT] (2012): Government Gazette of the Republic of Namibia. Government Notice No. 85 of 2012. Regulations for large carnivores in captivity: Nature Conservation Ordinance, 1975. Online at: <https://www.meft.gov.na/files/files/Large%20Carnivore%20in%20Captivity%20Regulations%20-%202012.pdf> (15.06.2024).

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY & TOURISM [MEFT] (2013): Report on the Namibia Tourist Exit Survey 2012-2013. Online at: <https://www.meft.gov.na/files/files/Report%20on%20the%20Namibia%20Tourist%20Exit%20Survey%202012-2013.pdf> (15.06.2024).

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY & TOURISM [MEFT] (2020): Annual Progress Report 2019/2020. Online at: [https://www.meft.gov.na/files/downloads/853_\[MEFT\]Annual%20Progress%20Report%202019-2020LOW-RES%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.meft.gov.na/files/downloads/853_[MEFT]Annual%20Progress%20Report%202019-2020LOW-RES%20(1).pdf) (15.06.2024).

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY & TOURISM [MEFT] (2023): Tourist Statistical Report 2022. Online at: https://www.meft.gov.na/files/downloads/MEFT-Tourist-Statistical%20Report-2022-new%20design_21-Aug-2023.pdf (15.06.2024).

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY & TOURISM [MEFT] (n.n.a): Etosha National Park. Online at: <https://www.meft.gov.na/national-parks/etosha-national-park/217/> (15.06.2024).

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY & TOURISM [MEFT] (n.n.b): Namib-Naukluft Park. Online at: <https://www.meft.gov.na/national-parks/namib-naukluft-park/224/> (15.06.2024).

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY & TOURISM [MEFT] (n.n.c): Wildlife and National Parks. Online at: <https://www.meft.gov.na/about-meft/wildlife-and-national-parks/272/> (15.06.2024).

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY & TOURISM [MEFT] (n.n.d): Tourism and Hunting Concessions. Online at: <https://www.meft.gov.na/services/tourism-and-hunting-concessions/251/> (15.06.2024).

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY & TOURISM [MEFT] (n.n.e): Management Plan. Online at: <https://www.meft.gov.na/files/files/Management%20Plan%20-%20Table.pdf> (15.06.2024).

- MINISTRY OF LAND REFORM (2016): Guide to Namibia's Flexible Land Tenure Act, 2012 (Act No. 4 of 2012). Online at: <https://www.giz.de/de/downloads/giz2018-0105en-guide-namibia-flexible-land-tenure-act.pdf> (15.06.2024).
- MKONO, Mucha (2019): Neo-colonialism and greed: Africans' views on trophy hunting in social media. In: *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 27(5), 689-704.
- MONDI, Megan (2006): "Connected and Unified?": A More Critical Look at Frederick Jackson Turner's America. In: *Constructing the Past*, 7(1), 30-34.
- MOORE, Gillian Lizbeth (2017): From Head to Tale: the circulation, display and representation of big-game material culture c. 1870-1920. Dissertation. University of Exeter, Department of English and Creative Writing. Exeter. Online at: <https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/handle/10871/32476> (03.04.2024).
- MUIR, John (1992) [1911]: *My First Summer in the Sierra*. Reprinted in: MUIR, John (edt.): *The Eight Wilderness Discovery Books*. London: Diadem/ Seattle: Mountaineers.
- NAMIBIA TOURISM BOARD [NTB] (n.n.a): Namibia at a glance. Online at: <https://visit-namibia.com.na/namibia-at-a-glance/> (15.06.2024).
- NAMIBIA TOURISM BOARD [NTB] (n.n.b): Namibia's Conservation Success. Online at: <https://visitnamibia.com.na/conservation/> (15.06.2024).
- NAMIBIA TOURISM BOARD [NTB] (n.n.c): Unique to Namibia. Online at: <https://visit-namibia.com.na/unique-to-namibia/> (15.06.2024).
- NAMIBIA TOURISM BOARD [NTB] (n.n.d): Geography. Online at: <https://visit-namibia.com.na/geography/> (15.06.2024).
- NAMIBIA TOURS & SAFARIS (2024): Top 10 Things To Do in Namibia. Online at: <https://www.namibia-tours-safaris.com/travel-guide/top-10-things-to-do-in-namibia> (15.06.2024).
- NAMIBIAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY BASED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS [NACSO] (n.n.a): Registered Communal Conservancies. Online at: <https://www.nacso.org.na/conservancies> (15.06.2024).

NAMIBIAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY BASED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS [NACSO] (n.n.b): Freehold Conservancies. Online at:
<https://www.nacso.org.na/freehold-conservancies> (15.06.2024).

NAMIBIAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY BASED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS [NACSO] (n.n.c): National Parks. Online at:
<https://www.nacso.org.na/national-parks> (15.06.2024).

NAMIBIAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY BASED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS [NACSO] & MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY
AND TOURISM [MEFT] (2023): Sources of Returns. Online at: <https://communityconservationnamibia.com/support-to-conservation/livelihoods/sources-of-returns> (15.06.2024).

NAMIBIAN PROFESSIONAL HUNTING ASSOCIATION [NAPHA] (n.n.a): Essential information on hunting in Namibia. Online at: <https://napha-namibia.com/qa/> (15.06.2024).

NAMIBIAN PROFESSIONAL HUNTING ASSOCIATION [NAPHA] (n.n.b): Code of Conduct. Online at: <https://napha-namibia.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/2021-NAPHA-Code-of-Conduct.pdf> (15.06.2024).

NAMIBIAN PROFESSIONAL HUNTING ASSOCIATION [NAPHA] (n.n.c): Minimum measurements for NAPHA medals according to the new ART Measuring System. Online at: <https://napha-namibia.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Minimum-measurements-for-NAPHA-Art-medals.pdf> (15.06.2024).

NIXON, Rob (2011): Stranger in the Eco-Village. Environmental Time, Race and Ecologies of Looking. In: DELOUGHREY, Elizabeth & HANDLEY, George B. (eds.): Post-colonial Ecologies. Literatures of the environment. New York: Oxford University Press, 159-181.

O'NEILL, Maggie & ROBERTS, Brian (2019): Walking Methods. Research on the Move. London: Routledge.

ORTEGA Y GASSET, José (1960): La Caza y los toros. Madrid: Revista de Occidente.

OßENBRÜGGE, Jürgen (1983): Politische Geographie als räumliche Konfliktforschung. Konzepte zur Analyse der politischen und sozialen Organisation des Raumes auf

- der Grundlage anglo-amerikanischer Forschungsansätze. In: *Hamburger Geographische Studien*. Issue 40. Hamburg: de Gruyter.
- OSTERHAMMEL, Jürgen (2006): *Welten des Kolonialismus im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*. In: LÜSEBRINK, Hans-Jürgen (edt.): *Das Europa der Aufklärung und die außereuropäische koloniale Welt*. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 19-36.
- PAIN, Rachel, KINDON, Sara & KESBY, Mike (2007): *Participatory Action Research: making a difference to theory, practice and action*. In: KINDON, Sara, PAIN, Rachel & KESBY, Mike (eds.): *Participatory Action Research. Approaches and Methods. Connecting people, participation and place*. Milton Park/ New York: Routledge, 26-32.
- PEARSALL, Marion (1970): *Participant observation as role and method in behavioral research*. In: FILSTEAD, William J. (edt.): *Qualitative methodology: Firsthand involvement with the social world*. Chicago: Markham, 340-352.
- PEEL, Charles V.A. (1906): *Popular Guide to Exhibition of Big-Game Trophies and Museum of Natural History and Anthropology*. Oxford: self-published.
- PHILO, Chris & WILBERT, Chris (2000): *Animal Spaces, Beastly Places: New Geographies of Human-Animal Relations*. New York: Routledge.
- PIERCE, Joseph, MARTIN, Deborah G. & MURPHY, James T. (2011): *Relational place-making: the networked politics of place*. In: *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 36, 54-70.
- PINK, Sarah (2007): *Walking with video*. In: *Visual Studies*, 22(3), 240-252.
- PINK, Sarah, FORS, Vaike & GLÖSS, Mareike (2019): *Automated futures and the mobile present: In-car video ethnographies*. In: *Ethnography*, 20(1), 88-107.
- POSEWITZ, Jim (1994): *Beyond Fair Chase: The Ethic and Tradition of Hunting*. 1st edition. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group.
- PRED, Allan (1981): *Social reproduction and the time-geography of everyday life*. In: *Geografiska Annaler. Series B. Human Geography*, 63(1), 5-22.
- PROCTOR, James D. (1998): *The Spotted Owl and the Contested Moral Landscape of the Pacific Northwest*. In: WOLCH, Jennifer & EMEL, Jody (eds.): *Animal Geographies*. New York: Verso, 191-217.

- PRZYBORSKI, Aglaja & WOHLRAB-SAHR, Monika (2014): Qualitative Sozialforschung. Ein Arbeitsbuch. 4th extended edition. Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag.
- PÜTZ, Robert & SCHLOTTMANN, Antje (2019): Welche Natur, für wen und wie zu schützen? Namibias Wildpferde im Fokus von Naturschutzkonflikten. In: Forschung Frankfurt, 1, 98-103.
- PÜTZ, Robert & SCHLOTTMANN, Antje (2020): Contested conservation – neglected corporeality: the case of the Namib wild horses. In: Geographica Helvetica, 75, 93-106.
- RAFFLES, Hugh (2002): Intimate knowledge* In: International Social Science Journal, 54(173), 325-335.
- RECKWITZ, Andreas (2002): Toward a theory of social practices: a development in culturalist theorizing. In: European Journal of Social Theory, 5(2), 243-263.
- RECKWITZ, Andreas (2003): Grundelemente einer Theorie sozialer Praktiken. Eine sozialtheoretische Perspektive. In: Zeitschrift für Soziologie, 32(4), 282-301.
- REINHARD, Wolfgang (2016): Die Unterwerfung der Welt. Globalgeschichte der europäischen Expansion 1415-2015. Munich: C.H. Beck oHG.
- RELPH, Edward (1976): Place and Placelessness. London: Pion.
- REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA (1922): Fencing Proclamation 57 of 1921. Online at: <https://www.lac.org.na/laws/annoSTAT/Fencing%20Proclamation%2057%20of%201921.pdf> (15.06.2024).
- REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA (1975): Nature Conservation Ordinance 4 of 1975. Online at: <https://www.lac.org.na/laws/annoSTAT/Nature%20Conservation%20Ordinance%204%20of%201975.pdf> (15.06.2024).
- REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA (1995): Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act 6 of 1995. Online at: [http://www.lac.org.na/laws/annoSTAT/Agricultural%20\(Commercial\)%20Land%20Reform%20Act%206%20of%201995.pdf](http://www.lac.org.na/laws/annoSTAT/Agricultural%20(Commercial)%20Land%20Reform%20Act%206%20of%201995.pdf) (15.06.2024).
- REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA (2002): Communal Land Reform Act 5 of 2002. Online at: <https://www.lac.org.na/laws/annoSTAT/Communal%20Land%20Reform%20Act%205%20of%202002.pdf> (15.06.2024).

- REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA (2014): Namibian Constitution. Annotated Statutes. Online at: <https://www.lac.org.na/laws/annoSTAT/Namibian%20Constitution.pdf> (15.06.2024).
- REZANIA SHIRAZI, Hamid & RAHIMI SOJASI, Davoud (2022): A Reflection on Social Darwinism and Its Repercussions. In: *Religious Inquiries*, 11(2), 233-249.
- RICHARDSON, Lizzie & THIEME, Tatiana (2018): Planning Working Futures: Precarious Work Through Carceral Space. In: *Social and Cultural Geography*, 21(1), 25-44.
- RIDANPÄÄ, Juha (2019): Postcolonial critique and the North in geographical imaginations. In: MÄKIKALLI, Maija & HOLT, Ysanne & HAUTALA-HIRVIOJA, Tuija (eds.): *North as a meaning: in design and art*. Rovaniemi: Lapland University Press, 123-137.
- RØPKE, Inge (2009): Theories of practice – New inspiration for ecological economic studies on consumption. In: *Ecological Economics*, 68(10), 2490-2497.
- ROSALDO, Renato (1986): From the Door of His Tent: The Fieldworker and the Inquisitor. In: CLIFFORD, James & MARCUS, George E. (eds.): *Writing Culture. The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 77-97.
- RÖSENER, Werner (2000): Adel und Jagd. Die Bedeutung der Jagd im Kontext der adligen Mentalität. In: PARAVICINI BAGLIANI, Agostino & VAN DEN ABEELE, Baudouin (eds.): *La Chasse au Moyen Age. Sociétés, traités, symboles*. Florence: SISMEL – Edizioni del Galluzzo, 129-150.
- ROTHFELS, Nigel (2002): *Savages and beasts. The birth of the modern zoo*. Baltimore/London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- RYAN, James R. (2000): “Hunting with the Camera”: Photography, Wildlife and Colonialism in Africa. In: PHILO, Chris & WILBERT, Chris (eds.): *Animal Spaces, Beastly Places: New Geographies of Human-Animal Relations*. New York: Routledge, 203-221.
- RYAN, Vanessa L. (2001): The Physiological Sublime: Burke’s Critique of Reason. In: *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 62(2), 265-279.
- SACK, Robert D. (2001): Place, Power and the Good. In: ADAMS, Paul C., HOELSCHER, Steven & TILL, Karen E. (eds.): *Textures of Place: Exploring Humanist Geographies*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 232-245.

- SAID, Edward (1978): *Orientalism*. London: Peregrine.
- SAID, Edward (1995): *Orientalism*. (reprint with new afterword). Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- SCHÄFER, Hilmar (2013). *Die Instabilität der Praxis. Reproduktion und Transformation des Sozialen in der Praxistheorie*. Weilerswist: Velbrück.
- SCHÄFER, Hilmar (2017): *Praxistheorie als Kulturosoziologie*. In: MOEBIUS, Stephan, NUNGESSER, Frithjof & SCHERKE, Katharina (eds.): *Handbuch Kulturosoziologie. Band 2: Theorien – Methoden – Felder*. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien, 109-130.
- SCHATZKI, Theodore R. (1996): *Social Practices: A Wittgensteinian approach to human activity and the social*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- SCHATZKI, Theodore R. (2002): *The Site of the Social: A philosophical account of the constitution of social life and change*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- SCHATZKI, Theodore R., KNORR-CETINA, Karin & VON SAVIGNY, Eike (2001): *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*. London: Routledge.
- SCHLOTTMANN, Antje & GRAEFE, Olivier (2023): *Wild views on sale: commercialization of visual encounters in Namibian wildlife conservation*. In: *Globalizations*, 2023, 1-21. Online at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2023.2252689> (15.06.2024).
- SCHMID, Benedikt, REDA, Jens, KRAEHNKE, Lars & SCHWEGMANN, Raphael (2019): *The Site of the Spatial – eine praktikentheoretische Erschließung geographischer Raumkonzepte*. In: SCHÄFER, Susann & EVERTS, Jonathan (eds.): *Handbuch Praktiken und Raum. Humangeographie nach dem Practice Turn*. Bielefeld: transcript, 93-135.
- SCHMIDT, Robert (2017): *Praxistheorie*. In: GUGUTZER, Robert, KLEIN, Gabriele & MEUSER, Michael (eds.): *Handbuch Körpersoziologie. Band 1: Grundbegriffe und theoretische Perspektiven*. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien, 335-344.
- SCHMITT, Rudolf (2009): *Metaphernanalysen und die Konstruktion von Geschlecht*. In: *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung*, 10(2), n.n.

- SCHREIER, Margit (2014): Varianten qualitativer Inhaltsanalyse: Ein Wegweiser im Dickicht der Begrifflichkeiten. In: Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 15(1), Art. 18, n.n.
- SELIGMAN, Linda J. & ESTES, Brian P. (2020): Innovations in Ethnographic Methods. In: American Behavioral Scientists, 64(2), 176-197.
- SHEEHAN, Bernard W. (1980): Savagism and Civility. Indians and Englishmen in Colonial Virginia. Cambridge/ London/ New York/ New Rochelle/ Melbourne/ Sydney: Cambridge University Press.
- SHOVE, Elizabeth, PANTZAR, Mika & WATSON, Matt (2012): The dynamics of social practice. Everyday life and how it changes. London/ Thousand Oaks/ New Delhi/ Singapore: SAGE Publications.
- SOSSUSVLEI (2024): What you need to know about Sossusvlei. Online at: <https://www.sossusvlei.org/about/> (15.06.2024).
- STEIGLEDER, Sandra (2008): Die strukturierende qualitative Inhaltsanalyse im Praxistest. Eine konstruktiv kritische Studie zur Auswertungsmethodik von Philipp Mayring. Marburg: Tectum-Verlag.
- STEINER, Christian, RAINER, Gerhard & SCHRÖDER, Verena (2022): Mehr-als-menschliche Geographien. Entwicklungslinien, Grundzüge und Schlüsselkonzepte. In: STEINER, Christian, RAINER, Gerhard, SCHRÖDER, Verena & ZIRKL, Frank (eds.): Mehr-als-menschliche Geographien. Schlüsselkonzepte, Beziehungen und Methodiken. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 9-38.
- STEINKAMP, Volker (2015): Europa (frz. Europe; engl. Europe). In: THOMA, Heinz (edt.): Handbuch Europäische Aufklärung. Begriffe – Konzepte – Wirkung. Stuttgart/Weimar: Verlag J.B. Metzler, 193-200.
- STEINKE, Ines (2008): Gütekriterien qualitativer Forschung. In: FLICK, Uwe, VON KARDORFF, Ernst & STEINKE, Ines (eds.): Qualitative Forschung. Ein Handbuch. 6th edited and updated edition. Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 319-331.
- STRAUSS, Anselm (1991): Grundlagen qualitativer Sozialforschung. Datenanalyse und Theoriebildung in der empirischen soziologischen Forschung. 2nd edition. Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag.

- SULLIVAN, Sian (2022): 'Hunting Africa': Trophy Hunting, Neocolonialism and Land. In: *The Land*, 31, 22-27.
- SULLIVAN, Sian (2023): "Hunting Africa": how international trophy hunting may constitute neocolonial green extractivism. In: *Journal of Political Ecology*, 30(1), n.n.
- TAYLOR, Charles (1971): Interpretation and the sciences of man. In: *The Review of Metaphysics*, 25(1), 3-51.
- TEDLOCK, Barbara (2007): The Observation of Participation and the Emergence of public ethnography. In: DENZIN, Norman K. & LINCOLN, Yvonna S. (eds.): *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*. 3rd edition. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 151-171.
- THOMA, Heinz (2015): Aufklärung (frz. lumières; engl. enlightenment). In: THOMA, Heinz (edt.): *Handbuch Europäische Aufklärung. Begriffe – Konzepte – Wirkung*. Stuttgart/Weimar: Verlag J.B. Metzler, 67-85.
- THRIFT, Nigel (1996): *Spatial Formations*. London: Sage.
- THRIFT, Nigel (2004): Driving in the city. In: *Theory, Culture & Society*, 21(4/5), 41-59.
- THRIFT, Nigel (2008): *Non-representational theory: Space/politics/affect*. London: Routledge.
- TUAN, Yi-Fu (1974): *Topophilia. A study of environmental perception, attitudes, and values*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- TUAN, Yi-Fu (1977): *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- TUCK, Eve (2010): Breaking up with Deleuze: desire and valuing the irreconcilable. In: *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 23(5), 635-650.
- TURNER, Frederick Jackson (1893): The Significance of the Frontier in American History. In: *Annual Report of the American Historical Association*, n.n., 199-205, 210-211. Online at: https://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/gna/Quellensammlung/06/06_turnerfrontier_1893.htm (12.06.2025).
- URBANIK, Julie (2012): *Placing Animals. An Introduction to the Geography of Human-Animal Relations*. Lanham/ Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

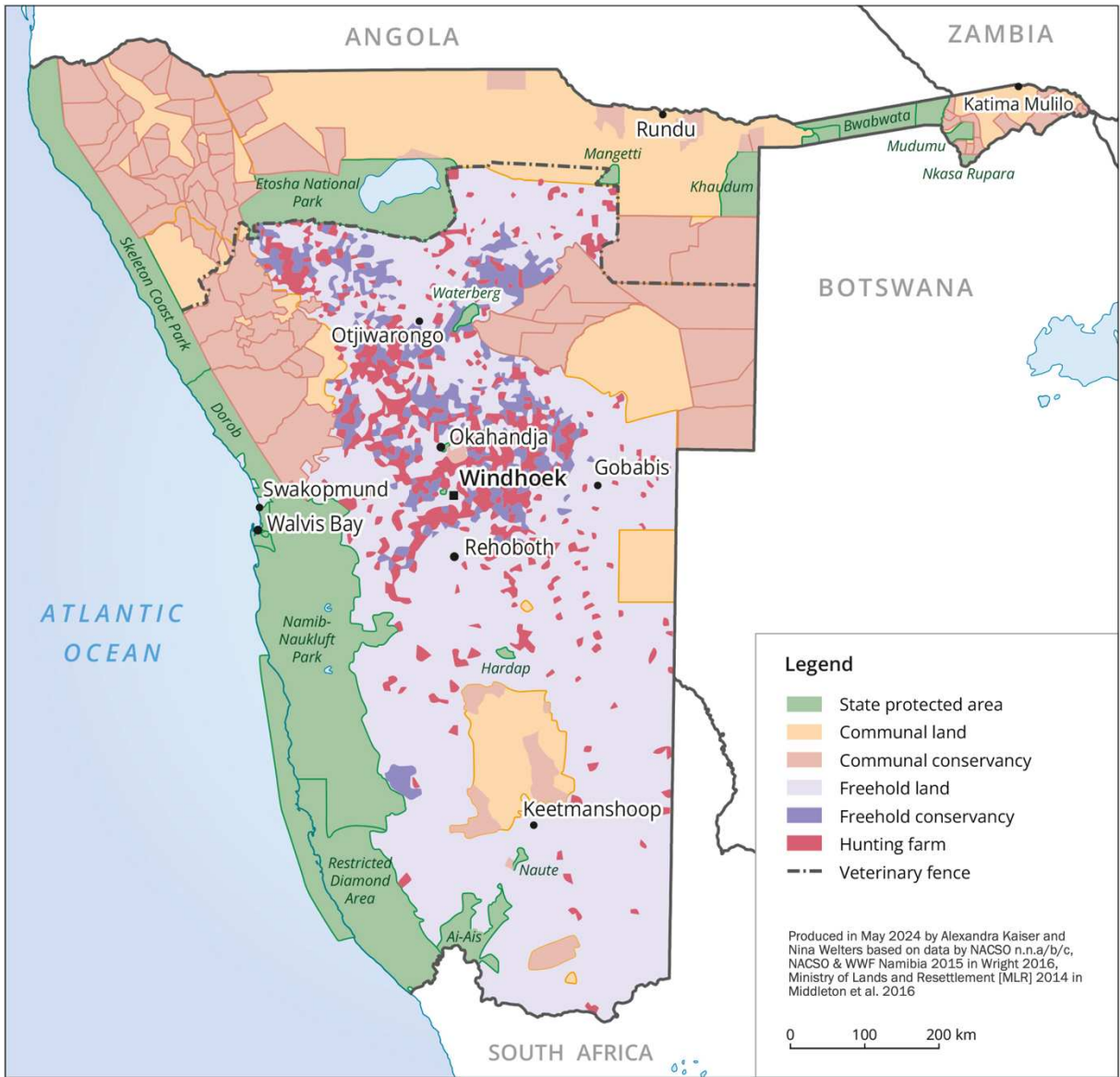
- VACCARO, Ismael & BELTRAN, Oriol (2009): Livestock versus 'Wild Beasts': Contradictions in the Natural Patrimonialisation of the Pyrenees. In: *The Geographical Review*, 99(4), 499-516.
- VAN SCHALKWYK, Diana L., MCMILLIN, Kenneth W., WITTHUHN, R. Corli & HOFFMAN, Louw C. (2010): The Contribution of Wildlife to Sustainable Natural Resource Utilisation in Namibia: A Review. In: *Sustainability*, 2(11), 3479-3499.
- VANHALA, Lisa, JOHANSSON, Angelica & BUTLER, Frances (2022): Deploying an Ethnographic Sensibility to Understand Climate Change Governance: Hanging Out, Around, In, and Back. In: *Global Environmental Politics*, 22(2), 180-193.
- VENTER, Roelie (2015): Impact of a hunting ban on commercial cattle farms in Namibia. Online at: <http://the-eis.com/elibrary/sites/default/files/downloads/literature/Impact%20of%20a%20hunting%20ban%20on%20commercial%20cattle%20farms%20in%20Namibia.pdf> (15.06.2024).
- WALEY, Paul (2000): What's a River without Fish? Symbol, Space and Ecosystem in the Waterways of Japan. In: PHILO, Chris & WILBERT, Chris (eds.): *Animal Spaces, Beastly Places. New Geographies of Human-Animal Relations*. New York: Routledge, 159-181.
- WALMSLEY, Ben (2018): Deep hanging out in the arts: an anthropological approach to capturing cultural value. In: *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 24(2), 272-291.
- WATERBERG HUNTING NAMIBIA (n.n.): Jagd & Farming. Online at: <https://www.waterberg-hunting.com/jagd-und-farming/> (15.06.2024).
- WEBER, David J. (1986): Turner, the Boltonians, and the Borderlands. In: *The American Historical Review*, 91(1), 66-81.
- WENZL, Christine, WERNER, Cosima, MOLITOR, Katharina, HORNING, Madlen, ROMINGER, Sarah & FALLER, Fabian (2019): Soziale Praktiken in der Forschungspraxis – empirisch forschen mit Schatzkis *site ontology*. In: SCHÄFER, Susann & EVERTS, Jonathan (eds.): *Handbuch Praktiken und Raum. Humangeographie nach dem Practice Turn*. Bielefeld: transcript, 341-360.
- WERLEN, Benno (1988): *Gesellschaft, Handlung und Raum. Grundlagen handlungstheoretischer Sozialgeographie*. Wiesbaden/Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.

- WERLEN, Benno (2002): Handlungsorientierte Sozialgeographie. In: *Geographie heute*, 23(200), 12-15.
- WESTPHAL, Wilfried (1984): *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien*. Munich: C. Bertelsmann.
- WHATMORE, Sarah (2002): *Hybrid Geographies: Natures, Culture, Spaces*. London: Sage.
- WHATMORE, Sarah (2014): Nature and human geography. In: CLOKE, Paul, CRANG, Philip & GOODWIN, Mark (eds.): *Introducing Human Geographies*. 3rd edition. London/ New York: Routledge, 152-162.
- WHATMORE, Sarah & THORNE, Lorraine (1998): Wild(er)ness: Reconfiguring the Geographies of Wildlife. In: *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 23(4), 435-454.
- WHATMORE, Sarah & THORNE, Lorraine (2000): Elephants on the Move: Spatial Formations of Wildlife Exchange. In: *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 18(2), 185-203.
- WILKINSON, Cai (2013): Ethnographic Methods. In: SHEPHERD, Laura J. (ed.): *Critical approaches to security. An introduction to theories and methods*. Milton Park/ New York: Routledge, 129-145.
- WITTGENSTEIN, Ludwig (1953): *Philosophische Untersuchungen*. In: *Werkausgabe Band 1*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 225-580.
- WITTGENSTEIN, Ludwig (1969): Über Gewißheit. In: *Werkausgabe Band 8*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 113-257.
- WORLD BANK GROUP (2021): Namibia. Current Climate > Climatology. In: *Climate Change Knowledge Portal. For Development Practitioners and Policy Makers*. Online at: <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/namibia/climate-data-historical> (15.06.2024).
- WORLD POPULATION REVIEW (2024): Namibia Population 2024. Online at: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/namibia-population> (15.06.2024).

- WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE [WWF] NAMIBIA (n.n.): Wildlife. Online at: <https://www.wwfnamibia.org/wildlife/#:~:text=Wildlife%20has%20a%20critical%20plpla,benefits%20the%20broader%2C%20national%20economy>. (15.06.2024).
- WRIGHT, Royston (2016): Economic benefits of hunting to Namibia. In: NAPHA (2016): Position Paper. The Importance of Hunting towards Conservation, 12-19. Online at: https://www0.sun.ac.za/awei/sites/default/files/Position%20Paper_0.pdf (15.06.2024).
- ZANETTE, Liana & SIH, Andy (2015): Meeting Reports. Gordon Research Conference on Predator–Prey Interactions: From Genes, to Ecosystems to Human Mental Health. In: Bulletin of the Ecological Society of America, 96(1), 165-173.
- ZIMMERER, Jürgen (2000): Deutsche Herrschaft über Afrikaner. Staatlicher Machtanspruch und Wirklichkeit im kolonialen Namibia. In: Europa – Übersee. Historische Studien, Vol. 10, Munster: LIT Verlag.

IV Appendix

IV.1 Landownership and land use in Namibia



IV.2 Categorisation of game species

Specially protected game	
Common name	Latin name
African wild dog	Lycaon
Black rhinoceros	Diceros bicomis
Black-faced impala	Aepyceros petersi
Burchell's zebra	Equus quagga burchellii
Elephant	Loxodonta africana
Giraffe	Giraffa camelopardalis
Hartmann's mountain zebra	Equus zebra hartmannae
Hippopotamus	Hippopotamus amphibius
Impala	Aepyceros melampus
Klipspringer	Oreotragus oreotragus
White rhinoceros	Ceratotherium simum

Protected game	
Common name	Latin name
Mammals	
Aardwolf	
Antbear	Orycteropus afer
Bat-eared fox	Otocyon megalotis
Blue wildebeest	Connochaetes taurinus
Bush baby	Galago senegalensis
Bushbuck	Tragelaphus scriptus
Cape hunting dog	Lycaon pictus
Cheetah	Acinonyx jubatus
Clawless otter	Aonyx capensis
Crocodile	Crocodylus niloticus
Dikdik	Madoqua kirki damarensis
Duiker	Sylvicapra grimmia
Eland	Taurotragus oryx
Hedgehog	Erinaceus frontalis
Honey badger	Mellivora capensis

Lechwe	Kobus leche
Leopard	Panthera pardus
Lion	Panthera Leo
Monitor	Veranus niloticus Veranus albigularis
Oribi	Ourebia ourebi
Puku	Kobus vardoni
Pythons	Python sebae Python anchietae
Red hartebeest	Alcelaphus buselaphus
Reedbuck	Redunca arundinum
Roan antelope	Hippotragus equinus
Sable antelope	Hippotragus niger
Scaly anteater	Manis temmincki
Sharps' s grysbok	Rhaphicerus sharpei
Silver jackal	Vulpes chama
Sitatunga	Tragelaphus spekei
Spotted-necked otter	Lutra maculicollis
Steenbok	Rhaphicerus campestris
Tortoises	Testudinidae
Tsessebe	Damaliscus lunatus
Waterbuck	Kobus ellipsiprymnus
Birds	
Bulbul	Pycnonotus nigricans Pycnonotus barbatus
Mousebirds	Colius colius Urocolius indicus
Pied Crow	Corvus albus
Redheaded Quelea	Quelea quelea
Sparrows	All Passer species
Weavers	All Ploceus species

Huntable game	
Common name	Latin name
Buffalo	Syncerus caffer
Bushpig	Potamochoerus porcus
Kudu	Tragelaphus strepsiceros
Oryx	Oryx gazella
Springbok	Antidorcas marsupialis
Warthog	Phacochoerus aethiopicus
Birds	
Burchell's sandgrouse	Pterocles burchelli
Cape teal	Anas capensis
Common quail	Coturnix coturnix
Crested francolin	Francolinus sephaena
Doublebanded sandgrouse	Pterocles bicinctus
Egyptian goose	Alopochen aegyptiacus
Guinea Fowl	Numida meleagris
Harlequin quail	Coturnix delagorguei
Hottentot teal	Anas hottentota
Kurrichane buttonquail	Turnix sylvatica
Laughing dove	Streptopelia senegalensis
Namaqua sandgrouse	Pterocles namaqua
Orange river francolin	Francolinus lelaillantoides
Redbilled francolin	Francolinus adspersis
Redbilled teal	Anas erythrorhyncha
Rock pigeon	Columba guinea
Swainson's francolin	Francolinus swainsonii
Turtle dove	Streptopelia capicola
White faced duck	Dendrocygna viduata

Source: REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA 1975: 78ff, own design 2024

IV.3 ART Measurement System

Method	Species	Measurements
1	Tragelaphus (kudu, nyala, bushbuck, sitatunga, bongo, addax)	(a) length from base to tip along spiral (b) circumference of base
2	Kobus, Redunca, Pelea, Damaliscus, Gazella, Aepyceros, Litocranus, Ammodorcas, Antidorcas (waterbuck, reedbuck, rhebuck, topi and related, impala, gerenuk, dibatag, springbok)	(a) length from base to tip along curve (b) circumference of base
3	Oryx, Hippotragus, Addax (oryx, roan, sable)	(a) length from base to tip along curve (b) circumference of base
4	Cephalophus, Sylvicapra, Neotragus, Nesotragus, Madoqua, Dorcatragus, Raphicerus, Ourebia, Oreotragus (duikers, pygmy antelope, dik dik, beira, steenbok, grysbok, oribi, klipspringer)	(a) length from base to tip (b) circumference of base
5	Loxodonta (elephant)	(a) weight of heavier tusk in kg
6	Panthera, Acinonyx, Hyaena, Crocuta (large cats and hyena)	(a) length of skull (b) width of skull
7	Phacochoeros, Potamochoeros, Hylochoeros (African wild pigs)	(a) length of longer tusk (b) circumference of thickest point
8	Alcelaphus (hartebeest)	(a) length from base to tip along curve (b) circumference of base
9	Taurotragus (eland)	(a) length from base to tip along spiral (b) circumference of base
10	Synceros (buffalo)	(a) length of both horns (b) breadth/width of boss
11	Connochaetes (wildebeest)	(a) length of both horns (b) breadth/width of base

Source: ERONGO VERZEICHNIS FOR AFRICAN GAME ANIMALS 2023: 10ff, own design 2024

IV.4 Guiding questions

Wilderness, wildlife and their places

“Wilderness“ is a rather broad topic. So I would be interested in your personal understanding of it means to you personally and what makes something “wild“ for you?

- You mentioned that aspect xyz is very important for your understanding of „wild“. Do you have any specific examples for that?

Relations towards conservation, tourism and hunting

In what relation do you stand with conservation, tourism and hunting? And how do you see the link to wildlife and wilderness?

- You said xyz. Could you please give some more details on this?

Practices of “hunting the wild”

Regarding the perspective on “the wild” you mentioned, what would you say are common things people do in relation to it?

- You were talking about xyz, could you give a bit more information on this?
- What would you say, plays an important role in doing this?

Effects of practicing “the wild”

As you mentioned, the ways of thinking and acting about/with “wilderness” can cause some controversial discussions. From your perspective, could you explain to me how this can affect people and practices around nature?

- You shared xyz as one effect. Do you have a specific example so I can get a better impression?

Do you have any further remarks/questions/perspectives you would like to add or highlight?

IV.5 Code handbook

Code name	Elements
Description	Different elements of configurations of “the wild” with top categories based on SHOVE et al.’s (2012) elements of practice.
Subcategories	• Materials ○ Wildlife ○ Landscape ○ Tools • Competences ○ Knowledge ○ Skills • Meanings ○ Emotions ○ Values ○ Wild & nature
Example	D: also meiner Meinung nach <u>nein</u> denn wenn ich da <u>so</u> schon rumgefummelt habe [räuspern] um das Tier nochmal zehn Zentimeter größer gezüchtet habe (.) und ich muss jetzt zu-futtern-fütter oder (.) ich muss dafür sorgen dass (.) dass das Tier äh was weiß ich ähm (4) fünfmal im Jahr entwurmt wird NW: ^L Mhm D: ^L sage ich mir das ist kein wildes Tier mehr weil ich muss es jedes Mal darten (.) NW: ^L Mhm D: ^L ich muss dafür sorgen dass es der Tierarzt ran kann oder äh was weiß ich die Nägel oder die Hörner geschnitten werden müssen um noch mehr und noch mehr und noch größer und noch besser (.) dann sage <u>ich</u> mir das ist ein domesticated animal (Elements/meanings/wild & nature)

Code name	Place
Description	Distinctions of physical place categories, where participants localised certain practices and imaginations of “the wild”.
Subcategories	• Sanctuaries • Communal conservancies • Private farmland • National parks • Other
Example	L: and the conservancy is a piece of land NW: Hmhm L: eh the people live on NW: Okay L: and these people come together and they agree (.) on that piece of land how they want to manage it with wildlife how they get along with wildlife NW: Okay yeah without fences L: without fences yah I mean it’s communal land and we don’t have fences (Place/communal conservancies)

Code name	Imaginations
Description	Closely connected to elements of meaning, this code encompasses the description of imaginations and expectations posed onto Namibia as well as conflicts and disruptions with “reality”.
Subcategories	• Western view • Motivations • Expectations
Example	D: aber äh ja die Raubkatzen jeder möchte nen <u>Leo</u> sehen Leoparden Leoparden (.) äh Löwe was hab ich jetzt gesagt Leopard Löwe ähm ja und jeder möchte nen afrikanischen Elefanten sehen (Imaginations/Western view)

Code name	Hunting practices
Description	Descriptions and stories of a variety of practices to hunt “the wild”
Subcategories	• Hunting • Trophy hunting • Game drives • Photography • Storytelling • Camping • Driving • Shooting • Tracking • Walking • Watching
Example	leopard hunt is one of the most boring things there are. N: Really? Why is that? [2] M: It’s two weeks. You’re driving around every day. Checking the meat. [...] M: They have meat somewhere and you’re checking the meat, you’re driving there, there, there, the hunters sit mmmmmh, all day the same road. Then you have to drag all the shit and the blood of the animal spread it everywhere so the leopard comes around, tomorrow morning, tomorrow afternoon. Then suddenly there is a-a-a- leopard on one of the baits and [.] they put up a little [.] thing, like a blind [.] eh you have these pop-up blinds, it’s a tent, it’s a camouflage tent, you put it up there. But then you cover it with some stuff and whatever and then [.] the two people are sitting [...] M: then [.] suddenly the leopard is there, you don’t even recognize it well. The light goes on, you shoot it [2] and then it’s dead or not dead. (Hunting practices/trophy hunting)

Code name	Context
Description	Background information that help to understand other elements and/or are very specific for Namibia.
Subcategories	• History • Characteristics • Rules & regulations • Code of ethics • Challenges
Example	In general, they will do everything possible to find the injured animal. However, daylight is a major limitation out in the bush. A search will end latest with dawn, otherwise it will become way too dangerous – and illegal. Other factors are the client himself. If he doesn't want to continue and is ready to take the consequences aka paying for not getting anything back, it's up to him. (Context/ rules & regulations)

Code name	Practitioners
Description	Used in cases where certain practitioners or groups of actors are specifically mentioned as main contributors to a certain practice or configuration of “the wild”.
Subcategories	• Tourists • Trophy hunting tourists • Professional hunters • Guides • Farmers • Others
Example	With skilled cuts, the farm workers now start to take off the blanket, making sure to be very precise especially in the area of the desired trophy, which is going to be a shoulder mount, and not leaving any meat on the inside of the skin. (Practitioners/staff members)