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Women's Views on Conservation-Based Income Generation and Women's Empowerment in Kwandu Conservancy in Caprivi, Namibia

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WOMEN'S VIEWS ON CONSERVATION-BASED INCOME

GENERATION AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN KWANDU

CONSERVANCY IN CAPRIVI, NAMIBIA

By

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Women's Views on Conservation-Based Income Generation and Women's Empowerment in Kwandu Conservancy in Caprivi, Namibia

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While advocates of Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) contend that this decentralized approach to natural resource management has higher potential for the distribution of conservation and social benefits throughout civil society than conventional protected area approaches, there is limited empirical research to confirm it, especially regarding goals and claims of gender empowerment. To assess the impact of CBNRM on women's empowerment, this research selected Kwandu Conservancy in Namibia's Caprivi Region for in-depth study, an area with a relatively long and nationally-praised experience with CBNRM. The research was organized around the following two questions: how do women residing in Kwandu Conservancy define empowerment; and how has women's empowerment changed as a result of CBNRM in Kwandu Conservancy? Given the range of CBNRM activities in the Conservancy, the research focused on the effects of income-generation activities, in part, because they have been emphasized in CBNRM as a mechanism for women's empowerment.

The iterative, ethnographic methodology included participant observation, document review, 20 interviews with key informants, and 49 in-depth interviews with women residents in Kwandu Conservancy varied by household wealth, age, ethnicity, education, marital status, Conservancy involvement, religion, and 5 other characteristics over the course of 6 months. Results show that women residents talk of a female ideal in their culture as having the following characteristics, and translated from their language as a "real woman": 1) able to meet material needs by earning cash income from locally-respected livelihood activities, 2) educated, 3) hard-working, 4) engaged in nurturing relationships with other people, and 5) performing culturally-defined roles as a wife and mother. Kwandu Conservancy provided enhanced income-generation opportunities through four activities: cash-paid employment of five to seven women annually; harvesting and sales of grass, reeds, and Devil's Claw (*Harpagophytum procumbens*); sale of locally-produced crafts; and collection of household dividends from the Conservancy. This represents limited economic opportunity for women in Kwandu Conservancy but mixed capacity to achieve their own, locally-defined female ideal of being a "real woman". While the Conservancy's economic activities provided women opportunity to gain new income, skills, public-speaking training, and awareness of gender norms and alternatives, opportunities were limited by existing and persisting male-bias, relatively low monetary returns from dividends and craft sales, and the low overall number of economic opportunities provided relative to the Conservancy's population size. The research concludes that efforts to improve women's empowerment need to be built on women's own definitions and goals in a particular context. They should also directly address barriers in gender-based roles and responsibilities, particularly regarding economic participation, household and community-level decision-making, and women's control over their bodies. Gender-based norms continue to place women in roles of subservience and dependency, increasing women's risks for experiencing gender-based violence.

Challenging cultural norms will be problematic in Kwandu Conservancy and likely in other CBNRM efforts because creating opportunities for women requires cultural and economic

change on the part of men, and is likely to create resistance from within the community as well as resentment against the conservation organization. It also begs the question as to who besides nature conservancies need to implement and reinforce empowerment programs.

Dedicated to the memory of my grandmothers,

Kathryn and Elizabeth,

who instilled a passion for stories and a commitment to education.

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List of Abbreviations

CBNRM: Community-Based Natural Resource Management

ICDP: Integrated conservation and development program

IRDNC: Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation

MCM: Management Committee Member

NACSO: Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organizations

WWF: World Wildlife Fund

Chapter 1   Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) and Women's Empowerment: An Introduction

International concern for threatened and endangered species has propelled the search for innovative approaches to conservation. Recognizing that historically marginalized and cash-strapped communities frequently inhabit species-rich areas, practitioners have increasingly infused development concerns into conservation endeavors. Such integrated conservation and development projects (ICDPs) exhibit a shift in conservation thinking from strict protectionism to a focus on community participation (Wainwright & Wehrmeyer 1998). ICDPs tend to make several claims that differentiate them from fortress-style protected areas. First, ICDPs claim to locate conservation at the local level, as opposed to the state level (Brown 2002). Second, ICDPs approach biodiversity protection through use of the market system, linking poorer communities to market-based benefits from biodiversity conservation (Büscher & Dressler 2012; Beilin 2010; Igoe & Brockington 2007; West 2006; Neumann 2005; Brown 2002; Young *et al*. 2001). Third, ICDPs claim to apply insights from non-equilibrium ecology, accepting that humans have influenced and continue to influence environmental change even in seemingly 'pristine' areas (Borrini-Feyerabend & Tarnowski 2005; Brown 2002). Consequently, ICDPs integrate human development interests into conservation efforts by offering market-based returns to communities in exchange for wildlife conservation. The cash incomes produced through increased market integration are believed to reduce communities' dependence on natural resources, facilitating nature conservation (Büscher & Dressler 2012).

ICDPs come in a variety of forms, but a segment of ICDPs in southern Africa have notably taken the form of Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). I focus this

dissertation on Namibia, where CBNRM has received accolades for linking conservation with human livelihoods. For example, at the time of writing, Namibia's CBNRM program had just been awarded the Markhor Award for Outstanding Conservation Performance (Felton 2012). With its worldwide reputation for conservation and development successes, Namibia's CBNRM program merits critical evaluation. In this dissertation, I tackle a particular aspect of CBNRM in Namibia by investigating how CBNRM affects women's empowerment. Specifically, I address three questions: 1) How have women's awareness of gender-based subordination and alternatives have changed as a result of CBNRM; 2) How have women's opportunities to exercise choice changes as a result of CBNRM?; and 3) How do women define empowerment? In this dissertation, the first installment of my research-based manuscripts, I focus specifically on CBNRM's income-generation activities and their effects on women's empowerment.

Before describing how I derived my research questions (addressed in Chapter 2), I provide some background on CBNRM and describe the need for empowerment research. I begin this chapter by providing a description of CBNRM's emergence in southern Africa and situating CBNRM within the broader IDCP approach to conservation and development. I then introduce some of the criticism leveled against the broader IDCP approach to conservation and development, and within it the CBNRM approach. With a critical understanding of the broader ICDP paradigm, I then describe the two research problems from which I derived the focus of my dissertation. Next, I describe the purpose of my research and explain why I chose to focus on CBNRM's income-generation activities. I then present the questions that guided my literature review, and I provide a description of my study site. Finally, I provide a brief overview of the findings that I present in this dissertation.

1.1 Creation of CBNRM programs in southern Africa

The creation of CBNRM and other formulations of ICDPs in southern Africa can be understood as part of the process of post-Independence transformation, an ongoing response to colonial-era land expropriation. Two global forces converged with the post-Independence drive to restore rights to indigenous populations in southern Africa (Igoe 2004). The collapse of the Soviet Union led to the two global imperatives of democratization and free market capitalism, forces to which conservationists have responded by combining conservation with development (Igoe 2004).

The post-Soviet era has been characterized by a neoliberal emphasis on structural adjustment, which emphasizes deregulation, privatization, and reduction of state government expenditures, including reduced state funding of social and welfare programs (eg. Neumann 2005; Young *et al.* 2001). Consequently, CBNRM and other ICDPs emerged in a gap created by the withdrawal of state funding.

Zimbabwe's Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE), the first program of its kind in southern Africa, began in 1988 and fuelled the proliferation of similar style ICDPs in Namibia, Botswana, Mozambique, Zambia, Malawi, and South Africa in the following decades (Murphree 2005; Nhantumbo et al. 2003).CAMPFIRE devolved wildlife use rights to specified villages in communal areas and gave residents wildlife use rights comparable to (historically white) private landowner rights (Fortmann *et al.*2001). CAMPFIRE provided benefits to local communities that the central government was no longer able to provide under the structural adjustment changes imposed from the early 1980s, including food and social services, infrastructure, wages, and roads (Neumann 2005).

Namibia's Community-Based Natural Resource Management program, the focus of my dissertation, followed CAMPFIRE's example in 1996, in the wake of Namibia's independence from apartheid South Africa. Like CAMPFIRE, CBNRM is characterized by the involvement of local residents in natural resources decision-making and a focus on local development through conservation (Adams & Hulme 2001b; Hulme and Murphree 2001b). The CBNRM approach to conservation devolves property rights to rural people and reduces incentives for behaviors that detract from conservation goals (Boudreaux & Nelson 2011, Jones & Weaver 2009; Scanlon & Kull 2009), and it increases social and economic benefits to local populations (Bandyopadhyay 2009; Scanlon and Kull 2009). So while CBNRM has led to increased wildlife numbers in some contexts (Jacobsohn and Owen-Smith 2003; Jones & Weaver 2009), it has also contributed to poverty reduction and increased community access to natural resources (Hulme and Murphree 2001a).

While Namibia's CBNRM program is clearly part of wider ICDP ideology, the program has distinguishing characteristics. Notably, Namibia's CBNRM program differs from some other arrangements in its economic basis in wildlife and tourism, its devolution of wildlife use rights but not land rights to communities, and the authorization for local communities to distribute benefits (Nhantumbo et al. 2003).

1.2   Responses to the assumptions that underpin CBNRM and other ICDPs

Given the global emphasis on CBNRM as a tool for meeting both conservation and development needs, a great many hopes and efforts are at stake. With so much time and money invested in CBNRM and other ICDPs, it is imperative to critically evaluate the core tenets

underlying ICDPs in general, before beginning a more focused critique of CBNRM and Namibia's program in particular. In evaluating specific effects of Namibia's CBNRM program, I also hope to discuss its broader implications for ICDP programs. Consequently, I dedicate this section to a brief discussion of some of the critique directed at the ICDP paradigm. I then revisit and evaluate the ICDP paradigm at the conclusion of this dissertation.

The newfound role of conservation as a form of governance, in southern Africa and elsewhere, has prompted a wave of scholarly critique, epitomized by Paige West's (2006) book, Conservation is Our Government Now. West (2006) and other scholars (eg. Büscher et al. 2012; Beilin 2010; Peterson *et* al. 2010; Young *et al*. 2001) have questioned the operating assumption that conservation goals mesh with the development goals, values, and worldviews of rural communities. The dominant discourse of sustainable development is shaped significantly by the World Bank, portraying economic growth as compatible with long-term resource utilization (Young *et al*. 2001). This discourse links the ideology of neoliberalism with conservation, becoming, as is claimed by Büscher & Dressler (2012:369), "...a key instrument by which market-based governance can be further driven into the rural frontiers of the world". However commodification, endorsement of private property rights, and a rolling back of state functions make neoliberalism a questionable partner for both conservation and community interests (Büscher et al. 2012; McCarthy & Prudham 2004).

Compatibility between sustainability/conservation and development is questionable since they are perceived as competing interests. Some scholars who question the merging of conservation and development contend that ICDP proponents emphasize conservation interests at the expense of development (eg. West 2006), while ironically, scholars calling for a

resurgence of strict protectionism make the opposite argument (see Borrini-Feyerabend & Tarnowski 2005; Wilshusen *et al*. 2002), contending that ICDPs emphasize development at the expense of biodiversity.

Critics claim that ICDP programs operate from the assumption that conservation goals are in line with the development and livelihood goals of rural communities, as well as their values and the general ways in which they view the world. Yet conservationists may have very different worldviews, ideas, and expectations of development than the communities in which they work (Beilin 2010; West 2006). For example, the sustainable development discourse advocates a particular type of development, one in which satisfaction is "…derived from the consumption of food, clothing, housing and experiences obtained with money through 'the market'" (Young *et* al. 2001:303). Young *et al.* (2001) revealed that in contrast to ICDP visions of development, the community in their study area valued smaller-scale projects and socio-ecological sustainability over large-scale, money-oriented environment and development plans.

In working with the Gimi of Papua New Guinea, West (2006) witnessed other types of contradictions between ICDP and target community goals. Conservation goals that required intensified regulations of Gimi forest activities contradicted with the hope held by some Gimi for increased access to resources (West 2006). West (2006) relates that some Gimi expressed anger over giving up resources in exchange for a desired form of development that they did not see coming to fruition.

Some conservation conflicts are attributable to the different ways that people see the world. Western ideas about nature, its inherent value and appropriate use fundamentally conflict with values of people with whom conservation organizations work (Peterson *et* al.

2010; West 2006). West (2006:xvi) noted that conservationists saw the world "…through a lens that imagines that things can be lost and destroyed, and that they can go away forever," while older Gimi did not believe in the loss of something, but rather in its changing form (West 2006:xvi). In this and other ways, neoliberal conservation can fundamentally alter people's relationships with nature (Büscher & Dressler 2012). Consequently, Peterson *et al.* (2010:8) have called for conservationists to approach their work through "cultural lenses" in order to not overlook the values and worldviews of target communities.

In line with the broader call for contextualizing ICDP efforts, scholars have cautioned that CBNRM has become a "privileged solution", accepted by its proponents as the right approach to conservation, in such a way that debate has been stifled about its appropriateness for all contexts (Adams & Hulme 2001a:18). While I acknowledge that some applications of CBNRM have been successful, and that it is overall a commendable endeavor, its limitations and failures also deserve attention, especially from the perspectives of individual residents in CBNRM areas, so that CBNRM can be improved to better meet its inherent conservation and sustainable development goals.

1.3 Research Problem 1: Insufficient information on the intra-community effects of CBNRM

In this dissertation, I focus on a particular criticism of Community-Based Natural Resource Management: the assertion that not enough attention has been given to CBNRM's effects on different sectors within communities, especially women. I show, in this section, that neglect of women's interests and priorities may exacerbate their marginalization. Marginalization of women may in turn decrease social resilience to shocks and stresses.

There is a common, yet erroneous, assumption that communities are identifiable and discrete and that they are small spatial units with homogeneous social structure and shared norms (Robbins 2004; Agrawal & Gibson 1999). As a result, conservation literature has increasingly emphasized the heterogeneous and dynamic nature of communities (eg. Brosius & Russell 2003; Kull 2002; Barrow & Murphree 2001; Jones & Murphree 2001; Agrawal & Gibson 1999; Agarwal 1997a; Belsky 1999; Nelson & Wright 1995). Conservationists need to pay attention to intra-community differences, power differentials, and the relationships that intracommunity groups have with institutions and external actors (Agrawal & Gibson 1999; Belsky 1999). Communities are comprised of competing interest groups (Igoe 2004) and exhibit internal differences influenced by age, race, gender, and ethnicity. Special attention should be given to household-scale divisions of labor and inequalities based on age and gender (Blaikie 1985). Consequently, community is best viewed "…as a political arena, grounded in a particular history and constituted through multiple scales and networks of social relations entailing contexts of unequal power" (Belsky 1999:645).

With a realization that communities are heterogeneous, it should come as no surprise that not every community member is empowered equally by CBNRM. Community-Based Natural Resource Management programs run the risk of appropriation by elites in a community (McDermott 2009; Hulme & Murphree 2001a; Young et al. 2001; Kellert et al. 2000; Belsky 1999; Brosius et al. 1998). People who are already in positions of power, whether they are traditional leaders, established business owners, or local officials, can use their existing power to capture CBNRM benefits (Hulme & Murphree 2001a; Belsky 1999). Men, as I show in the following sections, may experience greater benefits than women (eg. Kellert et al. 2000;

Sullivan 2000). Attention to power relationships in a community can help planners prevent CBNRM appropriation by elites and improve the distribution of benefits to more vulnerable community members, instead of primarily benefitting households and individuals who already have significant access to resources and income opportunities (Belsky 1999).

1.4 Research problem 2: More empirical evidence is needed to evaluate claims of empowerment and the concept's application in different contexts

Claims that Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) programs "empower" communities have not been empirically supported in regards to women in particular. This is of concern because the term "empowerment" may mask an unequal distribution of conservation costs and benefits that may serve to further subordinate women. As a result, there is a need to better understand the term "women's empowerment" so that program claims can be critically and empirically evaluated.

The term empowerment, like sustainable development, is rarely defined yet widely used by agencies with divergent aims. Parpart et al. (2002:3) states that "empowerment has… become a 'motherhood' term, comfortable and unquestionable, something very different institutions and practices seem to be able to agree on." Raju (2006:291) calls empowerment a "much abused word", and Cornish (2006:301-2) claims it "suffer(s) from insufficient theoretical articulation". The term's ambiguity actually contributes to its appeal (Sharp et al. 2003). So while numerous development projects claim to empower women, few define their approach to empowerment and fewer yet critically assess whether their project has empowering results.

Of particular interest is whether and how empowerment has been defined in a way that makes it relevant and adaptable to very different contexts. The contextual nature of empowerment has been emphasized by empowerment theorists (eg. Agot 2008; Jewell 2007; Kantor 2005; Sharp et al. 2003; Kabeer 1999; Carr et al. 1996). Women's empowerment researchers have experienced conflicts between their ideas of empowerment and ideas held by women in the field (eg. Jewell 2007). For example, women in many parts of the world view themselves not as autonomous individuals, but as part of a greater collective (Agot 2008; Jewell 2007). Agot (2008), for example, found that amongst Luo widows in Kenya, women who defined themselves as 'empowered' defined their status primarily in terms of having children, shelter, land, cattle, children, and access to health care. Agot (2008:299) also found that among Luo widows, "…responsibility to one's community often takes precedence over duty to self, such that empowerment discourse makes sense only if it is crafted in response to community as well as individual needs." Women in many parts of Africa are expected to provide for their households' material needs, refuting commonly-held Western beliefs about women's role in the household (Boserup 1970). Many women view themselves primarily as family or community members, subordinating their own interests to group goals (Agot 2008). Similarly, Sharp et al.'s (2003) study of Bedouin women suggests that some women view empowerment as emerging from cultural gender roles.

Identification as part of a collective rather than an autonomous individual may be linked to contexts where food shortages are prevalent. The fear of food shortages has contributed to what James Scott has termed a "subsistence ethic" in societies around the world. He explains that societies with a subsistence ethic are ones in which "...all are entitled to a living out of the

resources within the village, and that living is attained often at the cost of a loss of status and autonomy" (Scott 1976:5). In short, individuals in societies with food shortages may trade their status and autonomy for a minimized risk of starvation. They may be willing to sacrifice production and profits to patrons who offer subsistence security. This may mean that women may be willing to endure exploitive relationships, whether with marital partners or community members, when they believe the relationships will offer them a subsistence guarantee. Their path to empowerment, and their very definition of empowerment, may therefore differ considerably from women who live in places with a reliable food supply.

At the same time, the idea that empowerment is context-specific need not be taken to mean that people from outside a community have no contribution to make, or conversely, that women who are blinded by internalized patriarchal messages are empowered. Nonetheless, it is important to recognize the realities of women in a given cultural context and to evaluate those realities based on a close look at power relations in the context of women's lives.

1.5 Purpose of the research and explanation of focus

Given the dual problems of 1) insufficient research on intra-community effects of CBNRM, and 2) insufficient evaluation of empowerment claims, I aimed to empirically assess how Namibia's CBNRM program affected women's empowerment in Kwandu Conservancy. Communal conservancies are "…self-selecting social units or communities of people that choose to work together and become registered with the Ministry of Environment & Tourism" (NACSO 2008:11). Some of the other requirements for conservancy establishment include: clearly defined and undisputed boundaries, a defined membership, a legally recognized

constitution, an elected body of representatives, and a plan for equitable benefits distribution to members (Jones & Weaver 2009). Registered conservancies gain the right to conditionally use, consume, and sell game, as well as enter into tourism ventures (NACSO 2008). I describe conservancy origins in more detail in section 2.1.

Kwandu Conservancy is located in the Caprivi Region, an area that extends from the northeast tip of Namibia to the northwest tip of Zimbabwe, bordering Angola and Zambia to the north and Botswana to the south. I limited my research scope to a single conservancy in order to elicit richer, more nuanced descriptions of women's experiences with CBNRM. The narrow scope produced a greater depth of insight into the daily lives and viewpoints of particularly vulnerable community members who have had relatively little representation in conservation literature. By focusing on women in Namibia's CBNRM program, I assessed how a particular CBNRM program affects sub-sectors (women conservancy members from a range of socio-economic levels, ages, and ethnicities) of a particular conservancy.

In order to write a more focused and detailed dissertation, I further limited my discussion to assessing the effects of income-generation activities on women's empowerment, since income-generation activities have been emphasized as a mechanism for women's empowerment (eg. NACSO 2010). There are several reasons I chose to write my dissertation about this particular aspect of CBNRM rather than other important processes that arose from my collection and analysis of data, processes that include human-wildlife conflict and changes in decision-making processes. First, I wanted to prioritize women's expressed wants, needs, and values, which I describe in Chapter 5. I show that women in Kwandu Conservancy clearly expressed a need to access cash income by participating in 'respectable' livelihood activities.

Second, out of the five major wants, needs, and values that emerged from the data (see Chapter 5), I chose to emphasize the convergence of interests between CBNRM partners and female respondents. Both groups, as will be shown throughout the dissertation, emphasized the importance of women being able to expand their access income (see also section 2.2). Third, Kabeer (1999:435) makes the point that "advocacy on behalf of women which builds on claimed synergies between feminist goals and official development priorities has made greater inroads into the mainstream development agenda than advocacy which argues for these goals on intrinsic grounds" (Kabeer 1999: 435). For this reason, I begin my (foreseeable) multi-publication discussion of women's empowerment by building upon a synergy between women's expressed aims and CBNRM's emphasis on promoting income-generation opportunities. Fourth, I believe that rural women's voices should be added to the discussion about conservation-linked income, particularly their perspectives about how CBNRM-derived income opportunities (and/or lack thereof) have affected their lives and the meanings to which they ascribe those activities. Their voices are particularly important given the intense criticism aimed at ICDPs' emphasis on linking conservation with income-generation and the market economy (eg. Büscher & Dressler 2012; Büscher et al. 2012). Finally, in studying Namibia's CBNRM program through the lens of CBNRM's approach to empowerment, I am posing it as a real possibility that CBNRM partners care about women's empowerment and that claims to empower are more than a way to secure international donor funding for conservation. From this perspective, I highlight and evaluate the most important aspects of CBNRM and economic participation to address their empowerment potential.

In focusing on economic participation as a possible means to empower, I do not suggest that my emphasis is solely on the impacts of cash on women. Income-generation, as will be shown, is not only about cash, but about multiple types of opportunities that flow from the act of generating income. I also do not want to suggest that a focus on empowerment through participation in income-generation activities is without peril. I acknowledge the dangers of neoliberal ideology and market integration (see section 2.4.1.3), while still taking seriously women's expressed needs for cash. Consequently, I conclude this dissertation by critically reflecting on problems and possibilities of using CBNRM and economic participation as a means to promote women's empowerment.

1.6 Guiding questions

My research was guided by a literature review that addressed seven questions: 1) How does CBNRM affect the distribution of benefits and conservation decision-making processes, according to CBNRM policy documents and conservation literature?; 2) What claims to CBNRM proponents make about providing income-generation opportunities? 3) How are women differentiated from men in gender and development literature?; 4) What are the gendered impacts of CBNRM and other ICDPs on property rights and resource responsibilities, and how do ICDPs affect social resilience? 5) What does the literature suggest are the gendered roles of men and women in the particular context of Kwandu Conservancy?; 6) How is empowerment conceptualized in the literature? ; and 7) How, according to gender and development literature, does women's participation in economic activities affect their empowerment?

1.7 Site description

Kwandu Conservancy is nested in the Caprivi Region of Namibia in southern Africa. Namibia is a republic, with universal voting rights for citizens ages 18 and over (CIA 2012). It won independence from the South African administered apartheid system in 1990 (CIA 2012). Namibia has a population on 2.3 million (The World Bank 2012). With US$ 4,700 per capita GNI, Namibia ranks 132 out of 227 countries in the world (CIA 2012; The World Bank Group 2012). However, its regionally high GDP disguises a highly unequal income distribution, among the highest income disparity in the world (CBS 2008). Over 41% of Namibia's population is ranked as poor or severely poor (CBS 2008).

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP 2011) ranks Namibia 120th in the world for human development. Spread of diseases is a major source of vulnerability in Namibia. Risk of infectious diseases is high, with a prevalence of malaria, bacterial diarrhea, hepatitis A, typhoid fever, and schistosomiasis (CIA 2012). The country ranks seventh in the world for adult HIV infection, with an estimated 13.1% of adults are infected with HIV (CIA 2012). Malnutrition affects 17% of children under the ages of 5, and 18% of the total population is undernourished (UNICEF 2003; The World Bank 2012). Namibia's population is currently declining, with a growth rate of .817% per year, and a life expectancy of 62.5 years (CIA 2012; UNDP 2011).

1.7.1.1 Caprivi Region

Located in the northeast Namibian corner between Angola and Botswana and east of the Kwando River, the Caprivi has a population of about 90,000 (NPC 2012). Katima Mulilo is the largest town in the Caprivi, with a population of over 28,000 urban inhabitants and over

16,000 rural inhabitants (NPC 2012). Chieftaincies in the Caprivi include the Mafwe, Masubia, Mayeyi, and BaMashi (Kangumu 2011). Barakwena (or San) and Mbukushu ethnic groups also inhabit the region (Kangumu 2011). Traditional authorities in the Caprivi still exercise extensive power over daily life and the administration of justice (see section 2.5). Women comprise 51% of the Caprivi's population (NPC 2012).

The Caprivi is a post-conflict area. The northernmost provinces of Namibia, including the Caprivi, became the principal war zone for the Namibian Independence War that lasted from 1966 - 1990 (Preston 1997). The South African National Defense Force (SADF), aligned with the Angolan Uniao Nactional para a Independencia Total de Angola (UNITA) and others fought a guerrilla war against the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) and other liberation forces. While the Caprivi entered the cash economy as early as 1905 with the imposition of the hut tax (Fisch 2003; Clarence-Smith 1979), a major impact of the conflict was that wage labor became "firmly entrenched" when the defense force and government sector began wide-scale employment in the 1970s (Tvedten 2002:424). The conflict also fuelled divisions between the Caprivi region and Windhoek, divisions most evident in the failed secession attempt in 1999 in the Caprivi (Kangumu 2011; Taylor 2008; Tvedten 2002). Due to its remote location and recent armed conflict, the area was uninviting to tourists until the early part of the new millennium when the leader of UNITA was assassinated (Tvedten 2002). The Caprivi's isolation has contributed to the powerful role of traditional authorities who oversee customary law administration and cultural matters (Thomas 2007).

Poverty affects both men and women in the Caprivi. In the Caprivi, 12.9% of the population can only access a non-improved drinking water source (MOHSS 2008). The Caprivi has the largest percentage (48.8%) of people in the lowest wealth quintile in Namibia (MOHSS 2008). In the Caprivi region, 41.8% of women and 32.4% of men had not been employed in the 12 months preceding a recent survey (MOHSS 2008). Women who were employed were primarily involved with agriculture (48.4%) or sales and services (34.8%) (MOHSS 2008). Men who were employed were primarily involved in agriculture (52.4%) or skilled manual labor (15.4%) (MOHSS 2008).

The Caprivi region hosts one of the country's first four conservancies, with Salambala Conservancy registered in June, 1998 (NACSO 2010). As of December 2012, the Caprivi region contained a total of 13 conservancies out of the country total of 77 (NACSO 2012a). The area also includes two nationally protected areas and six community forests, and it is an integral part of the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area.

1.7.1.2 Kwandu Conservancy

Located in the Kongola Constituency, Kwandu Conservancy borders the Kwando River and Bwabwata National Park to the east, Zambia's Sioma National Park to the north, a Namibian state forest to the west, and the Trans-Caprivi Highway to the south. Kwandu was among the first nine conservancies registered in the country, receiving official recognition in 1999 (NACSO 2008). It has a population of approximately 4300 and an area of 190 km² (NACSO 2008), giving it a population density of 22.6 people per km². Wildlife species in Kwandu Conservancy include elephant, lion, leopard, roan, reedbuck, kudu, duiker, crocodile, bushbuck,

tsessebe, warthog, bush pig, hippopotamus, and sitatunga (NACSO 2010). Annual rainfall averages 600 mm (NACSO 2010).

The primary household income sources in the Caprivi are wage-work (32.5% of households), subsistence farming (17.8%), business (17.0%), pensions (12.9%), and remittances (10.4%) (CBS 2006). However, subsistence farming likely has greater importance in Kwandu than the Caprivi averages would suggest. Formal employment opportunities are scarce in the Kwandu area, so most people must pursue formal employment in Katima Mulilo or more distant urban centers. Alternative cash income sources in Kwandu include informal labor like agricultural work, operating a small business like a cuca shop and/or shibeen, and social cash transfers. Kwandu residents grow maize, sorghum, millet, beans, and pumpkins, as well as other crops for personal consumption and sale. Artisanal fishing, gathering wild fruits and vegetables, and collecting forest products also contribute to livelihoods in Kwandu Conservancy.

1.7.1.2.1 Points of comparison between Kwandu Conservancy and other conservancies

While each conservancy has a unique constitution that distinguishes its modes of benefit distribution and decision-making from other conservancies, Kwandu Conservancy, like all Namibian conservancies, has had to meet the fundamental requirements for recognition, as described in section 1.5. It is consequently administered under the same rules and basic assumptions that govern all of the country's conservancies. Like many conservancies, Kwandu derives a large portion of its income from trophy hunting revenue (see section 2.9). However, Kwandu Conservancy has several characteristics that distinguish it from some of the other

conservancies in Namibia. As I show in the following paragraphs, Kwandu Conservancy has

relatively high levels of human-wildlife conflict, lacks a lodge from which to generate revenue,

exhibited early leadership in the employment of women, and is located in a region that has

experienced relatively recent conflict and a secession attempt.

Kwandu Conservancy's human-wildlife conflict levels serve as an important point of

comparison with other areas. Among Namibia's conservancies, Kwandu has the highest levels

of recorded wildlife-induced crop damage and the second-highest level of recorded wildlife

attacks on people (Brown 2011). In a comparison of the 29 conservancies supported by the

Millenium Challenge Account, Kwandu had: a) the highest total incidents of wildlife-induced

crop damage between 2006 and 2010; b) the most incidents per 1,000 km²; and c) the most

incidents per 1,000 people (Brown 2011). Between 2003 and 2010, Kwandu averaged 517

reported incidents of wildlife-induced crop damage per year (based on Event Book data

provided WWF). One estimate shows that, on average, Kwandu Conservancy suffers N\$

193,800 in wildlife-induced crop damage each year.

Between 2003 and 2010, there were a total of 19 reported wildlife attacks on people in

Kwandu (based on Event Book data provided WWF). Kwandu also experiences wildlife damage

to livestock. Between 2003 and 2010, Kwandu Conservancy had 21 reported incidents of

livestock predation per year (based on Event Book data provided WWF). Elephants, pigs,

hippopotami, antelope, and baboons (in that order) cause the greatest number of reported

human-wildlife conflicts in Kwandu (based on Event Book data provided WWF). Among the

study of 29 conservancies, Kwandu ranked second worst in terms of benefit to wildlife-cost

ratios (Brown 2011). The relatively high levels human-wildlife conflict might be attributed, in part, to Kwandu Conservancy's location next to two national parks, residents' dependence on agriculture, and the area's population density.

Another characteristic that distinguishes Kwandu Conservancy is that it lacks a lodge from which to generate income. While not all conservancies have a lodge or resort, the conservancies that do have a lodge have a source of revenue and employment that the other conservancies lack.

Kwandu is also distinguished by its early involvement of women in traditionally male jobs. In 2006, Kwandu Conservancy hired the nation's first female conservancy Manager, Coedilia Muyoba, and the region's first female Game Guard, Peris Mbami (Baker 2006). It is not clear why Kwandu exhibited such leadership in hiring women, but its place as one of the initial four conservancies in the country likely gave it more time to adopt new initiatives and ways of thinking about employment (NACSO 2008). Additionally, Kwandu Conservancy, like conservancies in the Caprivi and in the Kunene regions, has also been supported by consultations with IRDNC staff (Jacobsohn & Owen-Smith 2003), possibly giving Kwandu more exposure to alternative ways of thinking about women's roles in CBNRM.

Kwandu also differs from other Namibian conservancies because the region has had a relatively recent history of armed conflict and a subsequent secession attempt. The area was part of the front during the Namibian War of Independence. A South African Defense Force (SADF) military base was located in present-day Kwandu Conservancy (personal communication with a Kwandu resident), and Fort Doppies, another SADF base, was located just to the west in

present-day Bwabwata National Park. Scholarly literature on conflict in the immediate Kwandu area are notably lacking, but several accounts point to a massacre in Singalamwe in 1968 that led to civilian deaths, arrests, and a forced flight of hundreds, if not thousands, of residents to Zambia (see Kangumu 2011). Conversations with residents confirm that the conflict forced people to temporarily relocate to Zambia.

Finally, Kwandu's location in the Caprivi distinguishes from conservancies outside the region in another way. In 1999, "separatist rebels" attempted to secede from Namibia and destabilized the area (Kangumu 2011:237). The attempt was fuelled by long-brewing notions of a 'Caprivian' identity that stemmed from years of political, social, cultural, and economic isolation from the rest of present-day Namibia during administration by South West Africa (Kangumu 2011). Some have suggested that the withdrawal of the South African Defense Force after the 1980s, and with it a withdrawal of their support for equipment, personnel, and infrastructure, left inhabitants feeling that their development needs were neglected by the new Namibian government (eg. Kangumu 2011).

1.8 Research questions and overview of the dissertation

In aiming to assess how CBNRM has affected women's empowerment in Kwandu Conservancy, a focused on three research questions. First, I assessed how women's awareness of gender-based subordination and alternatives had changed as a result of CBNRM in Kwandu Conservancy. Second, I assessed how women's opportunities to exercise choice had changed as a result of CBNRM in Kwandu Conservancy. Third, I assessed how women in Kwandu Conservancy defined empowerment. As I will show in the following chapter, empowerment is

the movement from oppression to liberation, a process whereby a person's awareness of gendered power relations and alternative arrangements, plus an ability to exercise choice (power) are enhanced. Therefore the first two questions were directed at assessing changes in women's empowerment. The third question tackles the question of defining empowerment in a way that is meaningful across cultures, a need discussed in section 1.4.

The literature review comprises Chapter 2 of this text. In Chapter 3, I describe the research framework I employed in designing the study. In Chapter 4, I discuss the methodology and methods I employed in the case study, and I provide a description of the context in the case study and discuss its generalizability. In Chapters 5 – 9, I present the results of the study, with an emphasis on a) women's stated wants, needs, and values, b) the constraints that can impede women from obtaining their wants, needs, and values, and c) the impacts of Kwandu Conservancy's income-generation activities on women's constraints. I conclude the dissertation in Chapter 10 with a discussion of women's empowerment, constraints, and Conservancy impacts in relation to theory and claims about CBNRM.

I show that women have a shared, but contested, set of wants, needs and values that are embodied in the social construct of a "real woman". In particular, "real women" were identified as 1) able to meet material needs by earning cash income from socially-respected livelihood activities, 2) educated, 3) hard-working, 4) engaged in nurturing relationships with other people, and 5) performing culturally-defined roles as a wife and mother. Women described a broad set of pre-existing constraints to becoming a "real woman". When the Conservancy's income-generation activities were evaluated based on their impacts on women's constraints, it was revealed that women have had different experiences, with effects ranging

from positive to negative. Most women were prevented from participating in the more lucrative income-generation activities by pre-existing constraints like gender-based norms. When women did participate in Conservancy activities, they faced mixed results. Conservancy employment offered the most direct income and secondary benefits, while natural resources harvesting and sales, craft sales, and dividend collection offered fewer opportunities for empowerment. However, a limited supply of employment opportunities, male-biased employment practices, and educational requirements meant that only a small fraction of women could participate in Conservancy employment. Ultimately, my findings provide a more nuanced perspective to criticisms aimed at the broader ICDP approach and suggest ways that CBNRM partners can avoid cultural myopia.

Chapter 2   Community-Based Natural Resource Management, Gender, and Empowerment: A Literature Review

In this chapter, I present my analytical framework, explain how I derived my research questions, and frame the results discussed in the latter part of the dissertation. I have built my working framework and analysis on the following contributions of existing research. First, CBNRM policy documents and conservation literature suggest that CBNRM enhances both benefit distribution and conservation decision-making on behalf of rural communities. Second, CBNRM advocates specifically claim that CBNRM provides income-generation opportunities to communities. Third, gender and development literature show that gender is socially constructed, with women comprising a heterogeneous group of people who tend to have reduced levels of power in relation to men. While relations between men and women are context-dependent, with gender roles influenced by local culture, women possess the ability to influence their position in society. Fourth, gender and development literature show that efforts directed at sustainable development and/or women's empowerment must consider and address gendered property rights and responsibilities, as well as potential points of gender-based exclusion in CBNRM. Neglect of these intra-community differences can harm trust and cooperation between people, undermining social resilience. Fifth, the relatively scarce literature on the gender roles and responsibilities of men and women in the Caprivi suggests that women in the Caprivi generally have less access to resources than men and have reduced decision-making power. Sixth, my review of the literature suggests that empowerment be viewed as the movement from oppression to liberation, a process whereby a person's awareness of gendered power relations and alternative arrangements, plus an ability to

exercise choice (power) are enhanced. The definition is based on the writings of Paolo Freire,

Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Linda Mayoux, Naila Kabeer, and others. Before discussing my

empowerment framework, I acknowledge that competing, contextually-based notions of

empowerment emanate from differing social positions. Seventh, empowerment and

development literature show that economic participation can have both empowering and

disempowering affects on women, depending on their position in society and the character of

work in which they are involved.

2.1   Claims about CBNRM

Claims of enhanced benefits distribution and decision-making through Namibia's

CBNRM program began taking root in 1982, when Garth Owen-Smith, working for a Namibian-

based non-profit organization, partnered with a government conservationist and indigenous

leaders in the Kunene region to hire community game guards to combat poaching (Jacobsohn &

Owen-Smith 2003; Jones 2001). Community game guards reported to traditional authorities

who could choose to hand over serious poaching incidents to the government (Jones 2001). In

the mid-1980s, Owen-Smith partnered with anthropologist Margaret Jacobsohn to form The

Puros Project in response to perceived social disruption from tourism in the Kunene region

(Jones 2001). The Puros Project collected money from two safari companies in the region and

redistributed the money to community members, reducing begging, intercommunity

competition, and migration into tourist areas (Jones 2001). Owen-Smith and Jacobsohn

eventually formed a non-governmental organization called Integrated Rural Development and

Nature Conservation (IRDNC) in support of the now countrywide game guard program (Jones

2001). Perceiving a gap in women's opportunities, a gap that stemmed from game guarding being a traditionally male-dominated activity, the IRDNC founders created Community Resource Monitor (CRM) positions in 1994 (Jacobsohn and Owen-Smith 2003). CRM positions were specifically designed to target women with direct employment opportunities (Jacobsohn and Owen-Smith 2003).

Eventually, reduced poaching helped pave the way for CBNRM legislation in 1996 (Jones 2001; Jones & Murphree 2001). The Nature Conservation Amendment Act of 1996 transferred wildlife ownership from the state to approved communal conservancies (Jones & Murphree 2001). Namibia's first conservancy was established in February, 1998 (NACSO 2010). At the time of writing, Namibia's system had grown to 77 registered conservancies (NACSO 2012a). Over 60% of Namibia's CBNRM programmatic benefits are derived from joint ventures and trophy hunting, with additional income derived from community campsites, harvest of natural plant products, conservation farming, and other activities (WWF 2008). In 2007, conservancy incomes and benefits totaled N$ 39,127,982 in Namibia as a whole, with individual conservancies receiving a low of N$ 9,730 in income and benefits to a high of N$ 2,354,860 (WWF 2008)[1].

CBNRM policy documents and conservation literature claim that CBNRM has enhanced conservation benefit distribution by 1) making game meat available to conservancy members (Bandyopadhyay 2009; Scanlon & Kull 2009; NACSO 2008), 2) creating income-generating opportunities in conservancies (NACSO 2012a; Bandyopadhyay 2009; Scanlon & Kull 2009; Shapi 2003; Long 2002; Murphy & Mulonga 2002a), 3) providing cash to conservancies and

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[1] N$ 7 is approximately equal to $U.S. 1.

individuals (Bandyopadhyay 2009; Scanlon & Kull 2009; NACSO 2008; Shapi 2003; Long 2002; Murphy & Mulonga 2002b), 4) providing skills training (NACSO 2012B; Bandyopadhyay 2009; Long 2002), 5) improving natural resource management in such a way that enhances the livelihoods of conservancy members (Long 2002), and 6) increasing awareness and prevention of HIV/AIDS in conservancies (NACSO 2008). Personal communication (2009) with conservancy members in the Caprivi and CBNRM-affiliated nongovernmental organizations confirmed that the aforementioned benefits are perceived to come from CBNRM.

Similarly conservation literature and CBNRM policy documents claim that CBNRM has enhanced conservation decision-making opportunities for local residents. The Namibia Association of CBNRM Support Organisations (NACSO), a consortium of fifteen nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the University of Namibia who work together to support CBNRM, states that CBNRM has three core elements, one of which is to be "an empowerment and capacity building programme. It encourages and assists communities and their local institutions to develop the skills and experience to sustainably develop and proactively pilot their own futures" (NACSO 2012b). NACSO (2008:7) also makes the claim that CBNRM "…enable(es) local residents in communal areas to take management decisions themselves about the way they use their natural resources". Conservancy committees and annual general meetings (AGMs) are mechanisms through which CBNRM enables community members to exercise power over how natural resources are used and benefits distributed. AGMs are open to all conservancy members and provide an opportunity for them to elect committee members and, in some cases, paid conservancy positions (Scanlon & Kull 2009; NACSO 2008).

NACSO member organizations and partners have also claimed to advance women's opportunities through CBNRM. The two founders of IRDNC, Margaret Jacobsohn and Garth Owen-Smith (2003:104) assert that IRDNC's policy "...has been to build capacity of women not quotas". They claim that CBNRM "...can and often does challenge or change previously existing power structures" (Jacobsohn & Owen-Smith 2003:94). USAID Namibia, a fifteen-year partner of CBNRM, claims that CBNRM in Namibia has "elevated status and opportunity for women: Women are taking advantage of many employment opportunities stemming from conservancies" (USAID Namibia 2012). NACSO (2008) also claims that CBNRM has enhanced decision-making opportunities for women in particular. Women in conservancies are said to comprise over 60% of members attending many conservancy meetings and to hold management positions in some conservancies (NACSO 2008). Finally, the World Wildlife Fund and others (WWF et al. 2008:vii) claim that "women have been significantly advanced by the CBNRM movement", particularly through part-time and full-time employment, increased decision-making, and conservancy membership.

2.2   Claims made about CBNRM's income-generation opportunities

CBNRM proponents make a variety of claims about impacts of Namibian conservancies on communities' income-generating opportunities. Broadly, proponents claim that CBNRM empowers communities by diversifying livelihoods, building capacity, and by giving communities greater access to benefits from natural resources (eg. NACSO 2012B; NACSO 2011a:2; NACSO 2010; Hulme & Murphree 2001b; Hulme & Murphree 2001a; Jacobsohn & Owen-Smith 2003). Not surprisingly, then, Kwandu Conservancy's new Constitution, approved

in April 2011, states that a primary objective for the Conservancy is "to promote a wise and sustainable utilization of natural resources for economic and social benefits of its members". Similarly, both the 2011 and 2010 Constitutions state that Kwandu Conservancy shall "promote and advance the socio-economic development of its Members". Both Constitutional statements emphasize the importance of providing Conservancy members with economic benefits, in line with the broader claim that conservancies diversify livelihoods.

Proponents claim that CBNRM diversifies livelihoods by providing income-generation opportunities to individual Conservancy members. They claim that conservancies make a variety of income-generating activities available. Activities include salaried employment, the harvest and sale of forest products, the production and sale of crafts, and the distribution of cash dividends. Proponents also claim that conservancies provide income by directing cash flow to local businesses. Specific claims made about these five income-generating activities are presented in the following paragraphs.

2.2.1.1 Salaried employment

Conservancies offer salaried employment to some residents. Since conservancies require staff to implement resource protection and development activities, a proportion of their incomes are directed to paying salaries. According to the Namibian Consortium of CBNRM Support Organisations (NACSO) (2010:22), "The most significant benefit to individual people living in a conservancy comes in the form of direct employment in positions that have been created through CBNRM, most of which did not exist prior to the start of the programme." CBNRM partners place a high value on formal employment.

2.2.1.2 Harvest and sale of forest products

Conservancies are believed to promote individual income-generation by facilitating the harvest and sale of forest products. NACSO (2010:23) claims that the harvest and sale of forest products provides "a significant source of cash income to individuals". In line with the claim, Kwandu Conservancy's new Constitution states that a primary objective is "to enable the general Members to generate benefits from the sustainable management, consumptive and non-consumptive use of wildlife, forests, forest products and other natural resource products in the Conservancy". Access to natural resources is believed to give individuals a variety of benefits, including cash income.

2.2.1.3 Production and sale of crafts

While direct sales of forest products are believed to provide Conservancy members with income, proponents also highlight the importance of value-added products to individual incomes. Some Conservancy members possess skills that allow them to produce crafts from forest resources. The crafts are often sold to tourists, adding monetary value to products originally harvested from forests and fields. Proponents have thus claimed that "craft production and sales represent another important sector through which individual community members can improve their financial situation" (NACSO 2010:23). The assumption that individuals can improve their livelihoods through the production and sale of crafts underpins Kwandu Conservancy's statement that it shall "create an enabling environment which permits community Members to establish business enterprises based on the sustainable utilization of

natural resources" (2011 Constitution). Craft-making is likely one type of enterprise that is based on natural resources.

2.2.1.4   Distribution of cash and meat dividends

Proponents claim that CBNRM makes cash and game meat available to conservancy members (Bandyopadhyay 2009; Scanlon & Kull 2009; NACSO 2008; Shapi 2003; Long 2002; Murphy & Mulonga 2002b). It is worth noting that Kwandu Conservancy's 2011 Constitution states that the Conservancy aims to allocate "appropriate income" to the traditional areas, where income is derived from natural resources. The Constitution states that one of its six objectives is "To support a devolved structure that delegates more responsibilities to Area level governance by allocating appropriate income to the Areas as derived from the utilization of resources within the Conservancy". Kwandu Conservancy thus claims to distribute income, in part, through area representatives.

2.2.1.5   Direction of cash flow to local businesses

CBNRM proponents claim that conservancies strengthen rural economies. NACSO stated, "Conservancies are also becoming important spenders within the rural economy, channeling funds generated from natural resource management to communities. Prior to the establishment of conservancies, the revenue generated by tourism and other sectors was significantly less, and almost all of it was drawn out of the area by businesses based in urban centres. Now, an increasing proportion of generated revenue stays within conservancies". (NACSO 2010:34). Conservancies are believed to stimulate rural economies in two ways: one,

by increasing the total revenue generated in a conservancy area, and two, by directing the revenue to locally-based ventures.

Directing cash flow to the local economy is one of five key ways that CBNRM is believed to boost individual income-generating opportunities. Salaried employment, the harvest and sale of forest products, the production and sale of crafts, and the distribution of cash dividends are also believed to enhance income potential. However, while proponents make explicit claims about the CBNRM system as a whole, it is not realistic to assume that all claims apply to all conservancies, nor that proponents themselves assume that every conservancy offers the benefits witnessed in the system as a whole. Nonetheless, it is imperative to understand specific effects that a single conservancy has on individuals, especially since one cannot assume that the existence of benefits means they are equally shared.

2.3   Gender is socially constructed and context-dependent

In order to evaluate claims regarding CBNRM's effects on women, the concept of gender needs explanation. Differentiating between women and men involves more than a biological determination of sex because gender is culturally constructed and mutually constituted (Charmes & Weiringa 2003; Hodgson 2000). According to Charmes & Weiringa (2003:420-1), "the concept of gender makes it possible to see both femininities and masculinities as being produced by and reproducing themselves in particular discursive patterns." Institutions produce gender through the distribution of resources, social value, and power (Goetz 1995). Typically, similarities between men and women are downplayed, their inter-gender differences highlighted, and greater value attached to one gender over another (Charmes & Weiringa

2003:420-1). Since gender is culturally constructed and mutually constituted, relations of power between women and men differ even within communities (Hodgson 2000).

Given that the female gender has often been assigned less value and power, discussed in detail below, feminists have attempted to change the meaning of "woman" to eliminate subordination. Two primary approaches to redefining woman - essentialism[2] and nominalism[3] - have been criticized for strengthening ideas about innate female attributes and constituting a negative and neo-deterministic approach to feminism, respectively (see Alcoff 1994; Agarwal 1992). I take a third approach suggested by Alcoff (1994): positionality. Positionality holds gender as a position for political action (Alcoff 1994). From this approach, the identity of "woman" is not fully determined or biological, but it is rather seen as a position within a network of power relations from which to demand social change (Alcoff 1994). While culturally-constructed ideas of gender limit a woman's power and mobility, the positionality approach holds that women possess agency and are able to influence contexts of subordination (Alcoff 1994).

In asserting woman as a position, intra-gender differences need consideration. Women within a given society do not share equal power or access to resources (Hodgson, 2000). Rather, a woman's power relative to other women and men is mediated by class, race, age, ethnicity, and nationality (Carr 2008; Charmes & Weiringa 2003; Sharp et al. 2003; Hodgson 2000; Meinzen-Dick et al. 1997). Racism and imperialism are integral to considerations of

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[2] Essentialism, also referred to as "cultural feminism", valorizes female characteristics that proponents deem are innate strengths in all women, such as the female propensity to nurture life (see Alcoff 1994).

[3] Nominalism is the post-structuralist position that there is no essential female identity and that the very category of "woman" is socially constructed and should be dismantled (see Alcoff 1994).

female liberation, and women are fully capable of oppressing other women (eg. Gilliam 1991; Johnson-Odim 1991).

2.4   CBNRM, gendered vulnerabilities, and social resilience

The material outcome of gender inequality is extreme poverty for many women in developing countries. Women experience limited access to both material and immaterial resources relative to men at all scales from inside the household to the international level. Intrahousehold divisions of food tend to favor males, with men getting first and larger shares of food (Roy et al. 2008; Young 1979). Both gendered divisions of labor and differential access to resources make women and children most vulnerable to environmental degradation (Agarwal 1997a, 1992). Consequently, gender and development scholars have underscored the need to focus on gender differences in order to enact conservation and development initiatives that strengthen communities (eg. Rocheleau et al. 1996; Agarwal 1994). In this section, I show that gendered property rights and responsibilities and potential points of gender-based exclusion in CBNRM deserve careful consideration in efforts to evaluate CBNRM's effects on women's empowerment. I also discuss how a neglect of these specific intra-community differences can harm trust and cooperation between people, undermining social resilience.

2.4.1.1 *Gender-based property rights and resource responsibilities*

Property rights and responsibilities are not uniformly shared within communities (Rocheleau et al 1996), so attention to who has rights to which resources and under what conditions is necessary for enacting equitable conservation and development initiatives. Property rights regimes, or institutions, are sets of rights that can prevent resource depletion.

Property rights are best thought of in terms of 'bundles' of rights that can include different combinations of *de jure* and *de facto* rights (Schlager & Ostrom 1992). They include rights to resource management, exclusion, and alienation (Schlager & Ostrom 1992). Therefore, institutions are sets of informal and formal rules that shape the rights of each person in relation to other persons (Agrawal & Gibson 2001; MacPherson 1978). Responsibilities can entail procuring and/or managing resources for family and community use (Rocheleau et al. 1996).

Property rights and resource responsibilities are gendered spatially and reflect relations of power (Rocheleau et al. 1996), therefore inattention to existing gendered property regimes can further marginalize or alienate women from resources. Consequently, Agarwal (1994:1455) contends that "the gender gap in the control of property is the single most critical contributor to the gender gap in economic well-being, social status, and empowerment". Her statement reflects the finding that men tend to have *de jure* property rights, while women are most often associated with informal, or *de facto*, property rights (Rocheleau et al. 1996). For example, Rocheleau & Edmunds (1997) found that in some parts of Africa, men own land and the land's timber, but women have usufruct rights to fodder, fruits, and fallen fuelwood. Similarly, women in many parts of southern Africa, including Namibia, rely on harvesting diverse wild plants, especially in times of famine (Sullivan 2000; Cunningham & Davis, 1997). Typically, women gather plants from lands that neither they nor their household own, relying instead on informal access (Rocheleau & Edmunds 1997). Creating institutions that deter negotiations of access rights between property owners, or men and women, can therefore serve to alienate women from subsistence resources.

Not only are women's resource rights more tenuous, but women also tend to have a larger share of resource responsibilities (Rocheleau et al. 1996), making women more vulnerable to changes in resource tenure that neglect intra-community differences. Altering institutions that already give women control, albeit through informal rights, may increase women's vulnerability and reinforce their subordination (Wangari et al. 1996). The era of structural adjustment, for example, brought with it an international drive to parcel out or codify rights to resources to individual users, at times overlooking informal property rights (Wangari et al. 1996; Jackson 1993). This is of concern because codifying land rights can actually impede women's access to resources (Jackson 1993). The neglect of nested property rights served to exclude women from their acquired property rights in the Gambia (Schroeder 1997). Schroeder (1997) learned that not long after women had gained informal rights to traditionally male areas, two new waves of development interventions undermined their access to vegetable gardens. Greater attention to and respect for *de facto* property rights would have allowed women to continue their gardening activities (Schroeder 1997). Hence, flexible property institutions need to be strengthened and/or developed that allow for negotiation of rights between men and women (Rocheleau & Edmunds 1997).

Women's informal property rights have direct implications for evaluating CBNRM and other integrated conservation and development programs (ICDPs), as ICDPs have been shown to impact women's access to resources. Nabane & Matzke (1997) found that a wildlife exclusion fence built as part of CAMPFIRE had an unintended side effect of obstructing women's access to their usual water and fuelwood gathering sites. In parts of Papua New Guinea, conservation and development projects have made property rights more complex, heightening tensions between

collective and individual rights, while strengthening the authority of state and corporate/NGO interests (Wagner 2007). Such changes transform social relationships within communities, enhancing inequalities between community members (Wagner 2007; West 2006; Schroeder 1997; Curtis 1995).

2.4.1.2 *Gender-based exclusion from CBNRM and ICDP participation*

Inattention to constraints on marginalized community members can prevent full participation in ICDPs. ICDPs have at times reinforced women's marginalized social positions by excluding them from decision-making processes. For example, Sullivan (2000) found that Damara and Herero women sat outside an introductory CBNRM meeting in Namibia while men discussed conservation plans. Sullivan (2000:145) states that "the convenors of the meeting claimed that they were working within the constraints of the (male) traditional leadership". Such refusals to challenge tradition ignore the fact that "tradition" itself is socially constructed and inherently unstable (Becker 2006; Sullivan 2000; see also Nabane & Matzke 1997).

In a study of four Namibian conservancies, Lendelvo et al. (2012) reported that women's participation was deterred by a failure to elect women to key positions and by the association of many core conservancy activities with male roles and responsibilities. Wildlife management activities like Game Guard work and hunting operations were typically associated with men, and women's participation in the Caprivian conservancy was typically restricted to positions that aligned with women's traditional gender roles and responsibilities (Lendelvo et al. 2012). Lack of skills and confidence also deterred women from participating, with the result that men had overall control of conservancy decision-making processes (Lendelvo et al. 2012).

Agarwal (1997b) observed other ways that ICDPs can exclude women. She found that in India, more formalized membership requirements prevented women from exercising significant decision-making power, ultimately limiting their access to environmental resources (Agarwalb 1997). Initiatives which limit membership to one person per household also generally exclude women (Agarwal 1997b). Agarwal (1997b) also notes that even when women are able to attend conservation committee meetings, they may be given little opportunity to speak or be ignored when they do speak (Agarwal 1997b). Customary male leadership combined with women's relative inexperience in public speaking can create barrier to participation (Agarwal 1997b). Extra work burdens can prevent women from attending meetings, as can meetings held at times that conflict with women's responsibilities (Agarwal 1997b).

Finally, the gendered nature of a conservation organization itself needs examination, as expressions of power, management styles, and organizational ideologies are all gendered (Goetz 1995). ICDP programs have also shifted value from women's work to men's work by emphasizing large mammal conservation. This has had the effect of making conservation "men's business" in some places (Beilin 2010). In many parts of southern Africa, for example, large mammals have been viewed as men's domain, while plants and other resources have been viewed as women's domain (Hodgson 2000; Sullivan 2000). Since Namibia's CBNRM program and other ICDP programs in Africa emphasize charismatic megafauna, women's roles have been devalued. Sullivan (2000:155), for example, contends that "…community-based conservation perhaps perpetuates a dominant culture of men, even though its explicit aim is full community representation and empowerment". ICDPs need to eliminate gender blindness so they do not serve to further marginalize women.

A general lack of socio-cultural expertise and time from donors, policy makers, and conservationists contributes to misunderstandings about the complexities of conservation in communities (Igoe & Croucher 2007). Yet attention to cultural and social aspects of communities, especially gender norms, is essential for meeting conservation goals. More research is needed to understand how CBNRM's costs and benefits differentially affect community members based on their gender, class, and ethnicity.

2.4.1.3 *Social resilience and market integration*

Ignoring intra-community differences may not only lead to elite capture and resource appropriation, but it can create conflict (McDermott 2009). As I have shown, CBNRM projects have the potential to disrupt social relationships by impacting gendered property rights and responsibilities and by excluding women from decision-making. In this section, I discuss more ways that ICDPs can impact relationships. I show that increased market integration, an emphasis common among ICDP efforts, has been shown to disrupt social relationships (eg. West 2006). I submit that by disrupting social relationships, ICDPs have the potential to increase community vulnerability to stresses and shocks, negatively impacting social resilience.

Relations of trust and reciprocity are elements of social capital, and social capital can help communities cope with stresses (Adger 2003; Shields et al. 1996). Social capital serves as a "safety net" and helps to direct resources to the most vulnerable members of a community (Shields et al. 1996:160). Therefore erosion of trust and reciprocity has the potential to undermine a community's social resilience further marginalize vulnerable members. Adger (2000:347) defines social resilience as "the ability of groups or communities to cope with

external stresses and disturbances as a result of social, political and environmental change." In short, when a community has social resilience, it is able to cope with shocks and stresses from various origins.

ICDPs can alter relationships between men and women by changing the ways in which men's and women's work is valued, exacerbating inter-gender tensions and inequalities. West's (2006) example of net bags (*bilum*), traditionally made by women in Papua New Guinea as symbols of kinship, illustrates this point well. Conservation interests helped create a market exchange value for *bilum* with the intent of enhancing community income (West 2006). Women began making *bilum* in exchange for cash (West 2006). But since men in that society tend to control cash income, women lost rights to their own labor (West 2006). What was once a symbol of affection became a source of increased work hours, displeasure, and conflict (West 2006). Women became alienated from their own labor, and they lost some of their traditional social power in the community (West 2006).

ICDPs have had other unintentional effects on community relationships. West (2006) observed that in assigning conservation value to the Harpy Eagle, conservationists inadvertently increased competition and tensions between men in Maimafu. Similarly, MacDonald (2005) found that after an ICDP program was implemented in the Karakoram Mountains of Pakistan, villagers became suspicious of community members who carried firearms because they were perceived as potential thieves of community-based conservation revenue. In this way, ICDPs can dissolve trust in communities, endangering the very social fabric upon which their conservation and development goals depend.

Whether instigated by ICDPs or other drivers, privatization and capitalization can concentrate resources in the hands of the wealthy (Shields et al. 1996). Additionally, commercialization can strengthen men's opportunities in the market economy and leave women behind (Shields et al. 1996). This process pattern has been evident in southern Africa where the migrant labor system and colonial policies have given men in southern Africa greater access to cash than women (Chanock 1991). Some scholars contend that since market integration and neoliberal ideology are inherent to all ICDP efforts, CBNRM and other ICDP efforts lead to and sustain social degradation (eg. Büscher et al. 2012). Consequently, close attention must be given to CBNRM's affects on community relationships and social resilience.

2.5   Gender roles and responsibilities in the Caprivi

Literature on gender roles of men and women in the Caprivi is relatively scarce, but suggests that women in general have less power, social value, and access to resources than men. While not enough published research is currently available to comment on gender roles of women based on class, ethnicity, and age, existing literature reveals that overall women's roles in the Caprivi are subordinate to men, leaving women vulnerable to economic and physical exploitation. In relation to Caprivian men, women have less decision-making power, have less control and access to property, are excluded from important livelihood activities, experience reduced control and dependence in marital relationships, and have diminished ability to defend themselves from HIV/AIDS.

That women have less decision-making power in the Caprivi is evident from Namibian history and current practices. Historically, Caprivian women, (and women in Namibia in

general), were politically marginalized. Namibian women only gained the right to vote and stand for election in 1989, at the end of apartheid (CIA 2009). Women in the Caprivi were, until recently, excluded from holding positions on the council of traditional authorities, preventing them from administering customary law (Thomas 2007). Since traditional authorities decide the outcome of domestic violence and rape cases (Thomas 2007), poor representation of women's needs and opinions leave women more vulnerable to abuse.

Similar to dispute resolution, women's property rights in the Caprivi are generally mediated by men. Marriage is thought to enable Caprivian women to access and make productive use of land (Thomas 2007). Thomas (2007) found that in most cases, women had to earn their rights through marriage, while men's rights were primarily inherited. Women's rights were then conditional on their submissiveness, especially when a significant bride price (*lobola*) had been paid (Thomas 2007). Additionally, widows are limited in their ability to move because their access to land is largely dependent on their male relatives (Thomas 2008).

In addition to their reduced access to property, women's livelihood options in the Caprivi tend to be limited by their gender. The migrant labor system and colonial policies gave men in southern Africa greater access to cash than women, a situation that persists in post-colonial Africa (Chanock 1991). Additionally, plowing fields is considered to be a male activity, meaning unmarried women have difficulty accessing cattle for plowing because their interests are often deemed subordinate (Thomas 2008, 2007). Since livelihood activities are "strongly gendered", households with both male and female labor have a large advantage over single-gender households (Thomas 2008:76). Nonetheless, 47.4% of rural households in Namibia are headed by women (MOHSS 2008).

While marriage enhances a woman's status in the community and can grant her access to land and livelihood opportunities (Thomas 2008), women tend to be subject to male authority within the household. MOHSS (2008) surveyed Caprivians about their attitudes towards wives' participation in decision-making. Only 59% of men believed that a wife, whether alone or jointly with her husband, should have a say in what to do with money the wife earns. Research found that *lobola* payments have in some cases fuelled beliefs that brides have "…forfeited their rights to be held as (men's) equals" (Thomas 2007:606). In fact, Thomas (2007:607) also noted that "…many young men were keen to assert their control over women…" and that "…all of those participating in focus groups wanted to get married and most felt that such a commitment was necessary to demonstrate their masculinity and ensure a level of 'ownership' over their wife". A dominant belief that women are property can fuel exploitation.

Similarly, women have expressed a belief that the *lobola* payment prevents them from seeking protection from domestic violence (Thomas 2007). This is especially disconcerting given its high prevalence in Caprivian society (Thomas 2007). In a survey of 474 Caprivian women, over 80% indicated that under certain circumstances, a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife (MOHSS 2008). Yet Thomas (2007) also found that most women did not see leaving an abusive husband as an option because men mediate access to key livelihood resources. Support available to married women largely comes from her husband's relatives, and support from his relatives is dependent on her remaining subservient to her husband (Thomas 2007). Support from civil authorities is generally seen as too remote to assist with the issues women face daily (Thomas 2007).

Women's gendered role as subservient wife makes women less able to defend themselves from HIV/AIDS and other sexually-transmitted diseases. The Caprivi has the highest levels of HIV prevalence in Namibia, with 43% of ante-natal attendees reported as HIV positive (MOHSS 2004 cited in Thomas 2007). Yet of the women surveyed in the Caprivi, only 51.1% of sexually active women ages 15-49 use any kind of contraception, and of those women, only 6.6% use condoms (MOHSS 2008). Low contraception rates may be linked to the finding that 46.8% of Caprivian men surveyed indicated that they believe that a woman using contraception may become promiscuous (MOHSS 2008). When the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MOHSS 2008) questioned Caprivian women regarding whether or not they agreed with instances in which a woman is justified in refusing intercourse with her husband, only 65% of surveyed women agreed with all three of the following reasons: knowing the husband has a sexually transmitted disease, knowing the husband has intercourse with other women, and is tired or not in the mood (MOHSS 2008). Thomas (2007:610) expressed that "refusing sex whilst married was considered 'unnatural' and disrespectful and was likely to result in declining support from a husband's relatives…" Fear of violence, loss of access to resources, and the potential withdrawal of family support systems leave women with little bargaining power to influence husbands' sexual behavior, creating greater risk for HIV/AIDS infection (Jewkes *et al.* 2010; Edwards 2007; Thomas 2007).

In recognition of gender inequality, Namibia passed the Married Person's Equality Act in 1996, the Combating of Rape Act in 2000, and the Combating of Domestic Violence Act in 2003. But passing legislation and having the capacity to enforce legislation are two different matters. For example, the practice of wife inheritance, banned in 2002 under the Communal Land

Reform Act in 2002, has not entirely disappeared from the Caprivi, and some women are still disenfranchised from their property following the death of their spouse (Thomas 2007).

While particularly vulnerable in the aforementioned areas, Caprivian women also exhibit areas of strength. For example, women in the Caprivi have slightly higher education and literacy rates than men. The ratio of females to males attending primary school is 1.01, while the ratio for secondary school is 1.08 (MOHSS 2008). Approximately 65% of female Caprivians responding to the survey had secondary school education or higher, while 11% had no reading ability at all (MOHSS 2008). In contrast, 62% of male Caprivians indicated they had secondary school education or higher, while 18.1% of men could not read at all (MOHSS 2008). In addition, 19.7% of Caprivian women versus 26.4% of Caprivian men had no weekly media (newspaper, television or radio) exposure (MOHSS 2008), indicating that women may have more access to critical information.

2.6 Empowerment in the academic literature

With an understanding of gender roles in the Caprivi, this section explores women's empowerment in the academic literature. This review of empowerment literature is divided into two sections. The first section reviews Paolo Freire, Michel Foucault, and Pierre Bourdieu's ideas about the nature of oppression, power, and liberation, as they have contributed to what subsequent theorists have termed empowerment. The second section reviews women's empowerment literature, as women's empowerment literature is an outgrowth of the ideas of the three theorists. In total, the review of empowerment literature contributes to a framework for understanding and assessing women's empowerment.

2.6.1 Ideas about the nature of oppression, power, and liberation

According to the literature, oppression is the absence of choice. Choice is removed through a variety of means, including objectification of people and the internalization of unequal power relations. Meanwhile, power is ubiquitous but not evenly distributed. It is both positive and negative, and exercised directly and indirectly. It is by gaining power that a person moves from being oppressed to gaining liberation. Liberation involves gaining and exercising choice through a combination of reflection, through which one gains awareness, and action. While numerous authors have contributed to theories of power and empowerment, three key thinkers in particular have influenced the way power and empowerment are conceptualized. This section is a summary and critique of Paolo Freire, Michel Foucault, and Pierre Bourdieu's main ideas about power, oppression, and liberation, with an explanation of their main contributions to current empowerment theory. Their work was chosen for a closer analysis because they are among the most frequently cited theorists in empowerment literature and the individuals I perceive as having contributed most to the development of empowerment theory. Common themes of ideas about reality, structure, and agency are also interwoven throughout the above theorists' writings. It is my intention to summarize and critique the above theorists' ideas in order to show later in this proposal how I have derived my understanding of empowerment.

2.6.1.1 Paolo Freire

Paolo Freire's ideas about power, oppression, and liberation center on a concept he terms "conscientização", translated into English as "conscientization". In Pedagogy of the

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Oppressed, first published in 1970, Freire (2009) contends that conscientization is the essential

pathway to overcoming oppression and attaining human freedom. Conscientization is a process

by which people shed an objectified status to regain their humanity (Friere 2009).

In order to explain the path to liberation, or conscientization, Freire developed a model

for how oppression is enacted. Oppression, according to Freire (2009), occurs through

objectification. According to Freire (2009:46-7), oppressors objectify the oppressed by imposing

"…one individual's choice upon another, transforming the consciousness of the person

prescribed into one that conforms to the prescriber's consciousness". Freire's idea of

oppression, then, involves the removal of choice. Applied to women's empowerment, Freire's

model suggests that women who are not empowered have been denied choice. This idea is

reflected in Joanna Rowlands' (1997), Naila Kabeer's (2005 & 1999) and Linda Mayoux's (1998)

ideas of empowerment, discussed later in this proposal.

Also central to Freire's idea of oppression is the internalization of the oppressors'

reality. Freire (2009:46-7) states that the oppressed have "internalized the image of the

oppressor" and that the oppressed are characterized by self-depreciation because they have

internalized the oppressors' negative messages about themselves:

> So often do they hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing and are
> incapable of learning anything—that they are sick, lazy, and unproductive—that
> in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness" (Freire 2009:96).

Liberation, then, depends on raised awareness, the oppressed recognizing the false

messages of the oppressors and seeing examples of the oppressors' vulnerability:

> It is only when the oppressed find the oppressor out and become involved in the
> organized struggle for their liberation that they begin to believe in themselves"
> (Freire 2009:65).

As is evident from the statement above, freedom from oppression requires a combination of action and serious reflection, a process Freire (2009:160) terms "true praxis". Praxis brings about self-affirmation by exposing enslaved thinking (Freire 2009). To expose the reality outside the oppressors' imposed beliefs, Freire (2009) calls for revolutionary leaders to engage the oppressed in a permanent relationship of critical and liberating dialogue, not through one-way indoctrination but through mutual participation. Emphasizing the need for action as well as reflection, Freire (2009) contends it is not enough for the oppressed to recognize mechanisms of oppression; rather, the oppressed must replace their old reality with a humanized reality.

Additionally, the oppressed must take action toward the oppressors. Freire (2009:44) calls it "the great humanistic and historical task" of the oppressed to liberate both themselves and their oppressors, and he cautions against the oppressed becoming oppressors themselves. Freire (2009:44) explains that oppressors should rather become the "restorers of humanity" of both the oppressors and the oppressed.

Freire's notion of liberation suggests an understanding of power that is not zero-sum. In other words, one person's freedom does not come at the cost of another. In Freire's view, freedom for the oppressed leads to humanization of both oppressors and oppressed, a situation that means benefits for both groups. This lends credence to ideas about women's empowerment that emphasize that empowerment does not require that men must lose when women gain power.

Freire's ideas also have clear implications for how women are to be empowered. His view that both liberation leaders and the oppressed need to exercise combined action and

reflection to gain freedom suggests that those who lead empowerment initiatives should expect to participate alongside the women they seek to empower. In emphasizing dialogue and humility in leaders, Freire (2009:39) describes the liberation leader as "…not afraid to confront, to listen, to see the world unveiled". This idea, combined with his warnings against objectification, have clear implications for empowerment researchers. A Freireian view of empowerment research would necessitate that a researcher be open to changing ideas, practice self-reflection, and act as partner with women by engaging in dialogue.

2.6.1.2 Michel Foucault

Many of Freire's ideas are echoed in Michel Foucault's writings. Empowerment theorists commonly refer to Michel Foucault's concept of power, and his ideas have heavily influenced poststructuralist theory (Ritzer & Goodman 2004). While Foucault did not supply an exact definition of power, he outlined a number of its characteristics. This section summarizes Foucault's ideas about power as they relate to current understandings of empowerment.

<u>Power is ubiquitous, but not evenly distributed</u>

Foucault highlighted that power exists not just in the realms of the sovereign, but at both the micro- and macro-levels of society and is present throughout social relations (Cooper 1994; Sawicki 1986). However, while power exists at all levels of society, Foucault acknowledged that power is not evenly distributed (Cooper 1994; Sawicki 1986). So power relations exist at the village, regional, and national level, for example, but the different levels may have different amounts of power in relation to each other. Foucault emphasized that an

understanding of power relations at the national and global level needs to begin by examining

relationships at the lowest level of society (McHoul & Grace 1993).

There are two major implications for empowerment theory when one employs

Foucault's explanation of power as ubiquitous, yet unevenly distributed. First, his explanation

indicates that household and village-level investigations of empowerment are critical to

understanding global relations of power between men and women (Sawicki 1986). It follows

that struggles against patriarchy must be carried out at the local level of social relations

(Sawicki 1986).The practical implication of his model is that resistance must be carried out in

local struggles against the many forms of power exercised at the everyday level of social

relations. Second, Foucault's concept of power implies that there is no such thing as a

powerless woman. Rather, all women have power, but some may have less power than other

people.

2.6.1.2.1 *Power is productive, not merely repressive. Power produces discourse.*

Foucault contended that power is inextricably linked with discourse and the production

of truth. In this way, Foucault challenged the view of power as an entirely negative construct.

Instead, he stressed that power is productive: "in fact, power produces; it produces reality; it

produces domains of objects and rituals of truth" (Foucault 1977a:194 cited in McHoul & Grace

1993).

Since power produces, it is not merely repressive, rather "…it traverses and produces

things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as

a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression" (Foucault 1977b cited in Rabinow 1984). So while Foucault acknowledged that power can repress, he also recognized a positive side to power. Recognizing a positive, productive side to power implies that women's gain in power does not require an equivalent loss by men (Cooper 1994). Similar to Freire, this suggests that empowering women does not necessitate men's loss of power, an idea that is explored later in this proposal.

Women's empowerment theory can also make use of the idea that discourse is linked to power. Foucault, it seems, would agree with Freire's assertion that the more powerful (or "the oppressors") shape what is believed to be true in a society. Applying this idea to women's empowerment would mean that one should be skeptical of anything accepted to be "true" in a society, especially in regards to women's roles and rights, as both Freire and Foucault would contend that such "truths" are an outgrowth of unequal power relations, rather than a reflection of actual reality.

Taking skepticism to the extreme, some have interpreted Foucault's claim that truth is always linked to power to imply radical relativism, meaning that evaluating truth behind any knowledge claim is a futile endeavor (O'Reilly 2005). However, radical relativism results in "a wholly negative feminism" that deconstructs everything and constructs nothing (Alcoff 1994). Consequently, I ascribe to Freire's idea that while what is accepted to be "true" can be an outgrowth of power relations, there are more acceptable underlying realities that can be exposed when layers of imposed "truths" are stripped away to expose the influence of power/oppression. To me, this suggests that in a given a society, women's subordination can be

seen as an outgrowth of pervasive "truths" that result from one sector, frequently men, having

more power than women. This also implies that stripping away imposed discourse about the

roles women are to play in society can reveal realities more suitable for both women and men,

in which men and women have equal opportunities. Therefore, focus needs to be on a woman's

relative power and mobility within a society (Alcoff 1994), making empowerment a positive

process of change.

2.6.1.2.2 Power relations can be sustained indirectly

Foucault, like Freire, recognized that power can be sustained through indirect

relationships in which a person internalizes the message of another. To explain one mechanism

of power, Foucault (Foucault 1977a:201 cited in McHoul & Grace 1993) used the metaphor of

the Panopticon. The Panopticon functions by inducing

> "…a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic
> functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in
> its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its actions; that the perfection of power
> should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary; that this architectural
> apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation
> independent of the person who exercises it; in short, that the inmates should be
> caught up in a power situation of which they themselves are the bearers"
> (Foucault 1977a:201 cited in McHoul & Grace 1993).

In Foucault's view, power can be exercised without sustained direct contact because the less

powerful person has internalized the unequal power relation.

Again, the idea of internalization has numerous implications for women's

empowerment theory. First, Cooper (1994) suggests that when Foucault's Panopticon

metaphor is applied to women, one can understand why many women accept their own

subordination, even if there is no physical agent dominating them. This brings about a second

point, evident in Freire's ideas as well, that relations of power may be difficult to recognize and confront, since they are often internalized. It is one thing to confront an abuser who leaves bruises on a person's face, for example, and another thing entirely to confront the root source of a woman's shyness in speaking out during a community meeting. Such unwillingness to influence decision-making, according to Foucault's logic, would not necessarily be a conscious or intentional decision (McHoul & Grace 1993).

The idea of internalized power relations also has implications for altering distributions of power. Foucault contends that the most effective resistance is aimed at a technique of power rather than at power generally (McHoul & Grace 1993). So in this light, efforts to empower women might best be aimed at first exposing subordination tactics, then combating the means by which messages of female subordination become internalized.

2.6.1.2.3 Agency and structure exist in tension

Understanding Foucault's ideas about power grows more complex when interpreting his ideas about agency and structure. Gordon (1999) and Sawicki (1986) reject a common interpretation of Foucault's writings which asserts that Foucault viewed subjects as passive, entirely determined by structure. Instead, Foucault sought a balance between both agency and structure, and activity and passivity, emphasizing that power relationships can only exist when a subject is free and there is some possibility of resistance (Gordon 1999; Sawicki 1986). Implied in this interpretation of Foucault's model of power is the idea that women's empowerment needs to recognize that while women operate in a field of patriarchal constraints, they are not helpless victims but rather agents capable of resisting subordination.

2.6.1.3 Pierre Bourdieu

Pierre Bourdieu's (1994) concept of oppression is built on his idea of "doxa". In "the doxic mode", tradition and ritual are taken for granted (Bourdieu 1994:160). With only a single definition of reality, existing power relations seem entirely natural and unquestionable when doxa pervades (Bourdieu 1994). Put succinctly, "…the established cosmological and political order is perceived not as arbitrary, i.e., as one possible order among others, but as a self-evident and natural order which goes without saying and therefore goes unquestioned…" (Bourdieu 1994:161). This echoes Freire's idea about oppression being internalized to the point that oppressors' ideas seem true.

In the doxic mode, dominant regimes retain power by ensuring that alternate beliefs do not enter the level of awareness in a given society. In this way, domination need not be direct, waged as one person against another, as lack of awareness ensures that the established hierarchy will remain unrecognized as a mere construction and continue unopposed. While Bourdieu (1994:184) recognizes that domination can take more visible, direct forms, he asserts that person-to-person domination is an "elementary" form of domination, requiring a greater expenditure of energy than doxa. Power, according to Bourdieu, is thus exercised directly and indirectly, with the indirect type of power exercised through the construction of a society's single reality.

Overcoming oppression requires an awakening to alternatives. Oppression in the doxic mode, according to Bourdieu, can only be overcome when people realize that the reality they have accepted is constructed by the dominant regime:

It is only when the dominated have the material and symbolic means of rejecting the definition of the real that is imposed on them through logical structures reproducing the social structure (i.e. the state of power relations) and to lift the (institutionalized or internalized) censorships which it implies… that the arbitrary principles of the prevailing classification can appear as such…" (Bourdieu 1994:164).

By learning of the existence of competing discourses, choice enters into peoples' lives and they can begin to challenge the idea that older men, to use Bourdieu's (1994) example, deserve the most power in a society. Rule by the dominant class no longer seems like the only way to exist.

Like Freire, Bourdieu suggests that oppression can only be overcome when the oppressed or less powerful learn of the existence of an alternate reality. Only through awareness of alternatives then, can the internalized messages imposed by the oppressors/dominant regime be rejected.

Applied to women's empowerment, Bourdieu's ideas have several implications. First, Bourdieu's ideas suggest that physical violence against women is a form of directly-exercised power, while socially-accepted messages that ascribe subordinate roles to women are a more pervasive, indirect exercise of power. Second, messages of women's subordinate status persist, Bourdieu would argue, because there is no awareness of an alternate way of thinking. This brings us to a third point. Bourdieu seems to suggest that in the doxic mode, women in a society would lack agency, as their behaviours would be prescribed to fit within the mold of the single social myth. Agency would only be introduced, it is implied, when women are shown alternative ways of thinking, given the opportunity to choose between different ideas. When alternate ideas are introduced, the "primal state of innocence" shifts to experiences of

"orthodoxy" or "heterodoxy" (Bourdieu 1994:165), and behaviors of the less powerful, it is

implied, are no longer entirely determined.

While I agree with Bourdieu that in a doxic mode, the less powerful would lack agency, I

am skeptical that doxa is all-pervasive. I think generally, people live in societies characterized by

Bourdieu's concepts of orthodoxy and heterodoxy, societies in which a range of ideas exists but

are suppressed to varying degrees. In this sense, I adopt Gordon's (1999) and Sawicki's (1986)

readings of Foucault's model of power – that women exist in a web of constraints, but still

possess agency and the potential to overcome subordination. In the rare contexts in which

women are not aware of alternative ways of thinking about the world and their place in it, then

it follows that the first step for liberation would be to introduce new ideas so that women could

exercise choice and become agents. Awareness would then need to be combined with the

actual ability to effect change.

2.6.2   Implications for empowerment theory

In summary, Freire, Foucault, and Bourdieu's writings have major implications for

women's empowerment theory in regards to the nature of power, oppression, and liberation,

as well as ideas about the role of agency and structure, and the nature of reality. As we have

seen, power is productive, with both positive and negative attributes. While power is

ubiquitous, it is not evenly distributed, lending importance to understanding power relations at

the micro-level. Since conceptualizations of truth and discourse are linked to power, people

who exercise more power can dominate belief systems and generate "truths" beneficial to

themselves. Power can then be sustained indirectly through the unquestioned acceptance of dominate ideas.

Oppression is enacted through unequal relations of power in which dominant regimes produce ideas about reality that are internalized and accepted as truth. Oppression persists through the suppression of alternative ways of thinking, through an absence of choice. It follows then that liberation requires an awakening to the existence of alternatives, to the awareness of choices. Liberation is enacted through a process of reflection combined with action that brings about change. Dialogue, it has been argued, facilitates reflection that leads to meaningful action.

The three themes of power, oppression, and liberation are evident in women's empowerment theory, discussed in the following section. Also key to empowerment theories is the idea that agency operates within a web of structural constraints, and that reality is constructed by those who wield power. Since Bourdieu and Foucault can be interpreted as relativists, I believe that Freire's notions of constructed reality are more fitting for empowerment theory in the sense that they imply that one reality can be far better than another. I think that a reality in which women have equal opportunities and in which men and women have mutual respect for each others' humanity can indeed be considered preferable to a reality in which men restrict women's activities and aspirations to levels subordinate to their own.

2.6.3 Empowerment Theory

The movement from oppression to liberation is conceptualized in the literature as "empowerment". Building on ideas about oppression, power, and liberation, recent theorists refer to the process of gaining power by moving from oppression to liberation as "empowerment". This section of the review shows that awareness of women's subordination and alternative options is a necessary but insufficient condition for women's empowerment.

As discussed previously, Freire (2009) advocated empowerment through conscientization, a realized awareness and rejection of internalized oppression, a process that occurs through a cycle of reflection and action. Like Freire, empowerment scholars advocate that building awareness and self-confidence are essential to the empowerment process (Agot 2008; Thomas 2008; Carr 2003; Charmes & Wieringa 2003). Mayoux (1995:253) states that "women's empowerment presupposes that women themselves are aware of all the options open to them, and their potential consequences, so that they are sufficiently informed to make their own decisions". While women's empowerment requires both an awareness of existing power relations and knowledge of alternatives, awareness is not enough. The alternatives must be attainable and attractive for women, or else they will need to suppress their own desires or face increased anger, frustration, and suffering from their inability to exercise choice (Charmes & Weiringa 2003).

Longwe (1998) also recognizes that self-confidence and awareness are not enough. Rejecting assumptions that education, access to resources, and increased self-confidence will empower women, Longwe (1998) contends that the patriarchal system plays "dirty tricks" that prevent women from having real decision-making power and control over their lives. She

argues that the same patriarchal system has directed attention from the real source of women's disempowerment, a lack of political influence, and perpetuates the false belief that women simply lack self-confidence, education, and resources (Longwe 1998).

So in addition to increased self-confidence and awareness, empowerment requires meaningful action and changes in power relations (Carr 2003; Rowlands 1997). Action must be taken to change power dynamics; and action needs to be taken at the level of relationships in particular (Rowlands 1997). Rowlands (1997) stresses that because relationships are a key dimension of empowerment, women's empowerment necessitates changes in men's attitudes and renegotiations of decision-making and resource-use patterns. Since personal relationships, especially those at the intra-household level, can create some of the greatest resistance to empowerment (Rowlands 1997), scholars call for women to work together, to take action collectively, and to cooperate with each other rather than compete in a quest to change power relations (eg. Carr 2003; Longwe 1998; Rowlands 1997).

2.6.3.1 *Capacity to exercise choice hinges on four types of power*

Continuing a theme from the previous section, choice is seen as central to productive power (Kabeer 2005 & 1999; Mayoux 1995). Kabeer (2005 & 1999) portrays power generally as "the ability to make choices". Opportunities for exercising choices are based on both formal laws and regulations and on social norms (Lachapelle et al. 2004). Kabeer (2005) places particular emphasis on strategic life choices as they have more consequences. Strategic life choices, such as the choice of a marital partner and decisions about having children, define the parameters of a person's life (Kabeer 2005).

Over the years, scholars have, to varying degrees, identified four types of power: 'power over', 'power to', 'power with', and 'power within' (eg. Kabeer 2005 & 1999; Mosedale 2005; Charmes & Weiringa 2003; Mayoux 1998; Rowlands 1997; Nelson & Wright 1995). 'Power over' has been portrayed as a negative type of power, as a "controlling power, which may be responded to with compliance, resistance … or manipulation" (Rowlands 1997:13). In this way it has been portrayed as zero-sum, with one person's gain in power coming at another's loss (Nelson & Wright 1995). Echoing the previous theorists, Charmes & Weiringa (2003:422) adds that 'power over' can be indirect, a suppression or denial of others' interests. In this way, 'power over' can be overt, but it can also be internalized, unquestioned and characterized by silence, making detection and confrontation very difficult (Charmes & Weiringa 2003). 'Power over,' when exercised indirectly through internalization, approaches Bourdieu's idea of doxa.

Mayoux (1998) provides examples of what gains in "power over" means for women. Increased "power over" is conceptualized as increased decision-making power, authority, and/or control (Mayoux 1998). For example, in reference to CBNRM, one can conceptualize "power over" as the ability to influence decision-making about a) how conservancy benefits are distributed to households and b) how income and other livelihood resources are used in female conservancy members' own households.

'Power to' generates new possibilities by increasing a person's capacity to enact change by defining and pursuing their own goals (Kabeer 2005 & 1999; Mayoux 1998; Rowlands 1997). Mayoux (1998) suggests that measuring changes in access to income, productive assets and property, and skills, among other things, reflects how women's 'power to' has changed.

'Power within' is a personal type of power, an increased will for change, indicated by such things as increased self-confidence, assertiveness, consciousness, and dignity (Mayoux 1998; Rowlands 1997; Carr et al. 1996). 'Power within' offers a striking contrast to the oppressed state described by Freire (2009) in which oppressed peoples have come to believe they have no self-worth.

Finally, 'power with' refers to collective power (Carr et al. 1996). Mayoux (1998:45) describes it as "increased solidarity with other women for change at household, community and macro-levels". This definition makes more sense when men are inserted, as is suggested by Rowlands (1997) and Raju (2005). This suggests that men need not give up power in total, as even when they release 'power over' women, they can exercise a far more positive 'power with' women.

2.6.3.2 Empowerment and disempowerment is a continuum

With an understanding of power as the ability to exercise choice, it follows that oppression blocks a person's ability to make choices. In fact, oppression may prevent the perception of any choices, as internalized, covert messages of what is "true" sustain unequal power relations (Freire 2009; Bourdieu 1994; Kabeer 2005; Charmes & Weiringa 2003; Rowlands 1997; Foucault 1977a, 1977b). Empowerment theorists have thus used the term "disempowered" to refer to a person who has been denied choice (eg. Kabeer 2005 & 1999). Kabeer (1999:436) approaches empowerment from the perspective that "it is inescapably bound up with the condition of disempowerment". From Kabeer's (1999) perspective, one cannot be empowered without having first been disempowered. At the same time, scholars'

warn against a simplistic empowered/disempowered dichotomy (eg. Parpart et al. 2002). Cahill (2008) rather contends that everyone has access to networks of power and weakness, and that development workers should assist women in identifying their sources of strength. Like Cahill, Cornish (2006:304-5) states that empowerment should be understood "…in a way that allows for people to be empowered in one domain at the same time that they are disempowered in another". Consequently, empowerment and disempowerment refer to changes in power, as opposed to states of complete liberation or total lack of power.

Empowerment and disempowerment is therefore a continuum. Disempowerment does not equate to powerlessness, which implies a total lack of power. Rather, a disempowered person is someone who has relatively little power (or little ability to exercise choice) compared to others. Echoing Foucault, I think that unless people are absolute slaves or objects, all people have some level of power and therefore some ability to exercise choice. However, relations of power can be highly unequal, especially between women and men. So while I recognize that most people are able to exercise some level of power and choice, disempowered persons have less power and mobility within certain contexts than others (see Alcoff 1994).

Having determined from the literature review that empowerment is the movement from oppression to liberation, a process whereby a person's awareness of gendered power relations and alternative arrangements, plus an ability to exercise choice (power) are enhanced, I now turn my attention to the question of economic participation and its potential effects on women's empowerment.

2.7 Economic participation and women's empowerment

Given that conservation and development organizations have emphasized economic activities as a means to development and/or empowerment, it is important to critically evaluate potential impacts of economic participation on women's empowerment. Evaluating the effects of economic participation on women's empowerment requires attention to both tangible and intangible effects of participation within the context of specific social institutions (Carr et al. 1996). Evaluating empowerment potential also requires a close look at both women's access to income-generation opportunities and their control over earnings (Kantor 2005). Women's positions in society, determined, in part, by their marital status, education level, and religion, can impact their ability to gain power through economic participation (Kantor 2005).

Scholars have shown that economic participation can have both empowering and disempowering effects on individual women. Economic participation has been shown, in specific circumstances, to empower women by increasing their self-confidence and self-worth (*power within)*, increasing their access to financial resources, skills, and training (*power* to), and increasing women's decision-making power in the household and community (*power over)* (Wrigley-Asante 2012; Kabeer 1997; Carr et al. 1996). Specifically, programs like the Self Employed Women's Organisation (SEWA) in India, that link self-employed women workers with one another in an effort to gain full employment, have been shown to assist women to overcome their fears and to speak openly about their problems and demands, boosting women's self-confidence and decision-making power (Carr et al. 1996). Some credit programs have not only offered women access to financial resources but have provided women with skills and training (Wrigley-Asante 2012). In Ghana, economic participation has reduced women's

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dependency on men and improved women's decision-making power over sexual relations (Wrigley-Asante 2012). Similarly, Kabeer (1997) found that women in Bangladesh strengthened their positions within the household by making financial contributions. Kabeer (1997:298) claimed that women's wages made an "unequivocal difference to the lives of most of the women workers. They were now perceived as earning members of the household" (Kabeer 1997). Kabeer's (1997) findings suggest that economic participation can empower women by expanding social awareness of women's roles, showing that like men, women can also make significant financial contributions to household income. In this way, social and economic transformations lead to a questioning of implicit assumptions behind male and female arrangements (Kandiyoti's 1988).

While economic participation has the potential to empower, it can also be disempowering at the individual level. Economic participation by women can increase their workloads and ignite household conflict. Furthermore, economic participation does not necessarily increase women's control over their earnings, and it may reinforce, rather than challenge, restrictive notions about women's place in society.

Participation in economic activities may add extra burdens to a woman's life (Rowlands 1995). Participation in the work force, for example, can mean a "double burden" for women who must continue to fulfill household responsibilities outside of formal work hours (Sharp et al. 2003:282). Women's wage work in Bangladesh, for example, did not result in any meaningful renegotiation of gendered divisions of labor within the household (Kabeer 1997). Domestic chores remained the responsibility of the female wage earners or were allocated to other female household member (Kabeer 1997).

In some contexts, the overall scarcity of economic activities like employment can create social tensions between men and women (Bradley 1995), and in some situations, women's economic participation has created household conflicts (Wrigley-Asante 2012). Men's fear of losing control over women, beliefs fuelled by pre-existing patriarchal structures, has led to confrontations (Wrigley-Asante 2012). Interestingly, Kabeer (1997) found that some women were able to avoid household conflict by entrusting their earnings to a senior, non-earning female member of the household, representing less of a direct threat to the ideology of men as household breadwinners.

As Kabeer's (1997) study suggests, earning income does not guarantee its control (see also Elson 1999). Improving market access and/or supplying equipment for women's enterprises may boost economic potential, but they are not sufficient to empower women when women cannot control their increased earnings (Kantor 2005). When women can retain control over the flow of information about their incomes, for example when their overtime rates vary and are not advertised, they may have more potential to exercise control over their earnings within their household (Kabeer 1997).

Women's inability to control earnings, in some cases, shows that economic interventions may not go far enough in challenging socio-cultural norms that subordinate women. Worse, economic participation may combine with internalized oppression to restrict women's perceptions of what is available and legitimate (Rowlands 1995). Therefore, to be empowering, economic interventions must be designed to "create a space" for women tackle assumptions about what women 'can' and 'cannot' do, requiring that employers and/or organizations relinquish a level of control (Rowlands 1995:104), even when the process leads

women to adopt ideas that are antithetical to an organization's mission. In essence, empowering economic activities facilitate an expansion of women's awareness of alternatives rather than reinforce restrictive notions of women's place in society.

Employment, as a form of economic participation, merits special attention as it has been emphasized as a key development tool (eg. NACSO 2010). I define employment as consistent work for which an employee is compensated in cash. Scholars contend that employment can empower women to meet basic livelihood needs, to have greater household autonomy, to challenge traditional gender roles, and to have increased self-confidence (Radel 2012; Foster et al. 2012; Gupta & Yesudian 2006). Consequently, employment impacts go far beyond numerical descriptions of male-female employee ratios and income differences (Elson 1999). An in-depth assessment of employment requires attention to the character of work (Jackson & Palmer-Jones 1999) and how that character affects other dimensions of women's lives.

Assessing the character of work requires a fuller understanding of the levels of control afforded to employees within their broader social structure (see Standing 1989). A job can incur its own costs, as women may have to pay for accommodation, equipment, transport, and clothing, especially when they must migrate to urban areas (Elson 1999). Employer flexibility can influence the amount of control women have over the number of hours they work, their ability to take leave, as well as when they do the work. Some types of work provide women with opportunities to network with other women (*power with*) (Tucker & Boonabaana 2012), as well as improve their skills, knowledge, awareness, and understanding, enhancing their control over future employment opportunities and life choices (Standing 1989). Additionally, the physical location of a job influences the range of alternative livelihood activities an employee

might access, as well as a women's ability to fulfill pre-existing household responsibilities (Tucker & Boonabaana 2012). Attention to the levels of control/power associated with specific employment therefore provides insights into its empowerment potential.

External constraints can limit the effectiveness of women's participation in employment and other economic activities, which is why some scholars emphasize the need for development organizations to broaden their focus beyond viewing empowerment solely as economic participation (Wrigley-Asante 2012; Kantor 2005). Instead, these scholars assert that economic-based development interventions should actively seek to change the social structures that subordinate women, especially intra-household power relations and patriarchal attitudes (Wrigley-Asante 2012; Kantor 2005). Challenging social structures can pose an ethical dilemma, however, as development organizations strive to operate in a culturally-sensitive manner. Sharp et al. (2003) found that cultural security and identification as a 'good woman' was more important to women in their study than increased economic participation. They contend that changes to women's priorities cannot be imposed by outsiders (Sharp et al. 2003). While I agree with Sharp et al. (2003) that organizations cannot (and should not) impose their priorities, I also think that economic interventions designed to empower women must identify and then challenge the cultural norms that prevent women from exercising control within their households and communities.

Identifying cultural norms that subordinate women requires an understanding of trade-offs. Patriarchal norms can serve an important function for women and challenging cultural norms without providing a viable alternative might leave women more vulnerable than empowered. In a situation where survival can be tenuous, women may subordinate their

individual interests to men who control property and exert social influence, providing them

with a promise of subsistence. The intra-household tradeoff between autonomy and a

subsistence guarantee is the basis of what Kandiyoti (1988) termed a "patriarchal bargain", a

set of rules that regulate gender relations in a given context. Naila Kabeer (1997:300) claims

that "patriarchal structures create gender-asymmetries in endowments, risks and constraints

which penalize autonomous behaviour for women but also offer them provision and protection

if they remain within its parameters; this is the basis of the `patriarchal bargain'". Economic

interventions that do not challenge the basis of the patriarchal bargain (i.e. men's control over

property, community and household-level decision-making) will therefore be ill-equipped to

empower women.

Thus far, I have discussed aspects of economic activities that are critical for evaluating

their empowerment potential at the individual scale. Scholars have shown that women can

experience empowerment in multiple domains by participating in economic activities. However,

economic participation may instead exacerbate existing constraints and/or not adequately

address patriarchal norms. A look at the community and regional level also suggests a mixed

potential for economic participation. Promoting economic participation may have a

destabilizing effect on subsistence-based communities by increasing market integration.

Increased market integration may undermine social resilience and negatively impact individual

women over the long-term (see section 2.4.1.3). Indeed, the use of employment as a

development tool has been criticized for promoting disruptive free market principles (Dressler

et al 2010). However, Dressler et al.'s (2010) critique does not apply as well to communities

that have already been forced into transition from a subsistence- to cash-based economy.

Larger market forces have long since imposed the need for cash in places like southern Africa where the migrant labor system and colonial policies have imposed the need for cash and which have given men more access to cash than women (Chanock 1991). An empowering intervention would therefore strive to address women's existing needs for cash, while strengthening social resilience.

Chapter 3   A Framework for Understanding Women's Empowerment

Building on the literature discussed in Chapter 2, I conceptualize women's empowerment over time as comprising two essential factors 1) increased awareness and 2) increased ability to exercise choice. **Figure 1** visually depicts the empowerment framework I developed. The framework offers a way to conceptualize how changes in empowerment can be assessed, by providing for a theoretical beginning point and endpoint in an assessment of an individual's empowerment over a pre-determined period of time. My framework accommodates women who at the beginning of a pre-determined time period had very low levels of awareness and choice. It creates a way to understand the empowerment experience of women who at one point in time had either great awareness of existing power relations and knowledge of alternatives, or who had broad capacity for exercising choice. In line with the literature, my framework also accommodates the assumption that women may have both high levels of awareness and broad capacity to exercise choice, but can still experience improvement in both dimensions.

An assumption embedded in the framework is that "disempowered" is a state of complete lack of choice and a total lack of awareness of existing power relations and knowledge of alternatives. However, in line with the previous literature review, my framework holds the state of being disempowered as a theoretical endpoint that does not exist in the real world. Similarly, 'empowered' is a theoretical but non-existent endpoint of complete awareness and total choice. The theoretical endpoints are used to conceptualize movement along a continuum between disempowered to empowered so that one can perceive changes in empowerment.

Figure 1: Visual Representation of the Empowerment Framework
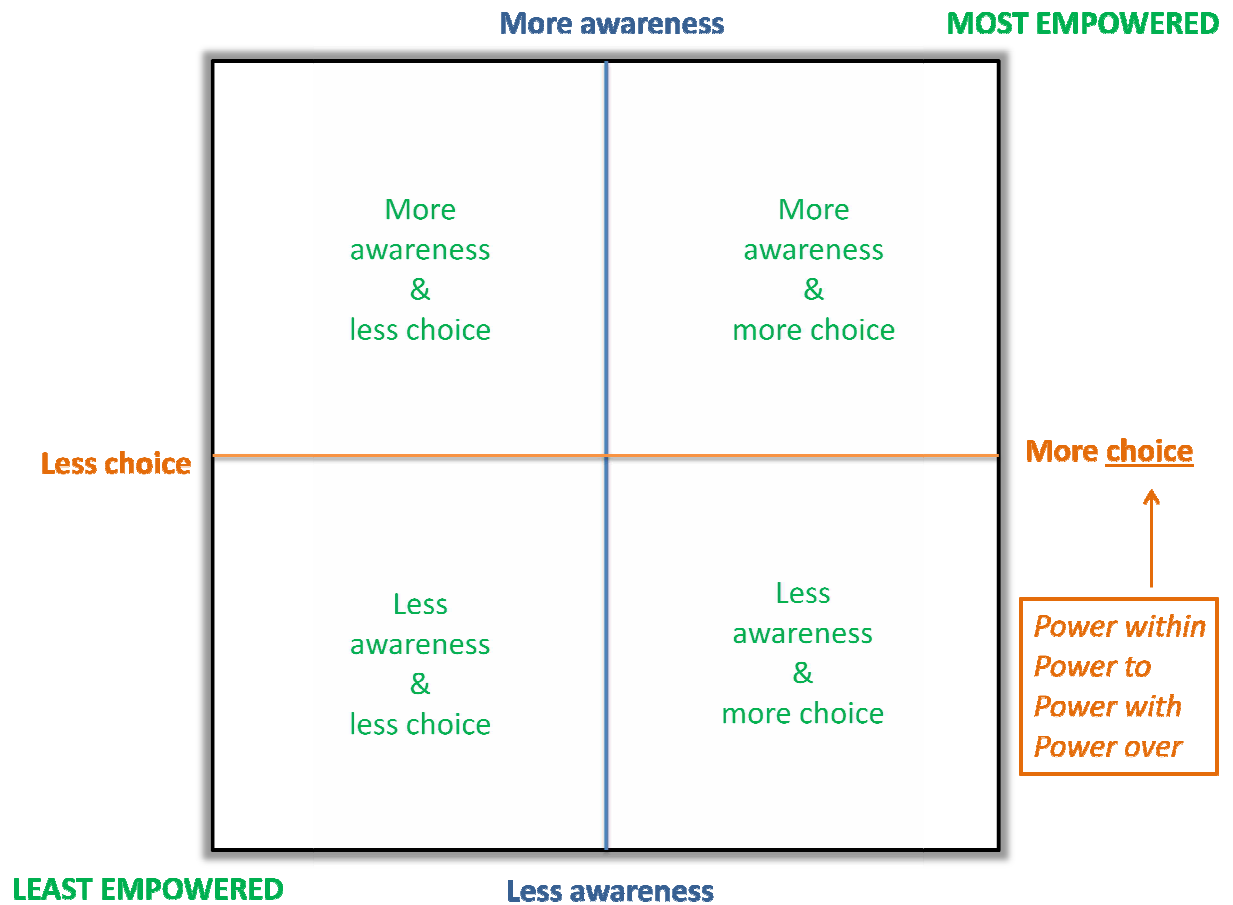
Movement can take place in either direction: toward or away from empowerment. While it is more difficult to picture a woman losing awareness of gender inequalities, it is not hard to imagine a woman losing power/choice. For example, loss of choice can occur when a woman's ability to work and gain income has been compromised, whether by illness, a controlling husband, or even discriminatory legislation. Her loss in ability to work is considered to be ground lost in a journey towards empowerment.

The awareness dimension is conceptualized in this framework as changes in awareness of prescribed gender roles within a given context and awareness of the positional power

associated with those roles, as well as an awareness of alternative arrangements between men and women. It is a change in awareness of gender subordination and the local manifestations of that subordination. Since my research revolved around the context of rural Caprivi, a Caprivian woman who expressed that she had become aware over a predetermined time period of alternative gender arrangements and/or issues of subordination was considered to be someone who has experienced increased awareness (i.e. that women have less decision-making power relative to men, have less control and access to property, are excluded from important livelihood activities, experience reduced control and dependence in marital relationships, and have diminished ability to defend themselves from HIV/AIDS). The framework is flexible in the sense that women could express topics of gender power that have not been found in the literature on Caprivian gender roles but that are in line with feminist and/or gender and development literature. Expression of an enhanced understanding of those topics was considered to indicate increased awareness.

The choice dimension of the framework incorporates the four types of power elaborated previously. It operates from the assumption that increases in any or all of the four powers equates to increased choice. In other words, a woman who has gained employment skills ("power to"), become involved in a women's support group ("power with"), and attained greater influence over the income she earns ("power over") over a pre-determined time period, is considered to have experienced increased choice, regardless of her level of awareness of gender subordination. Similarly, a woman who experiences increased self-confidence alone ("power within") is considered to have also experienced increased choice.

The framework facilitates the incorporation of benefits claims made in CBNRM policy documents and conservation literature. For example, if a woman received CBNRM-related skills training during the assessed time period, her "power to" was seen to have increased, as was her ability to exercise choice. Similarly, if a woman received cash from the Conservancy, her "power to" was seen to have been enhanced, provided she was able to decide how the income was spent "power over".

Since awareness and choice, individually, are necessary but insufficient conditions for empowerment, the framework operates from the assumption that there is some theoretical point where women gain enough awareness to be able to exercise choice in their own interests and hence be more empowered. The greater the combination of awareness and choice, the more empowered a women is. While enhanced awareness combined with no change in choice is still considered as a move towards empowerment, it is not considered to be as far along the continuum towards a state of empowerment as someone who experiences positive changes in awareness and choice. Similarly enhanced choice with no change in awareness does not advance a woman as far along the continuum towards empowerment as a combined change.

The empowerment framework can be used to assess both material changes in empowerment, as well as multiple meanings assigned to those changes. Its two dimensions suggest indicators that can be used for more objective assessment, as well as for investigating women's perspectives.

3.1   Research Questions

My research aimed to assess how CBNRM has affected women's empowerment in Kwandu Conservancy, and to understand its broader implications for women's empowerment in the context of CBNRM in southern Africa. Given the importance of both contextually-rooted and theory-derived concepts of empowerment, I assessed women's views on empowerment, as well as actual empowerment. By 'views', I mean contextually-rooted perspectives, feelings, symbolism and meanings assigned to empowerment and associated processes. In using the term 'actual empowerment', I denote structural and material aspects of empowerment, as well as the more 'objective' (directly observable) aspects. I employed my empowerment framework to assess both material and symbolic aspects of empowerment.

My review of the literature and my empowerment framework pointed to three research questions. First, I needed to assess how women's awareness of subordination had changed as a result of CBNRM in Kwandu Conservancy. In order to answer this question, I had to know more about how gender roles have been constructed in Kwandu Conservancy, and how those constructions have changed over the time period selected for the study. While the previous literature review highlighted some of the ways gender roles are currently constructed in the Caprivi, the few available published articles on the subject left gaps that needed to be illuminated. Since awareness of gender subordination needs to be evaluated in light of gender roles in the Caprivi, empirical knowledge of constructed gender roles was essential.

The second dimension of my framework was be addressed by assessing how women's opportunities to exercise choice have changed as a result of CBNRM in Kwandu Conservancy. Given the previously elaborated importance of recognizing the heterogeneity of gender, I

approached the question of enhanced choice through my interpretation of the perspectives of

women from a range of classes, ages, and ethnicities, as well as through the use of material

indicators of empowerment.

Since the framework shows that the four powers all contribute to choice, the second

research question was comprised of four parts. First, based on Mayoux's (1998)

conceptualization of "power to", I needed to establish how CBNRM has influenced women's

access to skills, rights, and resources in Kwandu Conservancy. Second, to understand Mayoux's

(1998) "power over", I assessed how CBNRM has influenced women's ability to influence

decision-making in Kwandu Conservancy. In light of time constraints, I focused on a) how

Conservancy benefits were distributed to households; and b) how income and other livelihood

resources were used in women's households. Third, to understand Mayoux's (1998) "power

with", I assessed how CBNRM has influenced women's perception of support (mutual trust,

willingness to discuss problems, and physical and emotional assistance) from other women in

the Kwandu community. Finally, to understand Mayoux's (1998) "power within", I assessed

how CBNRM has influenced women's sense of self-worth and confidence in themselves.

In order to understand the respective importance of indicators suggested by the

framework, indeed, even to choose which indicators to use, one needs to understand the

perspectives of female respondents regarding empowerment (Agarwal 1997b). Consequently, I

employed a third research question. I needed to assess how women themselves define

empowerment.

Women's definitions of empowerment may coincide or contradict with the framework I

derived from my readings of empowerment theory. However, their understanding of

empowerment facilitated a broader assessment of the politics of empowerment. A broader assessment was important because what more powerful actors (i.e. CBNRM leaders) believe and say about what empowerment is and how it should be enacted through conservation may differ considerably from what women desire.

3.2   The Nature of the Research Problem

Consideration of the complexity and urgency of the research problem informed my research methodology choices. The problem is both complex and urgent because it involves numerous people who have conflicting agendas. Agendas range from preserving or undermining the reputations of nongovernmental organizations to maintaining or accessing income-generating opportunities to conserving wildlife or advancing agricultural interests. Various and conflicting viewpoints needed to be critically interpreted based on a solid understanding of the local context, the struggles between people with different agendas based on local history, and each individual's position within the community based on gender, class, age, and ethnicity.

Additionally, dimensions of time and scale had to be taken into consideration. The Kwandu Conservancy program began in 1998, so the research needed to consider social and attitudinal changes that have occurred over time. Similarly, the scale of the research problem extends from individuals to households, communities, the Namibian nation and beyond. However, to make the research feasible for a doctoral program, the problem needed to have a narrowed focus on a particular scale.

The limited amount of previous research meant that my study was exploratory in nature. There is no firmly established method or framework for evaluating how CBNRM has affected women's empowerment. At the same time, there is much at stake with this research. Changes in conservation programs, livelihoods, and gender relations all have strong potential for loss or gain to individuals and organizations, and changes will have differential effects within a single group of people.

Chapter 4   Research Methods and Methodology

Given the complexity, urgency and exploratory yet high-stakes nature of the research

problem, I used a case study approach driven by assumptions and characteristics of an iterative-

inductive ethnographic methodology. Critical theory also informed the selected methodology to

address the research questions. Since the research problem revolves around female

conservancy members from different social positions with competing agendas and personal

values, a context-rooted, critical, and interpretive methodological approach was needed to

understand how CBNRM has affected women's empowerment. I begin this chapter with a

description of the values and assumptions underlying the research and explain how the

selected methodology aligns with the research questions and my stated values and

assumptions. I then outline the specific methods used to implement the methodology and

conclude with a description of the methods of analysis. Note that in employing the term

'methodology' I mean a theory-driven approach to research that is characterized by identifiable

epistemological, ontological, and axiological commitments, in this case, commitments aligned

with feminist and critical theory. In using the term 'methods', I refer to specific tools that can

be employed to collect and analyze data.

4.1   Researcher values and assumptions

Sociologists have long debated the extent to which researcher values influence

sociological research. I ascribe to Gewirtz & Cribb's (2006) position that researcher values are

embedded in and influence every stage of research, from topic selection to results reporting,

and that those values should be made explicit. Consequently, I use this part of the dissertation

to describe the major assumptions and values that drove my approach to the research problem. I then explain how the chosen methodology fits with my values, assumptions, and research questions.

As someone who ascribes to feminist theory, I operate from four key feminist assumptions: 1) that women's location within most social situations and their experiences are different from men's; 2) that women's situations are not only different, but they are unequal to men's; 3) that many women throughout the world are actively oppressed by men; and 4) that women's experiences of oppression, inequality, and difference vary based on their social position (i.e. by their class, race, ethnicity, etc.) (Lengermann & Niebrugge-Brantley 2004). In keeping with feminist and critical theory, I approach the research from a personal commitment to social transformation, and with a belief that the results of research should be used to create a more just society (see Neuman 2006; Lengermann & Niebrugge-Brantley 2004; Kobayashi 2001).

4.2 Methodological approach: assumptions behind critical theory-driven ethnographic methodology

Given that feminist and critical theories provided a foundation for the research, and since the research problem is complex and context-rooted, iterative-inductive ethnographic methodology was the most appropriate way to determine how CBNRM has affected women's empowerment. While ethnographic methodologies range from positivist to constructivist approaches, iterative-inductive ethnographic methodology (henceforth 'ethnographic methodology') is characterized as an in-depth interpretive study of people's accounts and actions in their everyday context (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007; Neuman 2006; O'Reilly 2005).

The axiological, epistemological, and ontological commitments behind ethnographic methodology match the nature of the research problem, as well as my personal values and assumptions as lead researcher.

An ultimate goal (the axiological position) of critical theory-driven ethnographic methodology is to bring less privileged perspectives to the forefront of discussion, to "…place non-dominate, neglected knowledges at the heart of the research agenda" in order to challenge dominate discourse (Kobayashi 2001; Smith 2001:25; Guba & Lincoln 1994). Ethnographic methodology is most suitable for creating opportunities for women to express their desires, needs, and experiences. It allows less privileged female voices, along with women's strengths and vulnerabilities, to challenge traditionally male-dominated CBNRM discourse.

I also chose to use ethnographic methodology because it acknowledges that meanings are socially constructed, and it facilitates access to multiple accounts of reality (Corbin & Strauss 2008; Kobayashi 2001; Smith 2001; Guba & Lincoln 1994). It operates from the ontological position that "…the world is not real in a fixed, stable or predictable way; that it is not entirely accessible; and that it does not appear empirically the same to everyone, no matter how carefully we look" (Smith 2001:24-5). Instead, ethnographic methodology assumes that dominate ideas about what is 'real' emanate from power relations (Kobayashi 2001; Smith 2001), an assumption that fits precisely with empowerment theory.

Since the world appears differently to different people, researchers and respondents alike cannot fully know the world, and both researchers and participants alike construct knowledge (Smith 2001). Consequently, ethnographic methodology operates from the

epistemological position that researchers must assess and recognize the "…the extent to which they are immersed in, rather than detached from, the production of knowledge" (Smith 2001:25). The role of researchers then is to act as interpreters of others' interpretations of the world (Smith 2001), to act as "translators of other persons' words and actions" (Corbin & Strauss 2008:49). The idea of researcher as interpreter/translator corresponds well with empowerment theory since empowerment theorists have asserted that patriarchy shapes how women view the world. Ethnographic methodology supports my role as a researcher who critically interprets women's views of the world in light of subordination and internalized oppression.

In order to interpret others' views of the world, qualitative methodology mandates researcher participation in the lives of respondents, typically through face-to-face interaction (Corbin & Strauss 2008; Lofland & Lofland 1984). Ethnographic methodology involves the researcher in respondents' lives, allowing the researcher to gain insight into inner experiences of the people they study (Corbin & Strauss 2008:12).

4.2.1 Positionality and reflexivity

Since the role of the researcher is to involve him/herself in the lives of respondents and to act as interpreter, ethnographic methodology necessitates that researchers practice reflexivity. Reflexivity is an ongoing examination of how one influences and is influenced by the research process (Corbin & Strauss 2008; Hammersley & Atkinson 2007). It means examining one's own motives and the effects of one's actions on people and the research process (Kobayashi 2001).

Reflexivity is essential to a feminist approach to research, and this research in particular, because it can help prevent the researcher from entering the role of oppressor. By staying aware of how my actions and approach influence my interpretations, I can better avoid the racist and imperialist tendencies that some feminists have ascribed to western researchers (see Gilliam 1991; Johnson-Odim 1991; Mohanty 1991a,b).

Acknowledging my own positionality in the research process is a first step for practicing reflexivity. In keeping with the tenets of feminist theory and ethnographic methodology, I acknowledge that I am not a neutral observer and that my identity and values influence my interpretations and interactions with people (Skelton 2001; Valentine 2001). I entered the field as an educated white woman who is relatively wealthy, childless, American, and in my early thirties. These identity categories shaped the way I was and am perceived by the community, providing increased access to some people and reduced access to others. Being married to and having taken the recognizable surname of a black South African also shaped and continues to shape how people categorize me. I acknowledge that my position in the network of power gives me greater choices than most of the people I interviewed and studied, and that my social identity shapes the way I view the world (see Carr 2003). During my fieldwork, I continuously reflected on how my social position might be affecting the research.

4.2.2   Role of theory

A review of ethnographic literature suggests that two fundamentally different views on the role of theory divide ethnographic research into two major approaches. Researchers have tended to apply ethnographic methodology from either a Grounded Theory or an

Extended Case Method (ECM) approach (Tavory & Timmermans 2009). While employing a

multi-year Extended Case Method was beyond the scope of this dissertation, I employed ECM's

basic assumptions in conducting a smaller-scale case study. ECM employs *a priori* theoretical

knowledge and elicits the (flexible) delineation of the case study before commencing fieldwork

(Tavory & Timmermans 2009). Therefore, ECM focuses on elaborating and reconstructing

theory (Tavory & Timmermans 2009; Burawoy 1998). I preferred to use an approach akin to the

Extended Case Method because it has traditionally been informed by the neo-Marxist principle

that external structures influence local processes and should be considered in local research

(Tavory & Timmerman 2009). This is important because I have previously shown that

oppression is often internalized and operates at the subconscious or unconscious level. As a

result, it is dangerous to evaluate respondents' perceptions and values based solely on their

lived experiences in the Kwandu context. Theory (along with reflexivity) is needed to guide my

interpretations of women's and men's experiences and perceptions so that unequal relations of

power can be perceived and critiqued. Consequently, my definition of empowerment ultimately

acts as a base from which I reconstruct theory.

4.2.3   Selection of the research site

Because of the close involvement with participants and attention to deeper meaning,

ethnographic methodology tends to focus on fewer cases (Neuman 2006). With this in mind, I

concentrated the study on a single conservancy in the Caprivi. I chose Kwandu Conservancy in

particular because it is one of the four oldest conservancies in the Caprivi; it had a female

Conservancy manager; it had created multiple opportunities for women to obtain income

through Conservancy-related employment; and most importantly, the Kwandu Conservancy committee personally expressed enthusiasm for my proposed research and stated that they were willing for me to use a translator from outside the community (see section 4.3.5 on translation issues). While my focus on a single conservancy may have sacrificed breadth, the depth from taking more time to establish open and trusting relationships with respondents was worth the trade-off because it generated a deeper description of women's experiences. At the same time, I recognize that important dimensions of empowerment may be excluded by focusing on one conservancy. For example, I was not able to assess how lodge employment affects women, nor how different conservancy constitutions, cultures, and ecological conditions affect women's empowerment.

4.3   Methods

In line with the assumptions of critical theory-driven ethnographic methodology, I used an iterative mixed-methods approach to address my two core research questions: 1) how female Kwandu Conservancy members' awareness of subordination has changed as a result of CBNRM, both from their perspectives and from a more objective stance; and 2) how female Conservancy members' opportunities to exercise choice have changed as a result of CBNRM, both materially and symbolically. This part of the chapter outlines the scale at which I directed my data collection, my method of sampling, my reasons for using a mixed-methods approach, and ultimately, how and why I used in-depth interviews, participant observation, document analysis, and feedback sessions to collect data. The methods section concludes with a brief discussion of how several field-based issues were addressed in order to collect data.

4.3.1 Scales and units of analysis

I aimed to assess women's awareness of subordination and ability to exercise power at the individual and household levels within Kwandu Conservancy. I chose the two scales because the literature review revealed that they are the least understood arenas and the levels at which power relations are most hidden (eg. Mayoux 1999). The household, for example, has been described as "the focus of men's power to define the product of women's labor, or their labor itself, as ideologically inferior, and ensuring that exchange between husband and wife, or men and women, can never appear to be equal" (Young 1979:17). It is also the location of subversive challenges to male power (Raju 2005). From a feminist perspective, research that exposes household power relations is crucial because it can do most for providing information that can liberate women. While my data collection efforts primarily targeted the individual and household levels, the very nature of the research problem is multi-scalar and complex. Since critical theory is "…rooted in the claim that all knowledge is historical" (Murray & Ozanne 1991:141), I also strove to gain information on local, regional, national, and global influences to help place different perspectives of CBNRM and empowerment in context, while helping to explain how CBNRM has materially affected women's lives.

4.3.2 Research phases

Research and data collection consisted of six phases: Scoping Phases A and B, the Proposal Writing Phase, and Research Phases I – VI (see Appendix 1). The research was designed, in part, to meet the research needs of Namibian CBNRM partners. Meetings with stakeholders in Windhoek, the Caprivi, and Swakopmund provided insights and guidelines for

formulating research objectives. The meetings occurred during October 20-25, 2008 and

September 3 – 22, 2009, comprising Scoping Phases A and B, respectively.

Respondent selection and data collection occurred in six phases (see Appendix 1), with

data analysis occurring throughout each phase. Phases were alternately located in the Caprivi

and Missoula, MT. Each research phase is described in more detail in the following sections.

4.3.2.1 Phase I: June 28 – August 11, 2010

The first phase consisted of a six-week visit to the Caprivi when I met with the major

gatekeepers in the area, modified my list of stratifiers based on preliminary interviews and

observations, and further developed and tested my interview guide. I initially met with CBNRM

partners in Katima Mulilo to obtain their recommendations for entering Kwandu Conservancy

and to learn of recent changes in the area. Next, I met with the Kwandu Conservancy

committee to explain the purpose of my research and to obtain their permission and assistance

to proceed.

Several Conservancy staff assisted me by giving me a tour of the Kwandu area,

introducing me to some of the residents, writing letters of introduction to the six traditional

authority courts (sub-*khutas*) in Kwandu, and describing characteristics of residents that they

believed differentiated people in Kwandu (for use as stratifiers). A Conservancy staff member

then accompanied me as I met with each of the six sub-*khutas* to explain my research

procedure and request permission to begin collecting data in their areas. Five of the six sub-

khutas granted permission immediately. The sixth sub-*khuta* required that I supply them with

proof of a study permit, a letter from my University, and a letter from the Conservancy. As I did

not have all of the documents in my possession at the time, I concentrated my work in the other five areas during Phase I. A translator was also interviewed, hired, and trained during Phase I.

In order to gain a better understanding of the local context and to improve the interview guide, I conducted nine observations of planned events prior to commencing interviews. Three of the observations consisted of spending a day each with three women as they engaged in routine activities. After over a month of interacting with and observing Conservancy staff, residents, and CBNRM partners, I began interviewing female Conservancy residents. A total of five female respondents were interviewed, and an additional three planned events were observed and noted (see Appendix 2).

Initially, I had hoped to obtain a list of Conservancy residents and members, plus a variety of other Conservancy documents that included pay records and a copy of the Conservancy constitution. Conversations with Conservancy staff alerted me there were no lists of residents or members, and some staff seemed reluctant to share the other documents.

4.3.2.2 *Phase II: August – September, 2010*

The second phase of my research occurred in Missoula, where I transcribed my interviews, read through my observation notes, and consulted with dissertation committee members. Using my preliminary data, I constructed my final interview guide using the empowerment indicators that emerged as being most relevant to the local context, Conservancy members, CBNRM staff, and empowerment theory. My empowerment indicators

were chosen from theory, adaptations of previous empowerment research, and from insights I gained as I collected and analyzed the initial data.

There are several criteria I used for prioritizing indicators and associated methods. First, I wanted to make sure that I selected at least two indicators for each of the five dimensions in my framework. Second, I wanted to personally collect data on material changes that 1) were claimed to be important by CBNRM staff (i.e. changes in the number of women's leadership positions, women's income, women's participation in meetings), and 2) that female Conservancy members asserted to be of great importance to them (i.e. changes in frequency and extent of wildlife crop damage, work hours, or more time with family members). Decisions about which material indicators I needed to ask about and try to observe were based in large part on what emerged from the Phase I interviews and observations. In response to data collected in Phase I, I prepared list of data collection priorities for Phase III.

4.3.2.3 *Phase III: September 27, 2010 – January 18, 2011*

The third phase of my research occurred in the Caprivi, primarily in Kwandu Conservancy. During the Phase III, I collected the most of my data. I obtained permission from the sixth sub-*khuta* to extend my research efforts into their area. I began homestays with families, camping in their courtyards for a period of about one week. I stayed with a total of four families, each located in Sesheke, Kongola, Mwanzi, or Sikaunga. I also camped at IRDNC's Kongola office where I interacted with Caprivi residents from outside the Conservancy. During Phase III, I interviewed 40 female respondents and 11 key informants, observed and noted 8 planned events, reviewed and noted Conservancy and Mashi Craft Market documents, and

conducted a back-translation of the interview guide. I also recorded notes from informal observations and interactions, as well as my interpretations of events and interviews, on an ongoing basis.

4.3.2.4 Phase IV: January – May, 2011

Phase IV began when I returned to Missoula where I concentrated on transcribing interviews and setting priorities for collecting data in Phase V. As I transcribed each interview, I recorded my initial interpretations and questions for the next round of data collection. I consulted with my committee members to ensure that I would pursue interviews and observations still needed to address my research questions. Ultimately, I made a list of specific factual questions that needed to be addressed and identified the characteristics of female respondents that I had not yet incorporated into my sample.

4.3.2.5 Phase V: May 22 – June 21, 2011

Again in the Caprivi, the fifth phase was dedicated to gathering the final data needed to address my research questions. I interviewed four female respondents and seven key informants, stayed with a fifth family (in Singalamwe), continued recording informal observations, conversations, and my interpretations, and provided nine feedback sessions.

4.3.2.6 Phase VI: June 2011 – present

Phase VI occurred in Missoula, with the exception of a week-long visit to the Caprivi. During this phase, I interviewed an additional two key informants over Skype and telephone. I

also completed all interview transcriptions and coding. This phase will be ongoing as I continue to analyze my data and write articles for future publication.

4.3.3   Sampling

Since an underlying value of my research was to gain a detailed description of women's experiences and viewpoints regarding CBNRM's effects on empowerment, I obtained most of my data from in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Purposive diversity sampling (or "sampling for range", Weiss 1994) for different social characteristics (eg. age, class, marital status, and ethnicity) and types of Conservancy participation was used to select female respondents. The intent of diversity sampling is to gain information from as many different types of female Conservancy members as possible in order to obtain as many perspectives and experiences of empowerment as possible (see Corbin & Strauss 2008; Valentine 2001; Burawoy 1998; Weiss 1994). Consequently, I initially set out to personally select respondents based on six major criteria: age (ages 18-29, 30-50, 60+), ethnicity (Mafwe, Mbukushu, and minority ethnic groups in the area), household wealth (low, medium, and high - with respect to other households in the Kwandu area), marital status (divorced, single, married, widowed), loyalty to one of two Traditional Authorities (Chief Mayuni, Chief Mamili), and Conservancy involvement (ranging from passive to highly involved). The stratifying criteria were then adapted to fit emergent phenomena encountered in the field. During the initial weeks of data collection, informal conversations with Kwandu Conservancy staff members and other informants made it clear that I should expand my initial list of stratifiers (personal communications on June 28 and July 7, 2010). Consequently, I included six additional criteria to the original list: education level

(ranging from no education to post-high school higher education), household type (female-headed or male-headed household), number of children (ranging from none to more than seven), location of residence (Kayuwo, Kongola, Sesheke, Sikaunga, Mwanzi, or Singalamwe), formal employment status (employed, unemployed), and religious affiliation (Seventh Day Adventist, New Apostolic, Dutch Reformed, Apostolic, United Reformed, or no religion).

Preliminary discussions with leaders and community members in the Caprivi suggested that a woman's involvement may be 'passive', meaning her involvement is limited to receiving cash or meat handouts. I chose to include passive Conservancy members in order to learn why they had chosen not to participate actively, in which ways they experienced the costs and benefits of Conservancy membership, and how their experiences differed from active members.

For the purposes of the research, I considered the first step towards involvement to be attendance of Conservancy meetings. Women who claimed to have attended one or more Conservancy meetings and/or received cash/meat handouts but who did not actively participate in other Conservancy activities were categorized as 'somewhat involved'. Next, women who claimed to have engaged in forms of Conservancy-related income (other than direct employment) and/or participated in an HIV/AIDS peer education group were categorized as 'involved'. Finally, at the latter end of the involvement scale, I categorized women who were currently or had previously been directly employed by the Conservancy as 'highly involved'.

Conservancy staff and key informants identified characteristics of poor and wealthy households that helped me identify a range of respondents. Respondents were not asked to identify their own wealth ranking, but they were asked several questions about their physical

assets and income, and observations of their homes and courtyards assisted with an assessment of their relative economic status. Conservancy staff and other key informants had indicated that wealthier households own cattle, have houses with steel roofs and wooden doors, and have larger courtyards. Additionally, wealthier households can afford to buy food from stores, can hire laborers, and can buy things from poorer community residents. Wealthier individuals have cleaner looking clothes with few or no holes in them. The poorest households, they explained, have no cattle or cattle-drawn plows and must farm with hand-held hoes, have houses with thatched-roofs and cloth doors, have smaller courtyards, if any, and may collect wild foods. Wealthier households have access to cash income through a household member, while poorer households lack a steady supply of cash income. My sample included a range of respondents with various levels of access to the physical assets and activities correlated with wealth (i.e. cattle, metal plows, large courtyards, consistent cash income, steel roofs, and clothing in good repair).

4.3.3.1 *Identifying respondents*

Respondents were identified through a variety of means. I solicited names of women who met my different sampling criteria by requesting Conservancy staff, respondents, a previous researcher in the area, NGO workers, CBNRM practitioners and others to provide names of women with particular characteristics (i.e. women who had participated in chili farming, women without children, or women who practiced traditional beliefs). I requested similar assistance from people I interacted with during participant observation. By obtaining names from a wide variety of people, I ensured that respondents were not selected based on

staff recommendations alone, as I did not want to have a biased sample. As women were identified, I kept track of who I had interviewed and the total respondents for each stratifier. Doing so helped me know what type of respondent I would need to select next so that I could more evenly distribute respondent numbers among the sample categories.

Since it was possible that a respondent could have been misidentified (i.e. be identified as a 'passive' Conservancy member when she is 'somewhat involved'), I asked all respondents questions about their presumed category (i.e. whether they participated in particular Conservancy activities). This allowed respondents to correct any of my misperceptions about her so that I could more accurately interpret her statements. When a respondent had been misidentified prior to an interview, I revisited my interview category tallies to ensure that I could still obtain roughly equal numbers of respondents in each category.

4.3.4 Characteristics of the sample

I personally interviewed a total of 49 female Conservancy residents. Two of the forty-nine respondents withdrew early from their interviews, citing concerns over a lack of direct benefits to them for their participation as well as stating that their responsibilities left them with too little time to continue. As a result, some respondents' profile information was not collected.

The sample reflects a wide range of demographic characteristics within the Kwandu area. Appendix 3 details the sample's characteristics, showing differences in age, ethnicity, number of cattle, marital status, Chief affiliation, Conservancy involvement, education, household type and number of individuals, children, residence, employment status, birthplace,

leadership status, and Conservancy membership. For example, respondents ranged in age from 19 to 95 years old, and respondents' household sizes ranged from having one person to 25 people. Respondents averaged 3.7 children, but ranged from having no children to having 12. Finally, while most of the sample was Seventh Day Adventist (71%), five other religious affiliations were represented.

4.3.4.1 Issues that needed to be addressed while collecting data

Fieldwork is replete with on-going negotiations and problem-solving. In this section, I describe how I addressed three common and major issues that can impede successful fieldwork. My past fieldwork experience, literature review, and conversations with scholars and Caprivi leaders suggested that negotiating community access, avoiding male hostility, and ensuring respondents' rights were three of the most important issues I would face. My methods for tackling these three issues are outlined in this section.

4.3.4.2 Accessing community members

Access must be continually negotiated among different people, as the viability of an ethnographic study depends on the willingness of respondents to engage with researchers (O'Reilly 2005; Valentine 2001). Scholars paint a picture of community access as a delicate dance between appearing to know too much and appearing too naïve (O'Reilly 2005). Access takes time because people need the opportunity adjust to the researcher's presence enough to resume their normal behaviors (O'Reilly 2005). Participant observation can improve opportunities for interview access (O'Reilly 2005). Consequently, my phased research plan was

designed to provide me with time to interact with Kwandu residents prior to requesting interviews from specific people.

The phased research plan also allowed me to combat a dominant stereotype about Americans, namely that they come for a visit, leave, and are never seen again. My phased plan meant that I returned to the Caprivi four times after my initial visit. Residents therefore had more opportunity to believe that I was invested in the area, and had extra time to speak amongst themselves about my presence in the area, enhancing their willingness to speak with me.

Obtaining permission from the major gatekeepers in the area, namely all six sub-*khutas* and the Conservancy management, was crucial for creating access to residents. With permission granted, Conservancy staff and *indunas* variably assisted me by introducing me to potential respondents. The introductions provided assurance to residents that my purposes were legitimate and that I was not working for the police, a common concern.

Conservancy and traditional leaders repeatedly requested that I give something back to the community. In response, I chose to provide free car rides to residents walking in the direction of my travel, provided I had empty seats and they exited within my planned travel area. Providing car rides to residents, male and female, helped me build rapport because it saved people time and money and facilitated more meetings with people.

Stays in the courtyards of respected families in the community improved my trustworthiness in the eyes of residents. Like homestays, camping at IRDNC's Kongola office increased my overall time in the area, giving people the opportunity to observe my actions.

Staying in the area thus made me a familiar sight in the area and improved the rapport I had with residents.

Finally, I adapted my dress and mannerisms to build rapport. I and the translator dressed modestly and appropriately for each setting. For example, we wore traditional wrap skirts when meeting with traditional authorities and during most of the fieldwork. I altered my traditional American tone, speech cadence, and speech volume to better match speech patterns in the area, garnering respect. In the Caprivi, I noted, it is conventional to pause respectfully before answering a question and to speak more softly and slowly than one does in America.

4.3.4.3 Avoiding male alienation and resentment

The primary way I built rapport with men in the area was by explaining the purposes of my research and gaining permission to work in the area prior to beginning my research. Gaining permission and assistance from Conservancy staff and the predominantly male traditional authorities was a crucial part of earning legitimacy in the area. In explaining my research, I explained why I was focusing on women in particular, stating that I understood men's interests to be of importance and that I would incorporate their viewpoints in my research.

Meetings with men and NGO-leaders in the Caprivi revealed that involving men in my research would be essential to retain their support. I realized their support would be essential to have continuous access to the community. In following with my promises and my research plan, I conducted interviews with male key informants, especially men in the Conservancy who were seen to be major decision-makers and/or had significant knowledge of the Conservancy.

Several interviews with men occurred early in Phase III the research, helping me to convey that I believed their viewpoints to be of importance.

Day-today informal and courteous interactions with men in the area also assisted with building rapport and avoiding alienation. I greeted everyone in Sifwe and with the customary hand-clap and handshakes. I also routinely asked men (and women) for assistance with introductions and with answering my numerous questions, which many people willingly provided.

4.3.4.4 Ensuring respondents' rights

I followed Institutional Review Board (IRB)-approved procedures (University of Montana IRB #136-10) for obtaining respondents' informed consent and ensuring their confidentiality. After potential respondents were identified, a Conservancy employee, *induna*, or Conservancy resident introduced me to the potential respondent. The recruitment script (Appendix 4) was used as a guide during the initial introduction, as I explained the purpose and voluntary nature of the research. Since the introductions occurred in the presence of a third party, I informed the potential respondents that if they agreed to meet with me, then I would return at an appointed time to conduct the interview without the third party. I also explained that the third party would not be informed about whether or not the respondent chose to keep her interview date and complete the interview.

At the interview appointments, I informed the potential respondents of their rights to refrain from participation, to withdraw at any time, and their rights to confidentiality, in accordance with the recruitment script (Appendix 4). I also informed them that they would not

receive any direct benefits for their participation. Respondents were not asked to sign a consent form because of its potential for confidentiality breaches. Instead, respondents verbally indicated their willingness to participate in accordance with my IRB-approved protocol.

Recruitment information was provided in the respondent's preferred language (Sifwe, Silozi, Hambukushu, or English). Employing a translator introduces potential for breaches in confidentiality, so I employed a well-recommended female translator with previous work experience with sensitive issues and confidential information. The translator was purposely selected because she lived outside the Conservancy and had no conflicts of interest. She was carefully trained and requested to sign a confidentiality agreement.

4.3.5 Translation

Discussions with researchers in the Caprivi indicated that while many Caprivians speak some English, a translator would be needed for communicating in Sifwe. The same researchers indicated that selecting a translator could be very political, as some conservancies insist on having a translator from their area and of their own choosing. Understanding that choosing a translator could create conflict, I broached the subject with the Kwandu Conservancy committee members in 2009 and again in 2010. They stated that while they preferred I select someone from Kwandu Conservancy, they were willing for me to choose an individual from outside the community. Choosing someone who was not too close to the community was important for ensuring that respondents felt free to discuss sensitive issues and to add an extra measure of confidentiality.

A Peace Corps volunteer who had worked in region for over two years recommended several possible female translators. It was important that a female translator be employed so that female respondents would feel less threatened. I interviewed possible translators to assess their level of English fluency, their willingness to live and work in the Caprivi over a number of months, their flexibility, and their level of professionalism.

I hired Charity Muwana, a young woman who speaks English, Subiya, Sifwe, and Silozi fluently. Charity, henceforth referred to as "the translator" or "the interpreter", comes from an ethnic group that is aligned with the majority of Kwandu Conservancy residents. Living in Masokotwane, she had few personal ties to Kwandu residents. Neither she nor her immediate family members worked for a conservancy or for a CBNRM-affiliated organization. I introduced the translator to Kwandu Conservancy staff and obtained their permission to work with her in Kwandu before commencing formal interviews.

Following advice from other researchers, I communicated from the start my expectations that the translator maintain confidentiality, use respectful facial expressions and tone of speech when translating, and translate as close to verbatim as possible. The translator read and signed a confidentiality agreement, guaranteeing that she would not identify any female respondents or key informants and that she would not disclose our working conversations about our activities and interpretations of events in the area. Prior to commencing interviews, I discussed the interview guide with the translator to ensure that word meanings were clear. She also assisted me with re-phrasing several questions to make them culturally appropriate prior to commencing interviews. The translator was also instructed not to

answer respondents' questions with examples, but rather to translate respondents' questions

verbatim so that I could offer clarification that would not lead the respondent.

A back-translation exercise was conducted on November 4th and 24th, 2010. The

translator read her translation of each question on the interview guide out loud in Sifwe, then

another Sifwe/English speaker translated what she said into English. The additional speaker had

no previous knowledge of the interview questions, and I recorded his spontaneous English

translation. Afterwards, the three of us discussed the few translations that did not match the

intended questions. I noted problems with the interpreter's translation of the words "affected"

and "influenced" on November 4th. For example, the interpreter had been translating "How

has the Conservancy affected your life?" as "How does the Conservancy be making your life to

be difficult?" and "How do you think the Conservancy has influenced women's difficulties?" as

"In which ways are the Conservancy bringing difficulties to the women?" With the assistance of

the second English/Sifwe speaker, the interpreter corrected her translation of "affected" and

"influenced" to be neutral in future interviews.

The back-translation exercise caught the "affected"/"influenced" translation error after

the eighteenth interview had been completed. However, only eleven of the initial eighteen

interviews were conducted in Sifwe. The remaining interviews were in English. All eleven

interviews have been analyzed and interpreted with the translation error in mind.

Interviews were translated *in situ*, meaning that respondents were asked questions in

English, with the translator repeating the same question in Sifwe, or occasionally, Subiya or

Silozi. The respondent then replied in Sifwe, or another language, and the interpreter

immediately translated the response into English. The immediate translation allowed me to

think of appropriate probes and follow-up questions. Given the necessity of translating during the interview, respondents were instructed, and occasionally reminded, to respond several sentences at a time so that the translator could interpret verbatim.

Over half of the respondent interviews were conducted in Sifwe, with nine interviews conducted in English without the assistance of a translator (see **Table 1**). Eight interviews were conducted in combination of Sifwe and English. One interview was conducted in Hambukushu with the assistance of a temporary translator from the Kwandu area. The temporary translator was not directly affiliated with the Conservancy or CBNRM.

Table 1: Languages Employed by Female Respondents during Their Interviews

Interview language	Number of Respondents
Sifwe	27
English	9
Sifwe & English	8
Hambukushu	1
Subiya	2
Silozi	1
Sifwe & Silozi	1

In addition to translating female respondent interviews, the translator was tasked with translating one key informant interview plus countless informal conversations and interactions I observed in the field. The translator accompanied me during all of my fieldwork, unless I was meeting with a fluent English-speaker for an interview. She provided advice for acting in a culturally-appropriate manner and discussed interpretations of observations and interviews.

4.3.6 Mixed methods data collection

A mixed-methods approach was needed distinguish between what respondents say and what respondents actually do. Such "amorphous social experiences" as gender oppression and empowerment are best studied through mixed methods, particularly a combination of interviews and participant observation (Lofland & Lofland 1984:14). While semi-structured interviews with female Conservancy residents formed the core of my data, I also employed key informant interviews, participant observation, document review, feedback sessions, and secondary sources of information to generate data.

Mixed methods allow researchers to gain access to conscious and subconscious behaviors, as well as behaviors that are not openly acknowledged in interviews. Mixed methods often yield contradictory data because in interviews people frequently share what they believe they should do or what they believe they are doing, instead of what they actually do (O'Reilly 2005; Valentine 2001). Instead of posing a problem, contradictions can shed light on social institutions and rules that people choose (consciously or subconsciously) to subvert (O'Reilly 2005; Valentine 2001). Contradictions between interviews and actual behavior can indicate differences between what people believe interviewers want to hear, or information they think interviewers should hear, instead of what respondents actually believe. In this way, mixed methods illuminate both material and symbolic aspects of empowerment. Finally, mixed methods can indicate errors in researcher interpretations of statements and/or actions, errors more probable in cross-cultural research in which mistranslation and cultural misunderstandings may convey wrong meanings, reducing what Robson (2002:370) has termed "inappropriate uncertainty".

I expected and found contradictions in findings from the five data collection methods because people have different viewpoints depending on their social location and life experiences. I discuss how I integrated the collected data in a subsequent section on analysis, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of each method. For now, I describe how each method was implemented in the field.

4.3.6.1   Semi-structured, in-depth interviews of female Conservancy residents

I personally interviewed a total of 49 female Conservancy residents ("respondents") (see Appendix 3), with assistance from a translator when needed. The "sampling" section provides a description of the criteria I used to select the respondents. A list of topics, probes, and follow-up questions was used to guide my semi-structured interviews. The interview guide ensured that the same topics and themes were covered in each respondent interview so there was some comparability across the sample. I did not use a strict set of questions nor ignore serendipitous opportunities for unforeseen dialogue during interviews, since I fully recognized that I would not be able to foresee every concept that is important for understanding CBNRM and empowerment (see Lofland & Lofland 1984).

While I allowed both participant observation and document analysis to inform what I asked during in-depth interviews, I primarily used my research questions to guide what I asked female Conservancy members. My interview guide, finalized in Phase II, is located in Appendix 5.

I individualized interviews by ordering interview guide questions in response to topics raised by respondents, with the goal of creating more of a dialogue than a question-response

format. As suggested by the interview guide, I asked more general questions at the beginning of each interview, and more specific and sensitive questions at the end of each interview. While the order of questions varied in response to topics raised by respondents, I always tried to ask general questions at the beginning of a new topic and then follow respondents' answers with more specific follow-up questions.

I also individualized interviews by asking questions particular to the respondents' experiences and involvement in the Conservancy. For example, if a respondent worked for the Conservancy, I would ask specific questions about her work duties and challenges, questions that I would not ask unemployed respondents. I would also begin interviews by focusing initial questions on a respondent's involvement with Conservancy activities, when applicable, as it provided a safer-seeming platform for entering the interview.

Two follow-up interviews were conducted when time constraints did not permit the pursuit of all interview topics and when a set of new questions emerged for the respondent after the interview was completed. Other respondents were often encountered informally after the interviews, so I would ask any factual, follow-up questions informally rather than enter into a recorded follow-up interview.

Following Kobayashi (2001), I remained as neutral as possible during formal interviews and avoided leading questions. At the same time, I acknowledge that complete neutrality is impossible so my analysis was aided by keeping a diary of my emotional responses and reflections. A diary of emotions and perceptions allows researchers to check for evidence of interpretive bias in subsequent interview analyses (O'Reilly 2005; Kobayashi 2001). I also

frequently discussed interviews with the translator, asking for clarification on anything I did not understand and seeking her interpretive insights.

All of the female respondent interviews were digitally recorded except for three that were recorded verbatim by hand, at the request of the respondents. I personally transcribed all the recorded interviews. Five interviews were transcribed in the field during Phase III, with the remainder transcribed in Missoula during Phase II (4 interviews), Phase IV (32 interviews) and Phase VI (5 interviews). One interview transcription date was not recorded.

Total interview time per female respondent ranged from 30 minutes to 120 minutes, not including my introductory explanations of respondents' rights and confidentiality guarantees. The average duration of total interview time per female respondent was 64 minutes. Interview range and average interview duration were calculated without including the three handwritten interviews and one recorded interview, as the durations of these four interviews were not recorded.

4.3.6.2 Key informant interviews

I personally interviewed a total of fourteen men and six non-resident women (henceforth termed "key informants"). The key informants included male and female practitioners from non-governmental organizations, Namibian government employees, foreign government employees, as well as male traditional authorities, religious leaders, and Kwandu Conservancy staff members. The key informants were selected based on their direct experience with CBNRM, the Caprivi Region, Kwandu Conservancy operations, and/or their expertise and experience with contextual issues in the Kwandu area.

I individually designed an interview guide for each key informant based on the area of his/her expertise. The guide ensured that I covered the topics necessary to fill factual information gaps in my research and to glean informants' perspectives on issues overlapping their personal experience, CBNRM, gender, empowerment, and/or Kwandu Conservancy. As with the respondent interviews, I ordered questions and topics in response to informants' statements to foster more of a dialogue than a question-and-response format. I also saved sensitive questions for the latter part of each interview.

As with respondents, I obtained verbal consent to interview each key informant and ensured that I would maintain confidentiality. All key informant interviews were conducted in English, with the exception of a single interview conducted in Sifwe with assistance from the translator. Two key informants participated in follow-up interviews.

Two key informants were interviewed over the phone or Skype, while I conducted all other key informant interviews in-person in Namibia. All key informant interviews were digitally recorded, with the exception of a single interview that was recorded verbatim by hand.

The total interview time per key informant ranged from 40 minutes to 260 minutes, not including my introductory explanations of informants' rights and confidentiality guarantees. The average duration of total interview time per key informant was 70 minutes. Interview range and average interview duration were calculated without including the single handwritten interview, as the duration of that interview was not recorded.

4.3.6.3 Participant observation

Participant observation is not a single technique, but numerous techniques that include informal interactions, homestays, demonstrations from respondents, walk-alongs, and planned and opportunistic observations (Dear 2008; Mitchell 2007). What distinguishes participant observation from other clusters of methods is that it "…involves living, working or spending periods of time in a particular 'community' in order to understand people's experiences in the context of their everyday lives" (Valentine 2001:44). In short, I conceptualize participant observation as a cluster of research techniques that take place within the context of respondents' lives. While some have considered formal interviews to be one form of participant observation (eg. Mitchell 2007), I group informal interviews with participant observation but relegate formal interviews and household surveys to their own categories.

My primary objective for using participant observation was to develop a richer understanding of local context. I also used observations to challenge my assumptions, raise contextually-relevant issues in my formal interviews, and assist with my interpretations of interview responses and other data.

I engaged in both planned and opportunistic observations. Planned observations consisted of attending community and Conservancy meetings, spending days observing women in routine activities, and attending church services, funerals, and festivals (see Appendix 2). Planned observations meant that I placed myself in situations where I could collect more information related to my research questions and issues that emerged from in-depth interviews. Planned observations also served the double purpose of increasing my exposure to new people so that I could gain more trust in the community. Ultimately, what I chose to

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observe and who I chose to speak with was largely informed by the indicators I chose in Phases I and II and by what I learned as I collected and analyzed data (see O'Reilly 2005).

Opportunistic observations occurred on an ongoing basis. They included conversations with people as I travelled from one place to another ("go-alongs", see next paragraph), conversations with people during homestays, and chance encounters. These observations deepened my understanding of life in the Caprivi, enriching what I knew about the context and challenging my assumptions.

"Go-alongs" consist of asking questions, listening, and observing as a researcher accompanies informants on their natural outings (Kusenbach 2003). The goal of a go-along is to "actively explore (the) subjects' stream of experiences and practices as they move through, and interact with, their physical and social environment" (Kusenbach 2003:463). The fact that go-alongs occur in a setting that is comfortable for the informants facilitates access to more hidden emotions and interpretations than one might normally access in interviews or through other participant observation techniques (Kusenbach 2003). Go-alongs typically occur on foot or while riding in a car and have productive windows of about one hour to 90 minutes (Kusenbach 2003). I used go-alongs to access women's and men's feelings about topics that might have been too uncomfortable to share in a formal interview.

4.3.6.3.1 Recording observations

I carried a notebook with me everywhere I went so that could record observations and experiences related to the selected indicators. At the end of each day, I wrote my short notes into full field notes while my memory was still fresh (see Corbin & Strauss 2008; O'Reilly 2005).

As part of my ongoing analysis, I also wrote memos of ideas and insights (O'Reilly 2005). I regularly recorded my feelings and reactions to life in the field so that I could remain aware of how my own emotions and personal biases were influencing my observations (O'Reilly 2005).

4.3.6.4 *Document review*

I obtained and copied, where possible, Conservancy and Mashi Craft Market documents relevant to the empowerment indicators. Documents included Mashi Craft Market craft records, Conservancy employment records, and the old and new Conservancy constitutions (see Appendix 6 for a complete list and description). As I read the documents, I took notes and wrote analytical memos, discussed below (Corbin & Strauss 2008; O'Reilly 2005). I used my initial analysis to inform my decisions about which activities to observe and which questions to ask and of whom.

4.3.6.5 *Feedback sessions*

Feedback sessions served two primary purposes. First, they were a mechanism for sharing preliminary findings with Conservancy residents and stakeholders, ensuring that I did not only engage in data-taking, but also in data-sharing. Second, the feedback sessions provided information on residents' and stakeholders' reactions to my preliminary findings and a way to test my interpretations of the data.

I gave a total of ten feedback presentations to male and female Conservancy residents, Conservancy staff, CBNRM partners, and higher education officials (see Appendix 7). I presented in all but one of the six sub-*khutas* in Kwandu. The sixth traditional authority did not accommodate my presentation at the appointed time, and I was unable to reschedule. My

presentations to traditional authorities lasted about 45 minutes, including the time for the

translator to interpret my words into Sifwe. At the beginning of each presentation, I thanked

the *indunas* and other attendees for the opportunity to speak and explained that I understood

them to be more knowledgeable than me about their own area. However, I explained, I wanted

to share with them what I had learned and hear which parts they agreed and disagreed with

from my presentation. Consequently, after my presentations, I engaged the sub-*khutas* in

discussions that ranged from half-an-hour to more than two hours. Since the discussion was

translated between Sifwe and English, I had time to note the questions and comments provided

in the feedback sessions, as well as the gender of the speakers.

4.3.6.6 Secondary data

While interviews, participant observation, and document review comprised my primary

data-gathering techniques, I obtained some of my data on material changes from previously

published research in the Caprivi and Namibia as well as Namibian government reports. While

there are a number of studies and secondary data sources on material changes in Kwandu

Conservancy (i.e. Bandyopadhyay et al. 2009; MOHSS 2008, 2004; Thomas 2008, 2007;

Mulonga 2003; Murphy & Mulonga 2002a,b; NPCS 2001), there is no published literature that

focuses on women's perspectives of empowerment and conservation activities in Kwandu. This

made my collection of women's perspectives all the more important.

4.4 Ongoing, cumulative analysis

From the iterative ethnographic approach, analysis begins from the first period of data

collection and continues as dialogue between the researcher, theory, context, and data until

the reconstructed theory matches the data (Burawoy 1998). The purpose of analysis then is to generate, develop, and verify concepts through the interpretation of data (Corbin & Strauss 2008), but in dialogue with theory and context (Burawoy 1998). Consequently, analysis began with the very first interview, document review, and observation, and it informed each subsequent act of data collection in what Hammersley & Atkinson (2007:160) term a "funnel" of data collection that grows increasingly focused over time.

Memos formed a central part of my analysis. Memos were used for each of the methods described above, and diagrams were used intermittently to keep a log of my insights, conceptual reflections, emergent questions, and theoretical connections as they evolved over the course of my fieldwork (see Corbin & Strauss 2008; O'Reilly 2005). Memos and diagrams were read through at intervals and used to inform my interpretations of interviews, documents, observations, and feedback sessions and to keep an ongoing log of my evolving understanding.

My methods of analysis differed slightly depending on the type of data, as data on perspectives of empowerment differs from data on material indicators of empowerment. Analysis of symbolic data allows for conflicting viewpoints, while analysis of material indicators requires more rigid validity testing through triangulation, as discussed in the next sections.

4.4.1 Interview analysis of symbolic data

While analysis of interviews began with the first interview, formal coding began after 67 of the 69 interviews were collected and transcribed. Both field notes (observations, feedback sessions, and informal conversations) and interviews were formally coded. Coding was used to

analyze symbolic data. I used QSR NVivo 9 software to help me retain the linkages I made

between the data and my categorizations.

I recognize that organization software does not do the categorizations for me.

Consequently, I used my own thoughts and ability to recognize patterns and connections. I used

data from participant observation and document analysis as well as my memos to help me

draw connections and recognize patterns. I also considered the translation errors I noted in

section 4.3.5 when interpreting and coding data.

I made sure that my categorizations (codes) were then formulated into well-defined

themes and that the relationships between the themes were sufficiently formulated to create a

reconstructed theory (see Fereday & Muir-Cochrane 2006). Therefore, coding served as an

intermediary step in analysis and a formal system for organizing my data (Bradley *et al.* 2007),

enabling me to interpret connections between categories and explain them in writing.

Categorizing data into well-formulated concepts and theory began within each

interview, then extended outwards across each set of data (see Jackson 2001). I began analysis

by first looking for themes that emerged within each interview. Reading each interview for

overall understanding helped me identify themes and retain awareness of connections

between the concepts and their context (Bradley *et al.* 2007). I looked for themes suggested by

theory and external and internal contexts and noted any new connections I observed in the

individual interview memos. I recorded interpretations and other insights in a memo dedicated

to each interview.

Memos also served as a way to record connections I observed between interviews.

Memos were used to record themes that emerged from each subsequent interview and

became codes. Initial coding began during Phase VI of my research. While I discussed my list of codes with committee members, I conducted all of the actual coding on my own. Researchers have suggested that a single researcher doing all of the coding can be preferable "...where being embedded in ongoing relationships with research participants is critical for the quality of the data collected" (Bradley *et al.* 2007: 1761). Given repeated contact required to gain access to respondents, as well as needing first-hand knowledge of the Kwandu context to build rapport with respondents and interpret their statements, it was most appropriate for me to code the data.

Competing and/or conflicting statements between interviews were not perceived as problematic, provided the statements were symbolic data. Ethnography operates from the assumption that the world is socially constructed - that people impose different meanings on the same phenomena. Since peoples' meanings are associated with power, my interpretations considered the social position of each respondent. I found themes from different views of the same phenomena that I was able to eventually knit together into a complex narrative that shows how CBNRM has affected gender empowerment. My narrative includes examples of conflicting and competing ideas, and my interpretations of those ideas, presenting a nuanced view of power relations in the Conservancy.

4.4.2   Interview and field note analysis of data on material indicators

Numerical data was entered into Excel spreadsheets to facilitate analysis. Basic statistical operations were used to interpret employment and income data (i.e. average income

and salary ranges) as well as to group and numerically describe characteristics of the respondent and informant samples.

Interpretation of data pertaining to material indicators required that inconsistencies be clarified to obtain 'true' facts, or objective data. I asked myself questions about formal interview data as I interpreted interviews, so that I did not take statements at face value. Becker (1958:654-5) suggests a series of questions that I used in my analysis (among others): "Does the informant have reason to lie or conceal some of what he sees as the truth? Does vanity or expediency lead him to misstate his own role in an event or his attitude toward it? Did he actually have an opportunity to witness the occurrence he describes or is hearsay the source of his knowledge? Do his feelings about the issues or persons under discussion lead him to alter his story in some way?"

The same logic was applied to questions about behaviors that I observed and information I obtained through informal conversations. Becker (1958) notes, and I concur, that even when follow-up research indicates that a person has reported something inaccurately or even intentionally misled a researcher, there is still much that can be gained from the information. False statements can be interpreted in light of the respondent's perspective from a given social position (Dear 2008; Becker 1958). As already discussed, perspectives are also a fundamental component of my research, so even when interviews and observations did not provide reliable information about material conditions, they still offered important data.

Frequent checks for inconsistencies between interviews, observations, document review, and secondary sources were used to determine areas that needed clarification so that objective data could be shown to be valid. For example, one respondent claimed to have no

cattle. When I stated that I had observed cattle in a kraal near her courtyard, she acknowledged that she had cattle and cited their number.

4.4.3 Observational data analysis

Comparisons between observations and context are an important part of interpreting observational data. I compared specific observations with other observations and embedded each observation in the larger context (see Dear 2008). Like Dear (2008), I "…situate[d] the part (the specific observed phenomenon) in relation to other parts, as well as within the whole (larger social and physical context)" (Dear 2008:89). In this way, my interpretations drew upon informal and formal interviews, other observations, previous studies, and gender empowerment theory.

Ultimately, I realized that my interpretations should inspire "trustworthiness" Mishler's (1990). Mishler (1990:419) defines validation as "…the process(es) through which we make claims for and evaluate the 'trustworthiness' of reported observations, interpretations, and generalizations. The essential criterion for such judgments is the degree to which we can rely on the concepts, methods, and inferences of a study, or tradition of inquiry, as the basis for our own theorizing and empirical research" (Mishler 1990:419). There are several ways that I worked to ensure that my interpretations were valid.

First, it was crucial that when I noted observations I recorded them in as much detail as possible (O'Reilly 2005). I also distinguished my direct observations from my interpretations of those observations (O'Reilly 2005). This allowed me to discuss my observations and my

interpretations with other people. Having a clear description of the initial observation allowed me to elicit and evaluate other possible interpretations.

Second, immediately after I observed and/or recorded my interpretations of data, I discussed them with the translator. As the translator was born and raised in the Caprivi, she had a much greater understanding of the local context than I did. Since she also witnessed and/or heard many of my recorded observations, she was able to provide a great deal of insight into my interpretations. Occasionally, our interpretations differed, and I made note of those differences and the reasons behind the different viewpoints. Often, differences in our interpretations were directly linked to my theory-based perspectives. For example, we had a discussion about a commonly heard complaint about "women who talk too much". The translator interpreted the complaint as merited by culture and tradition, while my readings of Foucault and Bourdieu led me to a different conclusion.

Thirdly, I discussed some of my observations with key informants to check their interpretation against my own and to rethink my interpretations when necessary. The feedback sessions proved to be a helpful way to understand how my preliminary interpretations were viewed by groups of people. While I did not always agree with some of the interpretations that differed from mine, the differences themselves improved my understanding of local context. I expect that interpretive contradictions often happened when people had strong agendas that contradicted with my research aims and/or when their ideas about roles of men and women were based on patriarchal notions. A key example was disagreement with my interpretation of women's physical placement at the Annual General Meeting. While I interpreted women's being seated behind men on the ground as undemocratic, some key informants in the Caprivi

claimed that it was not seen to alienate women from the decision-making but rather to be an important part of their culture.

4.5 Selecting excerpts for inclusion in the text

Exemplars were selected from interviews to represent sets of ideas and themes that emerged during the analysis and formal coding process. Some excerpts served as exemplars of an idea expressed by a single individual or a few people when the idea showed a variation in perspective within a larger theme. For example, interview data showed that most respondents believed that having a husband was an essential part of earning respect in the Kwandu area. However, several women expressed a very different viewpoint, stating that they did not believe women needed a husband to be considered a "real woman". Excerpts from their interviews were included as exemplars of the different perspective about marriage. In that circumstance, as in others, it was important to select exemplars that showed competing perspectives between respondents.

When numerous respondents expressed a similar idea, I would choose one or several exemplars from the group to illustrate the idea. When choosing from a large set of quotes, I would choose exemplars that illustrated the idea in the clearest language while still showing nuances in meanings. I was careful to consider possible translation errors when selecting exemplars.

4.6 Strengths and weaknesses of different kinds of data

Since I could not foresee every concept pertinent to my research topic, in-depth interviews were chosen as a means for allowing respondents to introduce concepts of

importance to them (Belsky 2004). In-depth interviews provided space for me to clarify and follow up on the issues raised by respondents (Valentine 2001), as well as to introduce questions pertinent to an individual's particular life experiences. In this way, in-depth interviews facilitated the documentation of a wide range of experiences while allowing marginalized voices to be heard and to some extent guide the research process (O'Reilly 2005; Smith 2001). Allowing rural women in particular to speak for themselves and to share their perspectives ensured that my research would have greater opportunity for challenging traditional power structures.

In-depth interviews not only provided opportunity for women to share their perspectives on empowerment, but the interviews allowed space to obtain more factual data pertaining to past and present occurrences in Kwandu. Incorporating material indicators into interviews allowed me to infer Conservancy impacts on empowerment.

The quality of interview data depends on its sampling procedure (see section 4.3.3). Purposive sampling was employed to eliminate biases towards elites, males, and wealthy individuals and to ensure that a wide range of perspectives were gathered (Chambers 1983). However, dynamics between the researcher, the questions, and the selected respondents serve as sources of bias that can be ameliorated but never eliminated. Interview statements are always influenced by the "character of the situation", meaning that interviewers may unconsciously give leading nonverbal cues even when they ask neutrally-worded questions (Hammersley 2008:99). Similarly, what people say is always shaped by convention, by what they think the interviewer wants, and by the questions they have been asked (Hammersley 2008). Consequently, I cannot assume that interview responses directly represent informants'

real thoughts and feelings (Hammersley 2008). Additionally, the accuracy of factual responses can be undermined by both memory lapses and response bias (Robson 2002). Therefore skepticism was required for improving the quality of my interpretations, even when deliberate misrepresentation was ruled out as a possibility (Hammersley 2008).

4.6.1 Strengths and weaknesses of participant observation

Participant observation lends insight into local context and assists with collecting data about structural changes linked to particular forces. First, participant observation builds depth of understanding about a particular context, generating an 'insider's view' (Belsky 2004). It can add rich detail to formal, in-depth interviews (Yung 2003), allowing the researcher to collect enough detailed information about a local context to generate a "thick description" (Geertz 1973 cited in Hudson & Ozanne 1988). Participant observation therefore adds another vantage point, another type of information to enlarge general understanding and interpretation of different kinds of data.

Second, observations can be used to validate or refute claims about a particular context. For example, if someone claims that women are banned from Conservancy meetings, but then women are observed at a meeting, one could conclude the person's statement is false. This leads to a third usage of participant observation. Observations can assist with interpretations of any misleading, false or contradictory statements in formal interviews. Observations can help a researcher understand the way social power is distributed in a particular context and why people hold particular viewpoints (see Belsky 2004; Yung 2003). It provides opportunities for comparisons between what people say and what people actually do. This can facilitate an understanding of the inner dynamics of social relationships that may not be overtly

acknowledged or even recognized (Valentine 2001). It provides access to more subjective aspects of empowerment, to subconscious aspects that are not revealed in interviews but that would be noticeable to a trained outsider, and to contradictions between stated realities and other realities – important from the viewpoint that oppression is internalized.

Fourth, observations can be used to note body language and gestural cues during formal interviews (Angrosino 2005), assisting with interpretations of respondents' statements. Fifth, participant observation can enable opportunities for in-depth, informal dialogue during which respondents may be far more at ease than they are during more formal interviews (see Kusenbach 2003). Like semi-structured interviews, participant observation reduces the hierarchical spaces between researcher and informants, allowing the informants to introduce issues of importance to them (Belsky 2004). It can also facilitate the exploration of topics that participants are unwilling to discuss even in informal ways (Creswell 2003). This is because participant observation provides space for unusual and unforeseen aspects to emerge (Creswell 2003).

Like interviews, participant observation data has several weaknesses. First, it can be difficult to know the extent to which the researcher's presence has influenced the behavior of people being observed (Robson 2002; Gold 1958). As a white woman who had spent less than a year in the area, it was impossible to be 'immersed' in the culture and therefore residents were consistently aware of my presence. While I attempted to be as unobtrusive as possible and to keep my opinions to myself during informal interactions, it was impossible not to influence behaviors in some way.

Second, the depth of insight offered by observation depends on the events one chooses to observe and to some extent on chance. Important aspects of people's lives will inherently remain invisible, as observations are superficial (Kusenbach 2003). Chambers (1984), for example, has lamented researcher bias towards the dry season when poverty is less visible than it is in the wet season. While I conducted fieldwork at the beginning of the rainy season, I was not present during February, reportedly one of the worst months for hunger. Consequently, my participant observation data did not capture all of the hunger season. It was also impossible to observe every type of event of importance to fully understanding the context.

4.6.2 Strengths and weaknesses of document review

Documents provide an indirect measure of past and current practices. Unlike interviews and participant observation, documents are nonreactive; they are not affected by my reading of them (Robson 2002). Furthermore, they can provide access to unpublished data that is central to research questions. The written data is not deterred by recall problems like interviews and informal conversations.

On a negative side, document data requires skepticism and an analysis of the motives and positions of the people who recorded the data. There is no guarantee that the data has been accurately recorded, and significant gaps may occur in the provided information. Records may also require additional interpretation from existing staff, which can introduce another potential source of bias.

4.6.3 Strengths and weaknesses of feedback sessions

Feedback sessions provide a mechanism for understanding how people view interpretations of the data and provide an opportunity to test the quality of interpretations. Feedback sessions can make conflicting viewpoints in a group evident, as well as points of agreement.

While feedback sessions can introduce uncertainty about interpretations when warranted, they can also add confusion. Furthermore, it cannot be assumed that every opinion in a group can be aired, so points of contention or agreement may be silenced by more dominant voices in a group.

4.7 Integrating the collected data

Document reviews, interviews, and observations all provided data indicative of material conditions in Kwandu Conservancy. For example, document data provided numerical employment data and interviews and observations provided information about employment procedures and past events. Where possible, data about material conditions were triangulated by pursuing a second or third source (i.e. a second or third interview) to substantiate a statement about a procedure or past event. Where conflicting information was present, more information was pursued to get a more accurate picture of the procedure or event. For example, two respondents made conflicting statements about whether Kwandu Conservancy was the first in the region to employ a female Game Guard. I searched for another source of information and found a news article supporting the first respondent's claims. I then looked at the work history of the two respondents and saw that the first respondent's work duties would

have placed that individual in a situation where he/she would have had more accurate information about the state of the region's Conservancies. I therefore reported the first respondent's claim to be correct. Where conflicting ideas about a past occurrence were present and no other information could assistance with the denial or confirmation of the accounts, the lack of clarity was noted.

After reporting material conditions and noting areas of uncertainty in the material data, I used symbolic data from interviews, participant observations and feedback sessions to build a thick description of how people in Kwandu have responded and continue to respond to material realities. In reporting symbolic data, I have not attempted to triangulate data or understand a single reality. Instead, I have provided exemplars to show how perspectives about material realities differ and how human interpretations of past and present events are influenced by their social position.

4.8 Evaluative criteria

The narrative I generated from this case study should be evaluated based on criteria developed for ethnography and/or methodologies of similar philosophical commitments. Hermeneutic methodology operates from the shared antifoundationalist tenet that "the credibility of the interpretation cannot be inferred separate from its reading" (Holt, 1991:59 cited in Patterson & Williams 2002:32). Therefore, this case study should be evaluated using Patterson & Williams' (2002) three criteria of persuasiveness, insightfulness, and practical utility. The three criteria are discussed below, with elaboration drawn from ethnographic and ECM-based research literature.

4.8.1 Persuasiveness

Rather than serving as an indication of absolute truth, the persuasiveness criterion refers to whether a researcher provides enough evidence for others to determine whether or not his/her claims are reasonable (Patterson & Williams 2002). Persuasiveness "…refers to the notion of providing the reader enough access to the data to make an independent assessment of the warrants for a particular set of conclusions" (Patterson & Williams 2002:33). Yet determining whether a report's conclusions are "reasonable" requires more elaboration.

The concept of credibility can be used to augment the persuasiveness criterion. Altheide & Johnson (1998) contend that researchers should explain how they claim to know what they know and include explicit statements about their own position and perspectives. They contend that a credible ethnographic report details how a researcher resolved typical research problems like situating him/herself with the setting's social hierarchy (Altheide & Johnson 1998). A credible report also reveals that the researcher explored and addressed alternative explanations to his or her arguments (Seale 2002). The researcher should provide particularly strong evidence in favor of his or her argument when the argument varies from existing knowledge, in order to establish dependability (Hammersley 1992 cited in Seale 2002).

Multiple methods can help build credibility (O'Reilly 2005), but the methods must all be consistent with the chosen methodology (Corbin & Strauss 2008). For example, Mitchell (1983) pointed to the widespread misapplication of statistical inference to case studies. As previously discussed, case studies should only employ logical inference (Mitchell 1983). Mitchell (1983:207) contends that "the validity [i.e. credibility] of the extrapolation depends not on the typicality or representativeness of the case but upon the cogency of the theoretical reasoning".

In other words, the credibility of case studies should be determined by the appropriateness of the methods and how well the author has evaluated the results in light of theory.

4.8.2 Insightfulness

Patterson & Williams' (2002) second criterion is insightfulness. Accordingly, "…the essence of this criterion is that the research should increase our understanding of a phenomenon. Rather than just resummarizing the phenomenon… the presentation is interpretive. The reader is guided through data in a way that produces an understanding of the phenomenon reflecting greater insight than was held prior to reading the research" (Patterson & Williams 2002:34-5). Quality narratives elaborate on the multiple meanings and perspectives encountered in a setting, providing a discussion of the rationality of the different perspectives (Altheide & Johnson 1998). Quality narratives also include tacit knowledge, a type of knowledge that exists outside of the spoken word - "the largely unarticulated, contextual understanding that is often manifested in nods, silences, humor, and naughty nuances" (Altheide & Johnson 1998:297). Such detailed analyses of contextual meanings allow researchers to build theory from individual case studies (Mitchell 1983), increasing understanding and insight of a phenomenon.

4.8.3 Practical utility

The practical utility criterion is met when a study provides an answer to the concern that motivated the research (Patterson & Williams 2002). Practical utility refers to a shift in emphasis from concern for objective truth "…to a predominant concern for the usefulness of knowledge in enhancing understanding, promoting communication, or resolving conflict

(Patterson & Williams 2002:35). There is a growing consensus that knowledge should be useful, and should liberate and empower (Altheide & Johnson 1998). It was my goal that in seeking to understand how CBNRM has affected empowerment of female conservancy members, the case study would prove useful to conservationists, development workers, and community members in their planning and implementation of social and/or conservation programs.

4.9 Generalizability

A common critique of case studies is that they are not generalizable beyond the scope of the specific case. While a case study is "a detailed examination of a solitary exemplar", it can still offer insightful information about the broader class (Ruddin 2006:797). Instead of the researcher drawing generalizations, readers of case studies (Namibian NGOs for example) need to be equipped to draw ideas from a case study that can be applied to different settings. For this reason, it is the researcher's responsibility to provide sufficient contextual information regarding the case to enable readers to draw their own parallels between the case study and other settings (Corbin & Strauss 2008; Ruddin 2006; Lincoln & Guba 1985 cited in Seale 2002). For this reason, I provided a description of my study site and its relationship to other conservancies in section 1.7.

Case studies have implications for other contexts, but the implications are left implicit (O'Reilly 2005). What case study narrative does make explicit is the contribution of the particular research to social theory. To underscore the significance of case studies to larger contexts, Mitchell (1983) contends that the field of anthropological theory has been built by inferring from individual case studies. It is my hope that this dissertation will be used to inform

CBNRM in Namibia and abroad and to expand theoretical understanding of women's empowerment.

4.10 Limitations

My study has several limitations that I have considered while conducting my analysis and writing conclusions. First, all data has passed through several filters that may have altered women's intended meanings, therefore my interpretations should be viewed as just that – interpretations of women's beliefs rather than 'factual' presentations. My interpretations have been influenced by the accuracy of translation (addressed in Chapter 4), by the quality of interview recordings, and by my personal biases and understanding of theory.

Second, some women may have chosen to articulate things that they believed I wanted to hear, rather than saying what they actually believed at the time of the interview. Women seemed cautious to discuss issues of witchcraft, for example, possibly believing that I might dismiss their perspectives. In short, my position as a community outsider likely influenced their responses. Nonetheless, my position did not necessarily influence their responses in a way that negatively impacted the quality of data I was able to obtain. A notable example was when one respondent revealed her HIV status to me, stating that she believed she could only share that information with community outsiders.

Third, women may not always know what they want. Women's responses reflect *conscious* wants, needs, and values, meaning that subconscious wants, needs, and values may not have been captured by this study.

Fourth, what women chose to express was undoubtedly influenced by their ability to recall events. The Conservancy was established in 1999, over a decade prior to my interviews. Therefore, women's experiences and perspectives on the Conservancy should be interpreted as weighted towards more recent events and Conservancy programs.

Fifth, my dissertation does not offer a conclusive statement about whether or not women experience *overall* empowering or disempowering impacts from Kwandu Conservancy. While this dissertation has addressed impacts of income-generation activities on empowerment in Kwandu, it has not incorporated the data I collected about human-wildlife conflict, nor changes in decision-making. In section 1.7.1.2.1, I revealed that Kwandu Conservancy has some of the highest total levels of human-wildlife conflict in the country, and future publications should address its impacts on women's empowerment.

Finally, it is important to remember that Kwandu Conservancy may be very different from other places where CBNRM is implemented. My results are therefore constrained by where and how I sampled. In generating my results, I have consequently aimed to highlight a range of possibilities rather than trying to generalize results to other contexts.

Chapter 5   Understanding Women's Values, Needs, and Wants: Face to Face with a "Real Woman"

Conservation and development interventions are never directed at a blank canvas. That is to say, interventions confront a wide range of competing values, needs, and wants when they are directed at a specific social context. Local culture, tradition, religion, and livelihood needs may contradict and impede the motives and values of organizations that seek to impart change in a region. Therefore, it is ethically and practically important to understand the cultural lens(es) through which target communities operate. With respect to women in particular, it is important to understand their values, needs, and wants so that interventions can serve to uplift rather than undermine women. With a clear understanding of women's priorities, conservation and development organizations may structure their programs to best meet women's most fundamental needs. Only then can organizations identify when it is both ethical and practical to challenge social norms.

Since local ecology, history, and culture may constrain women's goals for their lives, conservation and development organizations also need to understand existing forces that impede women from obtaining what they want and need. Without an adequate understanding of local constraints, organizations will develop a false sense of what they can achieve on behalf of women's stated aims and on behalf of their own mission.

Given the imperative to understand both the aims of women and local impediments to women achieving their goals, I use the next two chapters of this dissertation to present a framework for analyzing specific effects of Kwandu Conservancy on women's lives. In Chapter 5, I describe women's values, needs, and wants in Kwandu Conservancy. I use the culturally-

rooted concept of a "real woman" because it embodies values, needs, and wants shared by women in Kwandu. A "real woman" has the ability to meet her material needs through socially-condoned livelihood activities that bring cash income. She is also educated, hardworking, and cares for her relatives and community members. Furthermore, a "real woman" performs specific roles as a wife and mother. By building an understanding of women's needs and values, rooted in the idea of a "real woman", Chapter 5 provides a framework through which contextual constraints and Conservancy programs will be analyzed in the two subsequent chapters.

In Chapter 6, I examine contextual constraints that impede women in Kwandu from becoming "real women". In particular I focus on constraints operating at individual, household and community scales. In Chapters 7-9, I then build upon an understanding of women's values, needs, and wants, as well as local constraints, to ascertain how Kwandu Conservancy affects women's abilities to become or remain "real women". In the three final results chapters, I focus on the Conservancy's income-generation programs and their impacts on women's identified constraints. In Chapter 7, I contextualize the supply of income-generation opportunities that the Conservancy provides, examining overall opportunities in the Kwandu area and comparing women's opportunities to men's. In Chapter 8, I describe the extent to which the programs are able to overcome existing constraints to reach individual women. In Chapter 9, I then evaluate how the income-generation programs that do reach women ameliorate and/or exacerbate constraints to being a "real woman".

5.1 The "real woman" construct

Ideas about what women value, need, and want for the future and how they believe they can achieve their priorities are embodied in the concept of a *makentu nenja*, or "real woman", as translated from Sifwe. In this chapter, I explore the culturally-embedded idea of a "real woman", linking the concept to women's descriptions of their values, needs, and wants.

The concept of a "real woman" was first introduced to me by one of the initial respondents. After the interview, a discussion with the translator suggested that the concept of *makentu nenja* is widely acknowledged. Consequently, subsequent interviews included specific questions about the meaning of a "real woman".

In using the term "real woman", I do not mean to suggest that I ascribe to essentialism. While the temptation might be to translate the term *makentu nenja* to something like "ideal woman" to reflect a theoretical understanding of gender (see section 2.3), I have chosen the English translation that was used and accepted by the women I met during my fieldwork. Their meanings of the phrase are reflected by an English translation that denotes an essentialist position. Note that an alternative translation to *makentu nenja* in English is "good woman". *Makentu* means "woman", while *nenja* means "good" or real". For example, when one is greeted in Sifwe and asked, "How are you", one typically responds, "nenja".

Some women likely perceive more maneuver room than others within the concept. However, to women with more rigid definitions much is at stake. When a woman does not meet the social standard she may believe she will be abandoned by her husband, losing access to land, resources, and/or children. It is also possible she could lose access to assistance from friends and relatives, as will be shown in this chapter and the next.

Respondents indicated that a *makentu nenja* has what women want and has what people admire and respect in a woman. First, she has the ability to meet her household's basic needs by earning cash and engaging in respected livelihood activities. Second, she is educated. Third, she is hardworking. Fourth, she engages in nurturing and cooperative relationships with other people. Finally, a *makentu nenja* performs culturally-condoned roles as a wife and/or mother. This chapter elaborates all five criteria of "real women", discussing points of contention among respondents over the fifth criterion of a "real woman" - being a wife and mother.

5.2 A "real woman" has the ability to meet material needs by earning cash income from socially-respected livelihood activities

Women in Kwandu primarily want to have the ability to meet their material needs through socially-condoned livelihood activities. In particular, women believe cash is essential for meeting material needs. "Real women" employ specific livelihood activities that earn more respect than other types of livelihood activities. Common livelihood techniques like gathering wild foods, for example, garner less respect than cash employment, while engaging in taboo livelihood activities like transactional sex marginalizes women. Women's livelihood goals and values create distinctions between livelihood activities. Their livelihood distinctions are discussed in relation to the cultural construct of a "real woman".

5.2.1 Women want to meet their household's material needs

Respondents described their desire to provide necessary material resources and to live better lives, both in response to questions about their hopes for the future and in describing

what it means to be a "real woman". In total, thirty-two women described a desire to meet

material needs and/or to live better. Importantly, respondents indicated that it is the *ability* to

meet a household's material needs that makes someone a *makentu nenja*, as opposed to the

more passive objective of being a woman who has her needs met. In this sense, a "real

woman" plans for the future and obtains adequate food, clothes, and shelter for her

household, whether through direct labor or by earning cash income.

Having sufficient food to eat on a daily basis is a key aspect of being a "real woman".

The following exchange shows that a "good life" is perceived to be one in which an individual

does not suffer from hunger. Instead, she has enough food to survive, as indicated by the

following excerpt:

> *Interviewer: And what do you hope for your life five years from now?*
> I want it to be good.
> *Interviewer: So what does a good life look to you? Tell me what that means.*
> It is the one for eating food every day.

A real woman's access to material resources is readily apparent to her community

members. A quick glance at the structure of her house and courtyard, for example, indicates

that she has everything she needs, including enough food and clothing for herself and her

household members. Her access to material resources precludes her from begging goods from

people, as the following respondent indicates:

> It's like if I say this is a real woman, that person will, just by looking to where that
> person stays, then you can just guess from there that "Ah, this person lives a
> better life". She or he has everything. [Sh]e doesn't go around asking from other
> people, things like that.

As the previous quote demonstrates, it is not only having access to food that distinguishes a "real woman" from other women, but it is also the ability to obtain food for herself and her family that makes a *makentu nenja* worthy of respect. As one respondent put it, a "real woman" is "the one who feeds herself". Similarly, when another respondent was asked to describe women she knows who she would like to be like, she replied that "…those people are able to feed themselves". Respondents indicated that a "real woman" is therefore self-sufficient to the extent that she actively pursues needed material goods and does not wait for people to provide for her needs, nor beg assistance from others. Such self-sufficiency requires hard work and a willingness to actively pursue material resources.

Self-sufficiency means that a woman does not depend on a man, whether a husband or male relative, to gain enough food to eat regularly or to obtain adequate clothing and shelter. As the following respondent explained, a "real woman" can meet all of her household's material needs:

> It's like, I will start with the first one which says the "real woman". That one, it's a woman who is either taking care of her household, yeah… The other things which a real woman has to do is that person is the one who covers all the needs in the household. She works alone. She doesn't need a man to come and help. She has to struggle with everything. Yeah. That's the person we can call a "real woman".

Several other respondents emphasized self-sufficiency. One respondent described a "most respected woman" in this way: "That person doesn't need anything from other people. She just depends on herself. She is the one who struggles for everything which she needs. You'll find that people really respect that person". Similarly, another respondent claimed that a "real woman" is "… a woman who can take care of herself. She is the one who struggles for

everything she needs to survive". Both respondents use the word "struggle" to indicate that "real women" actively pursue material resources for their households rather than waiting for a man or community member to provide for them. Struggle also implies that "real women" do not need to be rich by local standards because it is, in part, their willingness to actively pursue household provisions that garners respect from their community. So in this sense, "struggle" is seen as the act of striving for something and is not necessarily an undesirable state of being.

The importance of self-sufficiency to "real women" is evident when one hears from women who view themselves as dependent on others for material goods. For example, the following respondent distinguishes herself from "real women" who are able to provide household goods by earning cash income. Instead of being able to personally access what she needs, like respected women do, she must instead "wait" passively for her husband to provide her with cash for purchasing household goods. She says:

> The reason why I am saying most women are suffering is only those who are working, yes, they are the people who seem to be living a… to be real women because they have… they buy what they need. They have got money. But with us, we others, we still have to wait for our husbands' salaries. Until when they are paid, it's when we take some for our children.

Similarly, another respondent explained that a "real woman" does not need a husband to provide for her household. Instead, she must personally be able to provide for her family's survival: "So I think to be a real woman, I don't need a husband for me to be a real woman. I just need a proper job or a proper income, a way of surviving". Both responses suggest that women may gain respect by participating in the cash economy. Women who want to earn respect from their community must therefore have the ability to meet material needs, whether by accessing resources directly or by earning enough cash to provide household resources.

5.2.2 Women want to engage in respected livelihood activities

While respondents indicated that a respected woman provides for her household, they also raised caveats to the criteria. They indicated that a woman's livelihood capabilities bring her respect, as long as they do not violate social norms. Respondents indicated that the most valued and respected livelihood activities are formal and informal employment, operating an informal business, farming, participating in development projects, and harvesting sellable natural resources. In contrast, women who engage in transactional sex are not viewed as "real women" because they partake in a taboo subsistence strategy. So while respondents indicated that women desire and need cash, and that a "real woman" has the ability to regularly access to cash, she must only earn it through respectable activities. This section therefore describes the livelihood activities respondents identified as most valued and respected. It then contrasts the most valued livelihood activities with less desirable strategies and taboo subsistence strategies that some women use to access material resources. It concludes by showing that livelihood activities are most valued when they provide a dependable source of cash income.

5.2.2.1 Formal and informal employment

Formal employment in the Kwandu area, considered here as a long-term job with a dependable salary, is very limited in the Kwandu area. In the region, it can be found primarily in the nearest town of Katima Mulilo, 120 kms from Kwandu, at a petrol station in Kongola, in area lodges outside of Kwandu Conservancy, through direct employment from Kwandu Conservancy, or through the Namibian government. Seasonal formal employment exists for several women in Kwandu Conservancy who teach literacy classes for pensioners in the area.

In contrast, informal employment, often referred to as "piece work" by respondents, is of short duration. It includes planting, weeding and/or harvesting in others' fields, growing vegetables for people in riverside gardens during the dry season, mudding houses for community residents, and working temporary jobs in Katima Mulilo. Informal labor may be paid for with maize meal or other goods, rather than cash.

Responses show that participation in formal and/or informal labor is important to a woman's ability to earn respect and to identify as a "real woman". When asked to describe a woman who is most respected by the general community, a respondent replied, "You will find that that woman will be someone who is working". Another respondent indicated that she respects women who work because they are able to get whatever they need and want for their households. She said:

> The things which I admire from other women, you'll find that they live well. They eat well. They have whatever they need. They are working. You'll find that they are able to do whatever they want in their household.

Similarly, work is believed to give a woman the ability to support her family and acquire what she wants. Such work-based accomplishments distinguish a "real woman" from other women, as shown in the following excerpt:

> To be a real woman. To be a real women, it's only if... if you accomplish anything in life. For example, like getting... you are a person who's working. So you can be able to support your family. You can be able to get anything you want in life.

Given the value ascribed to work, it is no surprise that some women expressed a desire for employment. One woman explained, "I just want to be someone who is working, if I will manage to get a job". Another woman conveyed despair when she stated her desire for work.

She explained that her current lack of employment prevents her from obtaining everything she needs. Working would allow her to pay for her children's school fees and uniforms, necessities that must be paid for in cash. As shown in the following excerpt, her idea of a better life is predicated on having a job:

> *Interviewer: So what does a better life look like to you?*
> There is no life in that way because I can't get everything I need. ... It's because I'm not working. If I was working, I could get everything I need.
> *Interviewer: So what would be a good life for you?*
> It's working.
> *Interviewer: For what?*
> Any types of job.
> *Interviewer: What do you hope to accomplish by having jobs?*
> It's to make sure that especially the children go to school. Yes. They have to get uniform. They have to dress well and eat well.

5.2.2.2 Having a business

Like employment, operating a business earns women money and is perceived to be a way to improve one's life. Women acquire and sell a variety of items to obtain cash. Informal businesses include selling traditional or bottled beer, cool drinks, fat cakes, blankets, cow's milk, clothes, bread, cooking oil, and combinations thereof.

Women explained that they value operating an informal business because it gives them access to money. Responses suggest that women view operating a business as a crucial means to a better future. As the following respondent indicates, a business would help her provide food to her children and provide a means to living a "better life":

> I can only live a better life when I start a business. If I was having money, I could start a business because there's no person who can say, "I just want to live a better life", while there is no means. So if I was having money, I could start a

business. … The business I'm trying to say now is about just selling some small things like either bread, sugar. Yes. That can help me to feed my children. Yes.

Like the previous respondent, other women explained that having a business was the only way to improve their lives. One woman said, "If a person wants to live better, unless you plan to have a business. Otherwise, there is nothing which can make your life better". Similarly, another respondent explained that a better life would occur "only if I make a business".

It is interesting that some women perceive having a business to be the only way to improve their condition, when other women have emphasized employment. The difference may be attributable to a woman's perceptions of her own abilities. Some women may lack employment skills or perceive themselves to be incapable of obtaining a job. To them, a business may seem like their only hope for accessing cash and expanding their household resources.

In contrast, other women perceive having a business as one of a variety of respectable livelihood options available to women. Growing vegetable gardens, farming, and even marriage can supplement or replace operating a business, as indicated in the following excerpt:

Others have business. Others have got gardens for vegetables. Others plow the farms so that they get money and sell at the market. That's how they live. Let me say, there are many ways, but others usually have to make these traditional beers and get money. Even when you are not married, when you try by all means to use those ways, you can also still be someone in a good condition.

Some women perceive having a business as one of several ways to improve their lives, while other women suggest it is the best option. Regardless, operating a business has the potential to earn a woman recognition as a "real woman". The following respondent shows that

operating a business earns a woman respect because she is viewed as someone who is striving

to survive. The respondent states:

> The reason why they say it's a real woman is because that person runs some of the business. Here and there she is struggling. That's why they usually say it's a real woman.

The emphasis on "struggle" is seen in the previous section, suggesting that some

women perceive the act of striving and obtaining subsistence to define a "real woman" more

than the actual type of livelihood activity. What is evident is that like employment, having a

business can earn women the status of a "real woman".

5.2.2.3 Farming

Farming, like employment and operating a business, is another livelihood activity that

women deem important. Respondents listed ten different crops farmed by women in Kwandu,

with individuals farming one or more crops in a season. Crops farmed by respondents include

maize, ground nuts, millet, beans, peas, sorghum, sugar cane, pumpkin, watermelon, and

cucumber. The importance of maize to livelihoods is underscored by 36 female respondents

reporting to farm maize, with some of them claiming it as their only crop. Maize serves as a

household food supply and as a cash crop.

Responses suggest that farming, often referred to as "plowing", offers women a better

future. The following respondent conveys the importance of farming to improving one's life,

while echoing previous comments about struggle and the value of operating a business. She

states, "I should not just sit without doing anything. But if I was able to plow for myself, then I

could live a better life, or having a business". Another woman asserts that farming gives her

food for her household. She states, "That's where you get food. You have to work very hard so that you'll get food for your kids and for the family of us". A third respondent so values farming that she portrayed it as a matter of life and death. She said, "Women here usually help themselves by plowing, having fields. If you don't have a field, you can only die from hunger".

Respondents indicated that they value farming not only because it provides food for direct household consumption but because it can provide access to cash as well. Like employment and operating a business, farming may enhance a woman's social standing because it gives her access to the cash economy. The following woman emphasized that selling her farm produce brings her money. Owning cattle amplifies her ability to have surplus produce to sell, as she indicates in the following statement:

> The other thing which I thought of since we have got cattle, I thought maybe we could have plowed a very big farm so that when I harvest more from there again I sell and get money.

Similarly, another respondent implied satisfaction with her ability to earn enough cash from her farm to pay school-related fees. Selling her produce enables her to purchase "whatever" she needs or wants, as shown below:

> My knowledge of farming is so good. Immediately when I started farming, it was good because I realized by that time after farming, you harvest. After harvesting, you sell. When you sell those things, you get money from there. Then now, you will be able to buy for yourself whatever you need, or you want. That is the thing I want to let you know about farming. …. It also helps me with my school children. I pay their school fees from there. So I have to struggle so that I manage to support all my families. Yes. I have to buy them some ballpoints, yes, and other things which they need.

While the previous respondent and like-minded women perceive farming to expand their opportunities, other women see farming as a respectable option, but they give it less

priority than other livelihood activities. Agriculture in Kwandu is primarily rainfed, and if there

are adverse weather conditions, crops may suffer. Farms, as discussed sections 1.7.1.2.1 and

6.1, are also threatened by wild animals. As illustrated by the quote below, employment can be

preferable to farming as a livelihood activity because salary is seen to be more reliable than

money from crops.

> If by this time I was working, my children couldn't die of hunger. I could be able
> to afford to take care of all my children. Then with this farming things, if I can't
> get anything from the field, it's not the same like working. When you are
> working, every month you have to receive something. Then it's not like in the
> field whereby if you lose, then you lose for good. You don't get anything again.

While some women may view employment as a more stable and reliable income source

than farming, employment simply is not available to everyone. Jobs are scarce and often only

available to men and women who have the most education. Consequently, the ability to farm is

a respected activity essential to many livelihoods. For example, when one female farmer was

asked to describe other ways she obtained food for her household, she said, "There is no ways

because we just live by our farms and our fields". Another woman indicated that farming is the

only way that her daughters and granddaughters can improve their lives. She said, "There is

nothing which can change their life. The things which we are always plowing in our fields are

the ones which should change their futures". Consequently, it is not surprising that farming, like

other respected livelihood activities, seems to be linked to the idea of a "real woman", as

indicated by this respondent:

> To be a real woman here in Kwandu, as a woman, I struggle for myself to get
> everything which I need. I plow to get money so that can feed myself. Cutting the
> grass and cutting the reeds from the river, then sell.

While formal employment may be preferable to farming for its relative stability, most

women depend on farming for their food and cash supply. Unlike formal employment, farming does not require higher levels of education and is therefore a more broadly-available livelihood source than is employment. At the same time, farming earns a woman respect. Provided she can meet her household's material needs through farming, a female farmer will likely be perceived to fulfill a fundamental criterion of a "real woman".

5.2.2.4 Harvesting natural resources

While a "real woman" meets her material needs through farming, operating a business, and/or employment, she can also respectably do so by collecting natural resources like grasses, reeds, and Devil's Claw. A number of respondents reported that cutting and selling reeds and/or grass provides women with income. Some women also harvest and sell Devil's Claw.

Revisiting the previous excerpt, one can see that "real women" may partake in "cutting the grass and cutting the reeds from the river". A value of harvesting natural resources like Devil's Claw, reeds, and grass is that they are available to women who live in the Kwandu area, regardless of a woman's level of education. The availability of reeds and grasses gives women another option for earning cash income. One respondent explained that the ability to harvest natural resources keeps her from "going in the wrong way". She is able to stay in the Kwandu area and harvest natural resources to sell for cash, instead of passively waiting for something to come to her, as conveyed in the following excerpt:

> When I'm going in the wrong way, to stay in village from morning to sunset without doing anything. I'm having some friends which is always drinking some beers and going outside the... outside the village to the town. And that life, me I don't like it. My life which I like, I like to stay home and plow field and doing

some jobs like making some bundles of grass and this reeds and sell to get money. Not to going in town, sitting doing nothing there.

Harvesting natural resources, like farming, is not without its difficulties. One respondent, for example, explained that she would not harvest Devil's Claw because it is "heavy work", and another because she does not "have the power to do those things". Nonetheless, the act of harvesting natural resources is viewed as a respectable means for supporting one's livelihood. The importance placed on gathering reeds and grasses is also evident from comments indicating that collecting reeds and grasses is considered by some women to be a woman's responsibility.

5.2.2.5 Participating in development projects

A fifth and final type of activity emerged from the interviews as being directly linked to a "real woman". Respondents indicated that participation in development projects is a respectable means to support one's household. Women mentioned three types of development projects that exist or have existed in Kwandu: poultry raising, farming maize and vegetables, and craft-making and selling.

Echoing the theme of self-sufficiency, one respondent explained that a "real woman" might support herself by making and selling traditional mats, a type of handmade craft sold in a shop near Kwandu Conservancy. The respondent said, "If I'm a real woman, I must... I'm a real woman in Kwandu Conservancy, I must depend on my own, to depend on my own whether I make this... this traditional mats, I sell to my conservancy".

Like farming and owning a business, participation in development projects is not necessarily precluded by a low level of education. One woman explained that her strategy for making her life better is to join development "projects", since she is not educated. She said:

> What I want do is… I want to start by just joining all the projects which will be coming so that from there, when I learn something, then I have some time to participate that thing. Yes so that I can see how far can I go with that thing since I'm not educated. I have to join many, many projects which usually come so that I can just study from there and have knowledge of those things instead of just staying.

In summary, not only is the participation in development projects associated with being a "real woman", but gathering and selling natural resources, farming, operating a business, and engaging in formal and informal employment can help a woman earn respect and admiration as she meets her household's material needs.

5.2.2.6 Other common livelihood activities

While not mentioned by respondents in reference to a "real woman", livelihoods are commonly obtained through a variety of means other than employment, small businesses, farming, development projects, and collection of natural resources. However, since common livelihood activities assist women in meeting material needs, often in conjunction with the more "respected" livelihood activities, they are worthy of discussion. In addition to the five types of activities listed previously, livelihoods are also obtained through direct use of natural resources, government assistance, help from friends and relatives, and through taboo activities like transactional sex and theft, and in combinations thereof. Common livelihood activities are summarized in this section, followed by a description of taboo activities.

Women reported collecting a variety of resources from the forest and river for direct consumption by their households. Women reported collecting fish and bush meat. They also reported a variety of wild plants collected for food. The importance of wild foods to women's livelihoods in Kwandu is underscored by Mulonga's (2003) study of wild resources collection in areas bordering Kwandu Conservancy. Mulonga's (2003) study suggests that at least 30 plant species are collected seasonally for food in the Caprivi.

Government assistance also contributes to women's livelihoods. Respondents indicated that old age pensions and pensions for orphans and vulnerable children provide households with cash. Additionally, the Namibian government distributes bags of maize meal, varying from once to twice a year, to unemployed people. One respondent explained that each person who receives maize meal gets three 12.5 kg bags of maize meal each time it is distributed.

Respondents also indicated that some livelihood activities occur in relationship to other people and that material needs are sometimes obtained, in part, through relationships with others. As noted above, however, livelihoods obtained solely from relationships with others are not enough to satisfy the requirements for being considered a "real woman". Marriage, goods from friends and extended family, and cooperative work arrangements are other ways for women to gain access to cash and goods. Relatives may provide assistance through providing food and shelter or remittances. Ex-partners and ex-husbands may also provide monetary assistance to the mothers of their children. Respondents also indicate that asking or waiting for assistance from neighbors is another technique for obtaining food.

5.2.2.7 Taboo livelihood activities

With an understanding of the livelihood activities associated with "real women", as well as alternative but less admired activities, it is important to understand remaining livelihood alternatives that provide women with cash and a means to survive. In this part of the section, I conclude the discussion of livelihood activities by describing taboo livelihood activities and their effects on a woman's ability to gain respect.

Some women gain material goods by engaging in sexual relationships with men outside the social norm of a marital relationship, or by stealing. Respondents contrasted women who partake in socially-condoned livelihood activities with women who engage in transactional sex or theft to help meet their needs. For example, the following respondent contrasted women who "go around, up and down", (a common characterization of a woman who engages in transactional sex), with "respected" women who remain in their households or who have salaried positions at an "island" or tourist lodge. The respondent stated:

> Even though these days women go around, up and down, but it's like, if a woman stays in her household, then even if that person is just alone, is not married, people will say, "That is a respected woman". Or if a woman is working somewhere and then that person is working somewhere on an island or something like that, then people will still say that is a respected woman.
> *Interviewer: Why do women go up and down so much?*
> Other women will just go out, just to sell their bodies in shibeens and other places. So when people look at those people, those women, they will say, "Those are not respected women".

Another respondent explained that to be respected one has to respect one's self, meaning a married woman must not have boyfriends. She explained that some married women will take boyfriends to access money that their husbands presumably lack, indicative of

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transactional sex. Instead, she argues, a respectable woman will find alternative means to

generate income for her household or "courtyard", as indicated in the following excerpt:

> Yes. Let me say, I can be found that I am married. But I can still need some boyfriends which make me to be unrespected. Yeah. So if I want to be respected, I should also respect myself. Like in generally, I should respect others. Then others will respect me. Even small kids, they can respect you if you respect them. …. Some they say they don't have money, they're husband don't have money, so they need to go out and look for money, other boyfriends for… which is bad. Which is the thing which I have refused. That's why I said, "Ah-ah. Myself, I don't want to have the other men as long as I'm married, even if my husband is not working. The thing which I should do, I should make business so that we can make a better life in our courtyard". Not to go out for men. Yes.

In additional to transactional sex, theft is also a taboo way to access material resources.

For example, one respondent said of a "real woman", "It's a person who does not steal".

Another woman implied that theft is an issue in the Kwandu area, and that it may be a survival

strategy for some people. When asked what kind of changes in the area would improve the

lives of her daughter and granddaughter, the respondent indicated that she must meet

household needs so that her female relatives are not inclined to steal. The following statement

suggests that theft, while not respected, may serve as a survival mechanism:

> There is nothing, but it only depends for people like me to work hard. Instead of my granddaughters going somewhere stealing things, I have to make sure that I depend on what I usually, on the way by which gives me money so that I can help that person. Instead of going out looking for other things, I should just give… take care of them.

This section has shown that a "real woman" must not only meet her household's basic

needs, but she must do so by carrying out socially-respectable livelihood activities and avoiding

all taboo strategies. A key aspect of socially-valued livelihood activities is that they all have

value that can be converted to cash. The following section shows that women want access to

cash, and therefore livelihood activities that provide access to goods most readily converted to cash are probably most pertinent becoming a "real woman".

5.2.3   Access to cash is important to women in Kwandu

Many respondents emphasized the importance of having and earning money, whether they earn it directly through employment or indirectly through selling farm produce or gathered resources. Women need cash to pay for clothing and school fees, thereby providing for their children's education. They also need cash to purchase basic supplies like soap, salt, and cooking oil. Access to cash is therefore central to being a "real woman" because it expands women's abilities to fulfill their needs and wants.

A number of respondents made it clear that they believe cash income is a fundamental requirement for meeting material needs. One woman linked money to life, saying, "the life of these days, only if you have money. If you have money, then you can live". Another woman stated that money would give her the ability purchase food for her family and to deal with problems, as shown below:

> If I was having money, then I could be able to help myself with everything I need. …. I could use that money to buy food and eat with my family, and other problems I face in life I also use that money for.

Women emphasized that a job is desirable because it offers reliable income. Employment income, unlike money earned from selling agricultural produce, it is generally not subject to losses from animals trampling fields or adverse weather conditions. Other informants made it clear that cash is necessary for meeting health needs, especially treatment for HIV, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

5.3   A "real woman" is educated and hardworking

Two more criteria of "real women" emerged from interview responses, namely, that a "real woman" is both educated and hard-working. Not surprisingly, both qualities directly relate to a woman's ability to meet material needs in her household. An education facilitates access to formal employment and other opportunities for earning money. Hard work, sometimes referred to as "struggle", similarly enhances a woman's ability to obtain food and cash. The following discussion shows that many women value education and hard work.

5.3.1   Educated

Some respondents indicated that they value education because they believe it gives women more opportunities to earn money. Similarly, education is believed to endow children with the ability to take care of themselves in the future. Most likely, many women value education for both reasons. Some women see education as a way to expand one's livelihood activities beyond subsistence farming, ultimately improving their lives. For example, one respondent said:

> As a woman, I think what can make my life better is if I was educated so that maybe I can work somewhere else and get more money. But right now because I only depend on farming, when I get money it's when I decide what to use that money which… I think it's better. It's good.

Another woman conveyed that the people she would like to emulate have more education than she does. She believes that education would allow her to plan and improve her life, as indicated in the following statement:

> The only problem is I'm not educated. But the people I want to be like are more educated than me. So otherwise, I want to be like them. …. If I was educated by

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now, I could be deciding in the other way around so that things could be a little bit better for me. .… If I was educated, I could be planning my things in a good way.

Additionally, some women indicated that in the near future, they would like to improve their school marks by "upgrading" their subjects. Upgrading involves studying for and retaking exams in subject areas in which a student tested poorly during matriculation. Some women who have already completed most of their education, but who failed to complete Grade 12 or who passed with low marks, indicated that they would like to improve their lives by going back to school or upgrading. For example, a respondent claimed, "I want my life to change. I want to go back to school, maybe I'll pass", where "passing" indicates matriculation at Grade 12. Another respondent indicated she hoped to change her life in the next five years by re-testing. She said, "If I was having money, then I could just upgrade my subjects".

The importance of education extends beyond women's personal goals to encompass their children. As shown in the previous section, respondents indicated that they desired cash income, in part, so they could pay for their children's education. One woman explained that she wants to pay for school fees so that her children can provide for themselves in the future, as shown below:

> Since I'm making crafts, I want to pay them for their school fees. I want to pay them for their school fees so that at the end when they are adults, they will have to take care of themselves and start with working.

Similarly, when respondents were asked what kind of changes would improve the lives of their daughters and granddaughters, some of them raised the topic of education. One respondent replied, "It's only to encourage them to go to school. Learning. To make the better future for [them]". Another respondent indicated feeling responsible for providing for her

daughter's education so that her daughter can have a better life, saying, "With me I wish when she grows up she's supposed to be at school. I take care of her so that she can afford to go up to higher grades".

While respondents did not link education directly to the "real woman" construct, they did so indirectly by equating education with both an enhanced ability to generate income and an increased possibility for a promising future. Consequently, it makes sense to interpret higher levels of education with social status, where educational success is seen as passing Grade 12 with high marks.

5.3.2 Hardworking

"Real women" are perceived to be hardworking, meaning they are willing to "struggle" when necessary to provide for their household's subsistence needs. In this sense, hard work must be directed at livelihood activities that bring benefits beyond an individual woman, implying that hard work in and of itself is not sufficient to earn recognition as a "real woman". A woman's ability to work hard at providing for her family earns her respect. Her willingness and ability to work hard also has serious implications for the quality of her children's lives, as shown in the following excerpt:

> A real woman is a woman who don't just sit, but it's a woman who struggle for her life. Every day that person has to wake up in the morning, stand here and there, looking for either food to eat or joining other projects so that she can participate in so that tomorrow in the future she can still try to feed herself, to live well. The other thing is, a real woman will have to… sometimes that person will have to go out to look for food so that that person can feed the whole family. Otherwise, if that woman will just wake up, then just sit, getting seated, later on you will find that either her children will be going out stealing other peoples' things, and she will be starving there. So if she just stands up and do

what other womens are doing, joining the projects so that in the future again she can still help herself, it's better.

Interestingly, respondents often defined a "real woman" in multiple terms, with hard work being one of several important characteristics. Responses suggest being hardworking is not in and of itself enough to earn respect from one's community. "Real women" must have additional qualities. For example, one respondent listed marriage, having children, and home ownership alongside hard work, as seen in the following statement:

> *Mukento nenja*. To be a real woman in Kwandu… You should be married. You should have children. You should have your own house. You should know… You should work hard.

Similarly, another respondent identified three characteristics common among women she would really like to be like, saying, "Yeah, it's a hardworking. Self-confident. It's a woman who can help others. Yeah. Honest". Another woman described a "real woman" as follows: "Hard-working. I would say hard-working, independent, and just one who is willing to accept life's challenges and find a way through that. But also, the most important one, to trust in God". Interestingly, the latter respondent's description suggests that women who are "hardworking" and who "struggle" have acknowledged difficulties and chosen to work through them, possibly propelled by their faith in God or perhaps their own determination. Her comment also seems to contrast "real women" with women who have relinquished hope in the face of challenges and refused to continue trying. A failure to try or to work is sometimes described as "just being seated", or as a previous respondent stated, "getting seated".

Instead of sitting and waiting for assistance, a respected woman occupies herself with providing for her family. She is perceived to be busy, indicated by the statement: "Respected is

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somebody… Someone who is found keeping [her]self doing a busy on his own work, busy helping the other people, busy taking the family in a good way". In contrast, perceived laziness will disqualify a woman from consideration as a "real woman". A male key informant explained that "…if she's lazy, she cannot be considered as a *makentu nenja*".

Both hard work and education provide women with a means to fulfill not only their own needs and wants, but to provide a life for their families. Hard work and education can help women feed their children, making their children less apt to steal or engage in other taboo behaviors to survive. Consequently, respondents perceive "real women" to have both attributes.

5.4 A "real woman" engages in nurturing relationships with other people

In addition to being educated, hard-working, and capable of maintaining a respected livelihood, a "real woman" is also expected to engage in nurturing relationships with relatives and community members. In particular, she is expected to be friendly and hospitable, and she is expected to offer material and psychological support to people in her community. In this section, I show that a "real woman" treats others well and does not fight or quarrel with others. Similarly, a "real woman" extends openness in her speech and actions, and she welcomes visitors.

5.4.1 Does not fight or quarrel

Respondents indicated that respected women get along well with others because they do not fight or quarrel. One respondent explained, "You can realize her just by looking. You can

see that the person doesn't have to fight with people every time". Similarly, another woman

explained that a "real woman" is "a person who does not fight with people. A person who does

not do bad things with other people". Instead of being apt to quarrel, a "real woman" is

considered to be "nice", as explained in the following description of an ideal, respected woman:

> It's like that woman has to be like a person who has got knowledge. People can
> still respect that person. A person who is like… that person doesn't quarrel
> sometimes with people. Also people can say, "This is a nice woman".

Some statements about quarrelling hint at behaviors that bring women disrepute and

ultimately fuel arguments. For example, a previous statement suggests that women who do

"bad things with other people" are not "real women". A comment by another respondent

sheds some light on some behaviors considered to be "bad". She said of a "real woman", "It

means that that woman is so faithful. She's always in the household. She doesn't quarrel with

people. She doesn't fight with people. She respects other people". Since the respondent

defines a "real woman" as "faithful", it suggests that a woman who is unfaithful and who does

not stay in the household will fall into disrepute and possibly ignite quarrels. As shown in the

section about transactional sex, women who are described as not staying in their households

are believed to be engaging in multiple sexual relationships as they "go around, up and down".

It follows that a woman who is not "faithful" may be viewed as an adulterer, perceived to be

betraying her husband and/or married women in her community. Real and perceived sexual

betrayal may fuel quarrels between the alleged perpetrator and other people. The topic of

infidelity is explored in a subsequent section about "real women".

5.4.2 Friendly and welcoming to people

Not only does a "real woman" avoid fighting with people, but respondents indicated

that she exhibits friendliness and communicates well with others. Her speech and behavior

earns her respect from people in the community, as shown in the following statement:

> It's a woman who is usually most people respect her according to what she does
> in the community. That person knows how to talk or speak with other people in
> a good way. So people will say she's a real woman.

Another respondent highlighted the importance of friendliness when asked to describe

a woman she admires. She emphasized that openness to all people and an ability to speak well

with others makes the woman liked by many. The respondent said:

> With [woman's name], she is good to people. You will find that even in the
> [workplace] where she is working, she is friendly, open to all people, and also in
> the community. She knows how to speak with people every time. And then
> everyone likes her.

Some believe that a woman's friendliness should extend to visitors. When asked to

describe the "good life" that a respected woman leads, one respondent claimed:

> The good life which I'm saying is like if a woman is staying with the husband,
> when people come for a visit, those people will be welcomed well. That woman
> has time to be friendly with other people. She knows how to laugh with other
> people.

In contrast, insulting people or refusing to speak with strangers can disqualify someone

as a "real woman". The following excerpt illustrates that one respondent judges "real women"

by their behavior, particularly their willingness to welcome strangers. She stated:

> On the behaviors, you will find that like me now, you see I've just welcomed you
> to come in my house, but you don't know really how I am. But if it was other
> people, they can't even allow you to come in and talk to them. For now, by this

time I cannot insult anyone. Those are my behaviors. But others can just do that to other people.

Friendliness, openness, and an avoidance of quarrels can help earn a woman recognition as a "real woman".

5.4.3 Provides assistance to community members

A "real woman" not only provides for her family, but she is also expected to provide assistance to her community members. One respondent said of a "real woman": "When other people come to ask for other things, like asking for help, that person will need to supply those people with help". Respondents indicated that a "real woman" provides help by encouraging people, sharing ideas, giving advice, and possibly offering material goods. A respondent's comment about her life as a woman in Kwandu was revealing. She said, "A woman is a woman because she is the one who takes care of all the family and the village". Her comment suggests that women are believed to have responsibilities that extend beyond their immediate household and into the broader community.

5.4.4 Shares ideas for solving problems

Respondents indicated that "real women" are expected to share ideas for solving problems and to provide advice to community members who are facing difficulties. One woman indicated that in addition to respecting herself, the most respected women in her community take note of the people around them, observe their problems, then respond by sharing ideas for dealing with those problems. She said:

> That person should also respect herself, firstly. Then people will watch out from there how she respects herself. Then they will follow up also. You also have to sit

with that people who are close to you... you also have to look at them. Other one encounters problems, you also have to come closer to that person and share ideas on how to solve the problem.

Another respondent emphasized that the most respected women in her community get along well with other people. They bring a sense of "fun" and communicate well. She said that such women "stay with people", meaning they provide assistance to people who are experiencing problems. When asked to describe a woman who is most respected by the general community, she said:

> That person has to either sometimes stay with people, have fun with the other people every time, and then that person knows how to talk to people. Then, again, that person can attend to other people's problems.
> *Interviewer: What do you mean by "stay with people"?*
> In the world where we live, there are many problems which people normally face. Then the people whom we can either say, "we respect them", sometimes if you are in trouble, in a problem, that person can come and stay with you and attend to your problem. Then you solve that problem together. Those are the people whom we say "they can stay with people".

Notably, the two previous statements portray problem-solving as a joint process. Respected women are seen to "share" possible solutions and to ultimately solve a problem "together", rather than strictly naming a solution as an uninvolved observer might be inclined to do. Instead, the responses suggest that respected women invest time and thought in assisting their neighbors by "sit[ting]" with them and "look[ing]" at them. This suggests that "real women" are physically present when they provide assistance, adding nuance to the phrase, "stay[ing] with people". In this way, assistance requires involvement with a person rather than a detached passing of goods from one person to another.

"Real women" listen to the concerns of their community members and then try to address those concerns. The following excerpt shows that "real women" offer encouragement

to people who ask for food or cash. Food and cash are implied by the respondent's references

to "what what" and "five hundred" Namibian Dollars. Rather than rudely turning away people

in need and who claim to be "suffering", a "real woman" is expected to provide advice when

she is unwilling or unable to offer material resources like money. The respondent echoes

previous statements when she implies that "real women" engage in a joint problem-solving

process. Notice the respondent's emphasis on the word "we" and use of the phrase, "let us go

with you" in the following excerpt:

> A real woman, which is a woman which is having a social life, which is not… when she is talking to somebody, she can feel free to talk with her. And then she can help him if she is asking any kind of help. She can help her. And she can encourage, "Do this. Do this. Do this. You can get more". Not to say that "I don't want somebody who is always coming to my orchard, 'I'm asking for what what. I'm asking for what what'". No. She can talk to him, "Do this. Do this. Let us go with you. We do this. We do this. We do this. In next month, you can see that now you are changing your life. Don't go somebody to ask, 'Me, I'm suffering. Me, I'm suffering'. Think for your life. In which way could you live? Not to sitting down that 'Today I could manage to get five hundred being seated'. You must suffer. You can get that money you want".

Ultimately, a "real woman" partners with a person in need, which means that the

person giving assistance requires something from the person she has been asked to help. The

emphasis on joint effort is again evident in the previous assertion that the person in need

"must suffer" in order to get the money he/she wants. While the first use of "suffering" in the

excerpt indicates discontent, want, and some level of need, the latter use of "suffer" seems to

have the same meaning as "struggle". The respondent tells the person asking assistance that

he/she "must suffer", implying that the person must work hard and invest effort. So advising a

person to suffer does not mean telling a person to accept extreme pain or excessive difficulty.

Instead, the respondent seems to be saying that "real women" offer assistance while expecting a show of effort and hard work on the part of the people asking for assistance.

Another respondent suggests that some people perceive "real woman" to provide material goods like cash and money to people. Unlike the previous respondents, the following woman seems to perceive "real women" more as leaders who provide for people in the community. The respondent used an example of female councilors who "buy clothes" for people, saying:

> [S]he leads people in a good way.
>> *Interviewer: So what do you mean by… or, tell me more about leading people in a good way.*
> I'm giving an example of these people like the ones who are… these who are participating in being councilors. That's where you can know that this person, even when she will be a councilor, [s]he will be a good person. They give people money. They buy clothes for people. That is a sign which shows that in days to come they can still help people when then vote for them.

The respondent's emphasis on material goods and leadership may be reflective of her relatively young age and current dependency on her parents. Youth in the Kwandu area generally relegates a woman to a lower social status. Youth can limit a woman to a position of dependency rather than partnership. However, like the previous respondents, the respondent believes that "real women" should offer assistance to their community members.

As the excerpts above show, "real women" are valued for their friendliness, their ability to get along with others, and the material and emotional assistance they offer to their relatives and community. So while a "real woman" must meet the material needs of her household, respondents believe that she must also nurture her broader community.

5.5 A "real woman" performs culturally-defined roles as a wife and mother

In addition to meeting her household's basic needs, and being educated, hardworking, and nurturing, a "real woman" is believed to perform the culturally-defined roles of mother and wife. Respondents indicated that the two, often integrated, roles require that "real women" perform specific duties and abstain from certain activities. For example, a "real woman" is expected to have children. She must also capable of providing sexually-satisfying experiences to men, according to respondents. She is also tasked with completing a range of household duties from cleaning to caring for children to farming to cooking. Women's specific household duties are described at length in Chapter 6.

Respondents expressed conflicting views about the necessity of marriage, with some arguing that a "real woman" must be married, while others claimed that single women can earn respect as long as they sufficiently provide for their families. Women who emphasized the importance of marriage indicated that the quality of the marriage has implications for one's social standing. They suggested that more respect is given to women married to a traditional leader and women who have a faithful husband. Respondents also explained that a "real woman" avoids taboo activities like promiscuous behavior and alcohol consumption, activities perceived to violate expected behavior of wives and mothers.

5.5.1 Has children

Responses suggest that "real women" must have children and that they must provide for their children well. For example, one woman clearly listed having children as one of several criteria for "real woman", including marriage. The other criteria, engaging in hard work and

providing for one's household (implied by her reference to owning a house), have previously

been discussed. She said:

> *Mukento nenja*. To be a real woman in Kwandu… You should be married. You
> should have children. You should have your own house. You should know… You
> should work hard. You should… Yeah.

Similarly, when a respondent was asked what changes in the area would improve the

lives of her daughters, she instead emphasized that having children can create a "better life" for

a woman. Like previous respondents, she also emphasized that a woman must provide for her

children's subsistence needs, saying:

> For now I can say that it's better if you have got children. Then, it's like you have
> something to feed with those children or to make them stay with you so they
> can't just go around every time like being street kids and other things. Then it
> could be better. That is a better life.

Her response suggests that social norms dictate that women have children and then

work to provide for them. Mothers' roles consist of working hard to provide for their children

by providing food and fulfilling household responsibilities. The following respondent

emphasized that women's household responsibilities center around caring for and "protecting"

their children. She said:

> In a household… A woman is always doing for the protecting their children,
> making foods, even firewood, making some grasses to build their house, making
> some reeds to make that courtyard to come… to being sitting inside. Is the one
> who must see that "Now I must get food to give my children in order to eat". The
> women who always doing that.

Women earn even more respect when they provide enough for their children to be well-

educated. One respondent described an "ideal woman" as someone who has "…more kids who

are very educated on a higher level", adding, "That woman would be respected".

The social standing of mothers is embedded within the Sifwe language. Women in Kwandu are given titles according to their marital and child status. Single women's last names are prefaced by *Ba-*, while married women's last names are prefixed by *Banya-.* However, once a woman has given birth to her first child, she is renamed after that child. For example if a woman gave birth to a daughter named Sonya, the woman would henceforth carry the title *BanyaSonya.* The title given to mothers provides them with social recognition and underscores the importance of motherhood to women's status.

5.5.2 Married, or single

Respondents indicated that marriage has the potential to earn women respect and recognition as a "real woman". However, while some women indicated that marriage is obligatory to earning recognition, others argued that single women could be "real women" if they found ways to provide their households with a dependable livelihood. Notably, several of the respondents indicated that the quality of a marriage is also important. Two respondents emphasized that extra respect is granted to women who are married to traditional leaders, while another respondent expressed that women married to unfaithful husbands forfeit the respect normally granted to married women.

Some women believe that their society places higher value on married women. A number of respondents indicated that only married women have social respect, or the status of a "real woman". Marriage seems to earn women respect, in part, because it is perceived to reduce the threat of infidelity. Some women view single women as untrustworthy and likely to steal their husbands. The following interview response was enlightening. The respondent

explained that people who my vehicle by her house would not suspect the respondent of

having sex with their husbands. Her marital status, she claimed, brings her trust and respect.

She also emphasized that marriage is a "gift from God", adding even more weight to its social

value. She said:

> I think those women whom they are respected, they are those who are married. Yeah. Why, because you know if I am not married, nobody can trust me because everybody in the community… Those who are married they are going to just suspect me that maybe if [s]he don't see h[er] husband, maybe he went to me. So those people who are married, I think they are blessed, and they are just respected. Yeah, because now, now they can see the car [she is referring to the vehicle the author drove to her courtyard], but they are going to think that maybe this car is for, for [the respondent's husband], he just came to his courtyard.

> But if I could not [be] married, they could think that every car which they can see, they can think, "Yeah, [s]he is changing men". But now they know that I am married. They can see someone coming. They know that maybe he came for another issue. They are not going to suspect me that "Ah, maybe [s]he change boyfriends, whatsoever". Yeah, that's why I see that those people… or those women who are married, they are just respected. That's the reason why, because they have chosen themselves. Like you, Miss Libby Khumalo, you are just respected because you have chosen yourself a husband. It's a gift from God because even at the beginning, God, when he just built this earth, he just gave blessed on three things. It was Sabbath, marriage, and tithe. So when you are married, it's just a blessing. Yeah, it's a gift from God.

Similarly, another respondent claimed that "real women" are married women. She

implies that married women remain in their households, or "courtyard[s]". A woman who stays

in her household is not promiscuous because she does not "walk around here and there every

time and then". The respondent describes a "real woman" as follows:

> Maybe it's the woman who is more respected. That person doesn't walk around here and there every time and then. And she is married. So she is just in her courtyard every time.

Since marriage is believed to enhance a woman's trustworthiness, single women face scrutiny. Some single women indicated that they find it difficult or impossible to earn respect. One single woman said, "We are not respected because there's no way they can respect a person who doesn't have a husband". When asked if there was anything she could do to become respected, she replied, "There is nothing". A divorced woman painted an even starker portrait of her single life, saying:

> Sometimes I used to ask myself, "Am I witched or what?" because other women are married and have their own places. But with me I am not. "Why is this happening to me?" I used to ask myself this question. This is what makes me feel I am not a real woman.

The respondent seems to link her self-image with her marital status, painfully wondering why she must experience life without a husband. Even more notable is her belief that she may be "witched". Witching involves casting a spell on a person to cause him/her harm. So the respondent seems to believe that someone has wished evil upon her and employed sorcery to prevent her from being married. Since men are viewed as the home-builders amongst Kwandu society (see Chapter 6), she may also believe that her lack of a husband prevents her from having a house, her "own place".

5.5.2.1 Quality of a marriage

Interestingly, it is not only marriage itself that seems to earn status, but the quality of the marriage. The type of marital arrangement can add or detract from a woman's social standing. Marriage to traditional authorities can garner more respect, while marriage to an openly unfaithful man can undermine one's image in the community. In emphasizing the respect to be earned by marrying a traditional authority, or *induna*, one woman said:

Okay, the women whom I would like to respect in our area are the women who are married, especially those who are married to the *induna.* We also have to give them respect because they are married to our leaders.

She further explained that the respect due to wives of *indunas* stems from the marriage itself, not from any specific leadership duties expected of the wives. She explained that such assignation of respect stems from cultural tradition, saying:

It is because those people, they are married to the *indunas*. We only have to give them respect, not that maybe they have something to work for us or something like that, [no]. We only give them respect. Traditionally, it's what we have to do.

Echoing the previous respondent, another woman explained that marriage to a high-ranking traditional authority can bring a woman respect. She said, "Or even the husband, sometimes he is the senior *induna*, that woman can be respected on a higher level".

While marriage has thus far been shown to enhance a woman's respect and enable her to be viewed as a "real woman", the following respondent suggests that there are caveats. She explained that a husband's behavior can undermine a woman's respect. When husbands "go out with other ladies", committing adultery, they are seen to inflict social disdain upon their wives. The respondent suggests that a woman's social recognition is therefore highly dependent on a man, both in a man's willingness to enter into marriage and then in his behavior as a husband.

It's like, when a woman is married, people will respect that woman since she is married. Then if the husband doesn't give respect to her, especially in the public, no one is going to respect that person. People will have to look on how the man treats [his] wife. Then it's where they can know whether to give that person respect or not.
> Interviewer: I'm wondering, so how does a man show respect to his wife in the public?

I'm giving an example about me. Because my husband didn't respect me, he used to go out with other ladies. But if a man respects her wife, like he doesn't

go out with each and every woman he sees around, then that's how people will take from there then whether to respect that person or not.

Given that some women view a woman's social status to be dependent on a man, women may seek to get married in order to improve their reputation. However, it is clear that other women view marriage as one of a variety of ways to earn respect, as shown in the following paragraphs.

5.5.2.2 Earning respect as a single woman

While the responses above indicate that a "real woman" must be married, five respondents indicated that marriage is optional to the definition. However, three of the five implied that marriage is viewed as the more socially-condoned option. In the following discussion, I show that some women believe that single women can be "real women", provided they earn a dependable livelihood for their households.

When asked whether married women are viewed differently from single women, an unmarried woman replied in the affirmative. She equated some of the perceived differences to beliefs that unmarried women cannot meet their household's subsistence needs, saying:

> Because they think people who are not married, they cannot be respected. Yeah, [single women] don't have respect from the community. And the other thing is that people who are not married, they cannot… they think they cannot have everything they need in life. They will not plan their things right.

The respondent then explained that she disagreed with that view that unmarried women cannot acquire sufficient material goods. As a single woman, she believes she can earn respect by gaining employment and providing for her household that way. She said that "The

only way I can earn respect is to work hard. Yeah. I need to find a job. I can show them that I can earn respect. I can be able to support my kids, my family".

When another woman was asked if there was a way to be considered a "real woman" without being married, she similarly emphasized the importance of earning money. She indicated that a woman can enhance her social standing by having a job and/or owning cattle, saying:

> Maybe in the way that if that woman is working, whether she is working in the companies or in the other government jobs. Then she is able to buy for herself whether it's cattle so that she can earn money.

Another respondent introduced an interesting term for working. She said, "It's like getting marriage in the other way". She explained that women could make their lives better and earn recognition as "real women" through literal marriage or by working, saying:

> It's like getting marriage in the other way. Sometimes even if you are not married, but you are working it also takes you as a real woman. Sometimes even when you are not married, but you are working it also puts you in the real way of life.

Since men are often seen to provide houses, cash, and access to arable land, (concepts explored in-depth in Chapter 6), marriage is often viewed as a way to access livelihood benefits from men. This view can help explain why one respondent claimed that respected women do not necessarily have to be married. As long as women have sufficient material goods to survive, or "…have something in their life", they are viewed with respect, according to the following statement:

> Some women they are widows, so they own cattle on their own. Some women they are not even… they are just local women, they don't even being married, they are not widows, sometimes they are not being married so they own their own cattle. Some women they have big businesses where they sell and then they

get benefit. So people they can respect them because they have something in their life.

Finally, another single woman explains that the definition of a "real woman" differs among people, helping to explain why some women believe that marriage is a pre-requisite for the label, while others see it is one of a variety of ways to be a "real woman". The respondent says that she does not believe she has to be married to be a "real woman", that instead, she must have sufficient income to provide for her family and that fighting amongst family members must be prevented. She said:

> Because it's different for everyone. So I think to be a real woman, I don't need a husband for me to be a real woman. I just need a proper job or a proper income, a way of surviving. And then have a better family. Have a family and a proper income.
> *Interviewer: What's a better family look like?*
> A better family is whether you have a got a… you know, without a husband or with a husband, your kids. We are living with extended family, so at least you have got also one extended family where you don't need… No fighting too much. At least… Because people, they will always have differences. So at least if there are no much differences, that's what I consider a better family.

Interestingly, the previous respondent was the most forthright about the unimportance of marriage to being a "real woman". She differs from most of the respondents in that she has had the highest level of education of the sample, and she has spent several years living in a city. Her education and life experience has likely exposed her to different ideas about marriage. This would explain why the previously cited respondent, of all respondents, was the only woman to state outright that a husband is not necessary for a woman to earn high social standing.

5.5.3 Ability to provide enjoyable sexual experiences to men

In addition to being married with children and/or able to support their households, responses suggest that a "real woman" is also able to a provide men with satisfying sexual experiences. While only two respondents broached this subject directly, informal conversations and a secondary source indicate that this aspect of being a "real woman" is important to women. My position as an outsider and the very personal nature of the subject probably contributed to an unwillingness by most women to include sexuality in their descriptions of respect and being a "real woman", despite its importance.

To show the importance of pleasing men to the idea of a "real woman", I include two excerpts and discuss other supporting evidence. The first excerpt shows the subtle dance between interviewer and respondent around the sensitive topic of sexuality. The respondent introduced the idea that a "real woman" is "good with men", then laughingly refrained from elaborating upon her definition. Instead, the laughter by the translator and the respondent clued the interviewer enough to understand that "good with men" refers to sexual prowess, as shown in the following excerpt:

> *Interviewer: I've just heard this term, "*makentu nenja"*, and I want to know what it means. What does it mean to you?*
> With that one, it is in different ways. It's one term, but it means many things. It's either it means…. whether it's a woman who is good with men, whether it's a woman who is good in life.
> *Interviewer: Okay. Well will you tell me more about that? I'd like to hear more about what it means when a woman is good with men. What does that mean?*
> *(The translator laughs as she interprets the question.)*
> (The respondent laughs.)
> ….

Interviewer: But it sounds like you haven't described yet the part about "good with men". What does that mean?

(The respondent laughs.) With that one, I cannot answer it. (We all laugh.)

Okay. That's something I should ask [the translator] to tell me about later.

(We all laugh.)

The translator (laughing): I don't know about it also.

Interviewer: Is that referring to a relationship, like a physical relationship with-

The translator: Yes. (She then translates the question to the respondent.)

Yes. (We laugh.)

A second respondent was more forthright about the sexual performance being an important criterion of a "real woman". She explained that a "real woman" must prepare her body for sex by using traditional powders and liquids. Traditional medicine is believed to make a "real woman" sexually desirable to her husband, as shown in the following statements:

A real woman is a woman who treats her husband well, especially when it comes to sex. That woman shouldn't be like something tasteless. That's how I can explain it.

Interviewer: So you said a woman shouldn't be something tasteless. Can you tell me how a woman makes herself not be tasteless?

She should use traditional medicine, like powders, to put in the vagina. And also for washing, which looks like fluid.

The previous respondent's statements about how women are expected to use traditional medicines and liquids to prepare for sex finds support in a 2010 publication by the Women's Leadership Centre (WLC) of Namibia. In their booklet entitled "Violence Is Not Our Culture: Women Claiming Their Rights in Caprivi Region", the WLC includes descriptions of practices women in the Caprivi region used to prepare their bodies for sex. Included amongst a variety of traditional practices believed to make women sexually desirable to men is the practice of using powders to dry out the vagina (WLC 2010).

While the WLC's booklet clearly has an advocacy focus, there are, to date, no peer-reviewed publications on the practices women engage in to make their bodies sexually-pleasing to men. However, a Kwandu woman in her thirties explained to me that some women still put powders into their vaginas to please men (informal conversation: August 2010). Ongoing informal conversations with a female informant also suggest that the practice is widespread in the Caprivi, indicating that it is considered a vital part of being a "real woman".

5.5.4 Does not engage in taboo activities

To conclude the discussion of what it means to be a wife and mother in Kwandu, I describe two behaviors respected woman must not exhibit. Respondents indicated that "real women" must avoid promiscuity and alcohol consumption. Seven respondents alluded to sexual promiscuity, or multiple sexual partnerships and/or adultery. The taboo against perceived promiscuity has already been shown to relate to beliefs about livelihood options and notions about single women. Statements about not respecting one's self, having boyfriends, "walking around here and there", and not staying in one's courtyard or household were used to describe promiscuous women. For example, one woman explained, "A woman who is always going out walking around here and there meets many men. So anytime she can get married to other different men. So the one who is just in the courtyard only stays with the husband". Her reference to marriage denotes a sexual relationship, not the act of legally entering into a marital union.

Some women believe that promiscuousness is conveyed and/or encouraged by the way women dress. Consequently, women perceived to dress inappropriately by wearing pants

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instead of skirts, or worse, tight pants, incur disrespect. The following excerpt shows that some

women believe that respected women, women who respect themselves", avoid exposing too

much of their bodies in public. The respondent states:

> *Interviewer: What do you think you have to do to be respected by the community?*
> You have to respect yourself.
> *Interviewer: And how does a woman respect herself?*
> The way you dress up. You dress accordingly to the values, and the way you talk to people. You have to talk to them in a good manner, because if you don't… you talk to them in a bad way, they will obviously respond in a bad way. So you have to talk to them nicely, the way you would like the other person to talk to you. And you dress up nicely because that one is also a culture tradition, even though these days we are changing to modern things. But even if I dress like a trouser, I should dress normally. Not too tight. Not very exposive. But at least I should dress nicely also. And, yeah, the way I approach people also, it is important.

While the previous respondent did not directly link style of dress to perceived

promiscuity, another respondent equated the two. In a previous part of the interview, the

respondent lamented men who cheat on their wives. When asked what happened to make

adultery common, she cited men's financial power over women, a lack of respect for marriage,

and the way that women dress. She said:

> A lot of factors. Sometimes… like the example I gave about… Because mainly the people who do cheat are the ones who are financially stable, I would say, because they are… Most women just need money sometimes. So… And of course, us women, we also do contribute to that with the way we dress. Sometimes we don't have respect for marriage. Most people don't have respect for marriage.

Not only must a "real woman" refrain from engaging in and conveying promiscuity, but

she must not drink alcohol either. As one respondent put it, "A real woman is a woman who

behave herself very well. She doesn't drink. She doesn't smoke". While the respondent listed

other criteria for a "real woman", her initial emphasis on alcohol mirrors others' emphases. The

high value placed on abstinence from alcohol, and cigarettes, may stem from widespread

Seventh-Day Adventist (SDA) beliefs that admonish alcohol consumption. Alcohol is believed by

some women to contribute to arguments and promiscuous behavior.

When asked to describe things that most respected women do, one respondent

emphasized sociability and abstinence from alcohol. She said, "People will look at you on how

you usually sit with others. Then, let me say, by this time then I take myself to be someone who

is just drinking beer. There is no one who is going to respect me". When asked to explain a

person who "usually sit with others", she said it meant "being social". In this way, she implies

that drinking beer diminishes or extinguishes a woman's social acceptance.

Another respondent emphasized the importance of avoiding alcohol. When she was

asked to explain what made her family different from other families in the area, she said that

the difference was due to their SDA faith, their lack of fighting, and her refusal to drink alcohol.

She stated:

> What makes things that look different from others, maybe, is I don't just talk,
> talk out to quarrel with people, and I don't drink alcohol. I'm a SDA Christian. I'm
> even now very old without any disagreement in my household.

Some women see alcohol consumption as detracting from a woman's desirability. One

respondent said that some men have trouble finding a wife because too many women are

drinking beer. Men, she said, complained that they had trouble finding a respectable woman to

marry. She explained:

> So [men] say, some of the ladies now, they don't have respect like the ladies for
> the past years. Now ladies… some of the ladies are using to drink beer which is
> difficult to identify which one to marry. Other men are saying that they… [no].

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Women who drink beer are perceived to be involving themselves in 'bad' activities. A woman who perceivably respects herself does "not involv[e] herself in things which is not good in the community, most especially drinking, looking like the criminal person, but she might look like somebody who is respected somebody". That a woman who drinks can be viewed as a "criminal person" suggests the high value that some women place on abstaining from alcohol.

To be a "real woman", many respondents believe that women must enact the prescribed roles of wife and mother. Being a mother means that a woman is capable of having children and then sufficiently providing for them. While earning a respected livelihood can bring single women respect, it does not merit respect from everyone. Instead, some women view single women as a threat to their own marriages, as well as other marriages in the community. Being a wife means that one can provide sexually-satisfying experiences and fulfill household duties. Being a wife is also interpreted as a woman does not engage in taboo activities like promiscuity and alcohol consumption.

5.6   Conclusion

The culturally-rooted concept of a "real woman" embodies what women in Kwandu deem to be most important. It includes what women need and want for their lives, as well as actions they value for meeting their aims. The notion of "real woman" has slightly different meanings to different people in Kwandu, but there are five core ideas that are shared. Respondents indicated that the most respected women have the ability to meet their households' material needs through socially-condoned cash-generating activities. "Real women" are viewed as educated and hard-working. They have harmonious relationships with

community members, providing advice, encouragement, and material assistance to people outside their household. Finally, respondents explained that the most respected women in Kwandu are wives and mothers who avoid taboo activities.

It is notable that the idea of a "real woman" is directly tied to a woman's relationships with other people, whether it's her ability to meet others' needs or to obtain respect and admiration from others. It emphasizes reciprocity by placing higher value on women who offer material and emotional assistance to community members. Therefore, the expectations for women to behave as "real women" have serious social ramifications for the whole community, including social integrity and children's survival and future opportunities. Given that the ideal woman is firmly rooted in her relationships with others, it is worth considering how the Conservancy affects women's relationships with other people. I discuss some of the Conservancy's affects on women's relationships with other women, with household members, and with the community at large in Chapter 9.

The five main criteria of "real women" overlap and reinforce each other, suggesting that an improvement or decline in one criterion will have synergistic effects. For example, improving a woman's education would increase her employability and opportunities to provide for herself and her household, while limiting her education would have the opposite effect. Marriage, under favorable conditions, would increase her access to goods and services and enhance her ability to provide for her family while also earning her social respect.

A "real woman" has what women want, need, and value. Within the concept of a "real woman", one finds a hybridization of things that women desire for their lives, plus culturally-

rooted ideas about women's roles in society. Since women's socially-constructed roles are

linked to cultural constraints, I use the concept in the following two chapters to explain how the

Conservancy interacts with contextual constraints to ultimately influence women's abilities to

meet their desired ends.

Chapter 6   Constraints to Becoming a "Real Woman"

A wide range of factors operate to reduce a woman's ability to obtain what she wants, needs, and values for her life. With an understanding that some women's desires for their lives are embodied in the "real woman" construct, it remains to identify which constraints, both real and perceived, most impede women from achieving their aspirations in the Kwandu area. Only with an understanding of women's desires and constraints can the Conservancy's impacts on women be fully understood.

In this chapter, I approach all five of the key aspects of being a "real woman" by describing constraints to each criterion. The constraints I identify in this chapter emerged from analysis of field observations and semi-structured interviews. Since I collected data at the individual, household, and community levels, I focus only on constraints that operate at these three scales. At the same time, this chapter is not an all-inclusive description of constraints at these three scales. Instead, I privilege women's views and experiences of constraints with insights from observations and informal conversations in the field. Additionally, I do not address constraints posed by the Conservancy, as Conservancy effects from income-generation activities are addressed in the following chapters. Human-wildlife conflict, for example, is not addressed in this chapter because respondents attribute human-wildlife conflict to the Conservancy.

This chapter has five main sections, with a concluding section in which I propose a framework for assessing Conservancy impacts on women's constraints. In the first section, I explore constraints to women meeting their basic needs through socially-respected livelihood activities. I show that rigidly gendered roles and responsibilities limit women's livelihood

opportunities, as do farming rights that are mediated through men. I also show that unemployment, limited education, fears of physical assault, minimal physical assets, and illness impede some women from having dependable livelihoods.

In the second section, I examine constraints to women obtaining a Grade 12 education with high exam scores. I describe barriers emanating from both the household and community levels, including household resource scarcity, bias towards boys' education, sexual exploitation, and teacher absenteeism and student abuse.

In the third section, I explore how prevalent feelings of helplessness and hopelessness may impede a woman's motivation to work hard. I provide excerpts from women who claim that God decides their future, who indicate that they have little or no control over their lives, and/or who convey despair for the future. I also show that fears of jealousy and witchcraft may also reduce a woman's inclination to be a hard worker.

In the fourth section, I illuminate some of the challenges women face to being considered nurturers, women who do not fight with people but who provide assistance to those in need. I illustrate how infidelity can compel women to fight with other people and to avoid assisting others. I also show how some women may be unwilling to offer assistance because they believe their efforts will not be reciprocated.

Finally, I show in the fifth section that prevalent domestic violence and infidelity make some women inclined to avoid marriage, or exit existing marriages. Since many consider marriage a prerequisite for consideration as a "real woman", mistreatment of women in marriage can serve as a barrier to a higher social standing. I also illustrate that impoverished

women may risk social stigma by engaging in transactional sex to secure a livelihood for themselves.

6.1 Impediments to meeting basic needs through respected livelihood activities that earn cash

At the root of women's livelihood opportunities are strictly defined gender roles and responsibilities that limit women's time and ability to perform certain tasks. In this section, I begin by examining how gendered roles and responsibilities in Kwandu constrain women's abilities to gain cash-paid employment and to meet household needs. Next, I continue the description of gendered constraints by showing that men mediate women's access to agricultural space and quality. Third, I show that women's efforts to meet basic needs, especially through accessing cash, are largely impeded by unemployment. Fourth, I show that fear of potential assault in surrounding areas where women typically farm and gather natural resources inhibits their ability to farm and gather. Fifth, I reveal that some households have so few physical assets that women lack both the capacity to meet their basic needs and to expand their livelihoods. Finally, I show that illness, especially HIV/AIDS-related illnesses, can create such a strain on household members and resources that women are unable to meet basic needs.

6.1.1 Socially-constructed gender roles and responsibilities prevent women from doing certain types of work

Strictly gendered roles and responsibilities constrain women's livelihood options temporally, spatially, and financially. Tasked with numerous responsibilities, women may have little time to search for or engage in more lucrative livelihood activities like cash-paid

employment. Additionally, the types of responsibilities traditionally assigned to women confine

many of their livelihood activities to specific spaces. Since women's responsibilities are most

often located in the household, farm, and nearby riverside, fields, and forests, women can have

a difficult time going to spaces where there is cash-paid employment, typically towns, cities, or

tourist lodges located far from the Kwandu area. At the same time, female-headed households

require cash to pay for home-construction, plowing, land-clearing, and other activities that are

believed to be "men's work". The cultural requirement for male labor conceivably forces

women to obtain cash or to marry so that they can meet their household's material needs

within the confines of gendered labor. The only alternative some women see is to violate

cultural gender norms, and in so doing, risk losing social standing.

6.1.1.1 *Women's responsibilities and spaces*

Rigidly-defined gender roles and responsibilities can curtail women's movements to the

vicinity of the farm, household, and resource-gathering areas. Women's daily household-based

responsibilities include fetching water, collecting firewood, making fires, washing dishes and

clothes, cooking, caring for children, pounding maize, sweeping the courtyard around their

houses, and serving their husbands. Just outside the household, women fetch thatching grass

and reeds. They also sow, weed, and harvest their farms.

One respondent directly identified the primary location of women's work as the

household. Her response alludes to the physical space occupied by a family's dwelling, often

comprised of a sleeping hut, a cooking hut, and a courtyard, all surrounded by a reed fence

(personal observations). She said, "And with the women, it's only… much of our work is just

based in the household. That's where we do lots and lots of work". Her response also refers to the physical space occupied by the family's farm plot, as other respondents frequently identified specific farming activities as women's responsibilities.

Another respondent provided a list of women's household responsibilities located both in the family's living quarters and at the farm. She identified duties related to cleaning, cooking, collecting water, farming, caring for children, and serving one's husband. For example, she explained that women are tasked with sweeping, bathing children, washing dishes and clothes, and "cleaning the courtyard", which personal observations indicate is the daily task of raking the soil in the courtyard to clear it of chicken droppings, trash, and other debris. In order to work on the farm, a woman then "goes out", walking up to an hour to get to her family's plot of land (as indicated by informal conversations). She stated:

> That woman will have to… a woman's responsibility in the household… will sweep the house, clean all the courtyard, fetch water, cook. Then she goes out. Again, she works at the field. Then later one when she comes back is when she can take a bath then rest for a while, waiting to do other duties again. The same women again, will have to wash all the dishes in the household, wash the children. Again, that person will have to do for her husband whatever he needs. Yes.
> *Interviewer: Anything else?*
> She wash her husband's clothes, giving him respect.

When asked to elaborate about the act of "giving [her husband] respect", the respondent emphasized that a woman must serve her husband with humility, kneeling at his feet, and anticipating his needs so that he does not have to ask for services expected from a wife. She indicated that wives should already know that it is their duty, for example, to cook, serve food, and to prepare a bowl of water for her husband to wash his hands. She also believes that wives should not have to be asked to clear the table when their husbands have finished

eating, nor should they be asked to prepare water for their husbands' baths. Instead, the

following excerpt shows that married women are expected to "do things traditionally",

meaning they should know what their duties are because women's responsibilities are dictated

by culture. She states:

> That woman will… she will have to cook for her husband, serve the food on the table, water for washing hands there, ready. When her husband arrives, she has to go and kneel down and tell him that "The food is ready on the table. Please, can you go and eat?" Again, when the man is finished with the eating, same lady doesn't need to be told that "I'm finished with the eating. Can you come and remove…?" No. That lady will just go there, kneel down, then remove all those dirty dishes, wash them. Then she brings water to the bathroom with a bathing towel. Again, she comes and kneel, "Please my husband, can you go and have a bath?" Then when he is finished there, he comes for resting. … That's how I know a woman's responsibility. If a woman waits to be told that "I need this. I need this". That's not the way we do that. We do things traditionally, or according to the culture. A woman don't need to be told that if a man needs something… he doesn't need to… a woman doesn't need to be told. You have to make all the things ready for his husband.

Other respondents added to the list of responsibilities ascribed to women, mentioning

natural resources harvesting ("cutting the grass, the reeds in the forest"), pounding maize, and

ensuring proper education for their children. Both of the respondents below also emphasized

women's farming, or "plowing" responsibilities, as shown in the following two excerpts:

> It's like, there are many duties of a woman in the household. It can be washing clothes, cooking, cutting the grass, the reeds in the forest last time when it was not yet flooded, cleaning the yards, plowing also. [Excerpt 1]

> They are responsible of cleaning, pounding, going to the field, plowing, and looking after the kids. And then the kids should go to school, should stay home they have to educate them what is life, especially if it's women. Then women should be taught on how to pound, washing, and know how to stay in the village. [Excerpt 2]

Women's responses indicated that there is a significant time investment required to fulfill their duties. When asked to identify women's responsibilities in a household, one respondent explained that women have many responsibilities in a day, requiring that they wake early in the morning and take only a few hours of rest. She added that the farming season requires women to wake up even earlier than normal, saying:

> Women are busy people. Starting from the morning, they are busy, busy, busy. Early in the morning they wake up. They start cleaning. Cleaning the courtyard and [*unclear*] the house. Make fire to prepare food for breakfast for their kids and husband. After that… Like there, we start to fetch water. Fetching water. When it's time for the field… If it's time for the field, you cannot wake up and clean the house. What you do, you wake up earlier. You do breakfast. You go to the field. After the field, around past eleven you come back. Then you start making lunch. After making your lunch, then again you just have a few hours rest. Then you start cleaning, fetching water, preparing for the supper. Even to watch kids, whatever.

The previous respondents make it evident that women's responsibilities most often tie them to their family dwellings, farms, and natural-resource gathering areas. Some women spend significant time at their family's dwellings because they believe women are tasked with foreseeing and then meeting husbands' needs and desires. Additionally, women's responsibilities occupy large spans of time each day. The lengthy time investment required to fulfill each day's responsibilities in the household, farm, and fields may therefore curb a woman's ability to seek cash-paid employment.

6.1.1.2 'Men's work'

While custom mandates that women complete specific household responsibilities, it was also suggested that women conventionally refrain from doing tasks that are culturally-designated as 'men's work'. Frequently, women expressed reluctance to do men's work, stating

that women could not manage to do things like build houses. Such rigidness of gendered responsibilities can act to prevent women from meeting material needs when they do not have access to male labor. Gender restrictions mean that female-headed households cannot, or perceive they cannot, rely on their own labor to complete male-designated tasks. Instead, female-headed households may have to obtain cash to hire male labor. This part of the section describes livelihood responsibilities that are designated men-only and shows how the rigid construction of gender roles may compel women to believe that they cannot meet their household's material needs without being married.

Respondents indicated that men are responsible for meeting a variety of subsistence needs in a household. Male duties include home construction, building courtyard fences, fetching firewood, preparing farms for plowing by clearing bushes and burning the brush, holding ox-drawn metal plows, caring for cattle, and providing food, money, and material possessions. As with women's responsibilities, men's responsibilities are believed to be derived from tradition, or "inherited". Culture is viewed as inflexible to the point that men, and presumably women, who renege on their gendered tasks are labeled "abnormal", as shown in the following excerpt:

> A man's responsibilities are… because we just inherited those from our parents, so we do things culturally. A man will have to go out. He is the one who starts to clear the field. When he is done with clearing the fields, then now if it's towards October, that man will have to go and burn those things because the field now is ready to be plowed. A man again is the one who has to stand in the household and look, "Do we still have a nice house?" He is the one who has to bring the decision that "Ah. Now we have to have a new house". Then now, as I have said, a man is the one again who has to look at the parts of the house, whether the house is still good. If that man don't check on things like that, we don't say that's a normal man, but it's someone who is just abnormal. That's what I know to the man's side, since we just inherited those from our culture.

Another respondent claimed that men are responsible for clearing the land for farming, adding, "…let me say, [you] have got oxen, men are also responsible for plowing with the oxen. They are the one who holds the plow". Responses suggest that men are expected to fulfill routine duties in a household when they have been unable find full-time paid work. Routine duties include bringing firewood to the family dwelling and caring for cattle every day. Respondents also indicated that regardless of a man's employment status, he is expected to provide his family with money. The respondent claimed:

> The men, like those who are not working, like here at the village, they must see that in the morning, early in the morning, there is firewood or not, how is the cattle over there at the kraal, and what this woman and the kids, what they are going to eat. Yeah. He must go and look for a piece job. He must… He is responsible to go and fish. Yeah, because if he is not working, when he fish, he get fish he sell, they get money where they can buy food. [Excerpt 3]

Men's perceived obligations to earn cash and provide food and material goods to their families means that they are often forced to leave the homestead and "look for a piece job". Similarly, a respondent suggested that men are expected to "go out" to towns and cities where they might have a better chance of earning cash, as shown in the following excerpt:

> With men they have a lot of duties to carry in their places. They have to go and prepare farms, cutting down trees on the farm. They have to build houses alone. They have to collect firewood. Again they have to come back and take care of the whole family. The men have to go out and look for jobs so that he takes care of the whole family. The man has to go out and look for women's clothes and many other things.

What is especially interesting about the previous excerpt is the emphasis on two distinct spaces for men: the homestead and the outside source where he secures cash and materials. Men are portrayed as searchers, hunters of subsistence goods. Men are tasked with locating and then bringing cash and material goods into their households. At the same time, they are

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expected to build houses and perform agricultural duties in and near the homestead. The emphasis on dual space is again evident in the following excerpt in which a man is tasked with building and maintaining the courtyard, while also being expected to "look for food". The respondent states:

> The duties of a man are… When a woman is done with the cutting of grass and the reeds, the man is the one who has to cut the poles for the courtyard. A man has to find out that the whole family eats and gets satisfied with what they have. He is the one who has to look for food and again, he is the one who has to go and prepare or cut the fields.

Unlike with women's work, descriptions of men's responsibilities seem to carry a connotation that men are expected to travel long distances from the household. While both men and women are expected to provide for their households, women's tasks have a tighter spatial orientation to the homestead. Their tasks require a daily investment in the spaces in and relatively near the homestead. Women's tasks of cooking, cleaning, and caring for children must be completed on a daily basis, while men's tasks of building houses, farming, and courtyard construction can occur on a seasonal basis. When men must be physically present to complete daily, collecting firewood and caring for cattle, for example, it may be assumed that they are not "working" (see Excerpt 3, above). In this way, men seem to be excused from daily duties when they are pursuing or engaging in cash-paid labor.

Male responsibilities are often associated with physical strength. For example, cutting and carrying timber, clearing fields of bushes, and constructing houses all require stamina and an ability to lift heavy materials. According to one respondent, "a timber is a big thing. A woman cannot make it". The physical strength requirements may explain why some people believe it is simply not possible for women to perform male tasks. For example, one respondent

indicated her belief that women cannot build houses. Building a house requires that a person

first acquire timbers and then manipulate the timbers into a house frame. When asked to

identify men's responsibilities in a household, she replied, "Building houses, because women

cannot manage to build a house". When asked why women cannot manage to build a house,

she said, "We can't. We just can't manage". Her response indicates that she believes the

division of labor, at least in the case of home-building, to be non-negotiable.

The perceived rigidity of gender-based responsibilities was similarly conveyed by a

respondent who claimed that women could not do most Conservancy jobs. She claimed that

women could not fulfill the tasks required of Conservancy Game Guards, especially the

responsibilities for guarding fields at night against wildlife. The reason she provided, that

women do not have sufficient "energy" or "power", implies that she believes women are

weaker and inherently unable to complete certain responsibilities.

She stated:

> You see at night, during night, women cannot afford to spend the night without
> sleeping. Yeah. Even for hunting, women cannot afford that.
> *Interviewer: And how come women can't afford that but men can?*
> They don't have energy. They don't have that power.

Given perceived and actual limitations on women performing subsistence tasks that are

designated male, female-headed households may have to hire men to complete specific duties.

Prohibitions on female labor may then create a reliance on cash for meeting subsistence needs.

When a woman in a female-headed household was asked to describe difficulties women face in

the Kwandu area that men do not face, she replied:

The problem which we women are facing in this community, you will find that especially with us who are not married, all the duties which should be done by men, we are the ones… you are the one who is responsible for that. No one can do it for you.

Her response naturally begged the question, "How do you achieve those tasks when you don't have men in your household?", to which she replied:

With us who are not married, we only depend on money. If you don't have money, then there's no way you can do anything. Because with money, if you have money, that money will help you to pay someone to do for you that thing which you cannot afford to do. We women who are not married, we are just married to money.

Women who lack both male household members and cash may find themselves in a double-bind. So when cash-strapped, female-headed households lack the option of hiring male labor, marriage or less formal sexual liaisons may seem like the best way to fulfill their livelihood needs. A compelling example of the need for cash was provided by the following respondent. She explained that unmarried women lack houses, presumably because women "cannot" build their own places. Instead, unmarried women are, from her standpoint, left to act promiscuously, "walking around, yes, in many places". Her description below was offered in response to a question about the difficulties she believes confront women that men do not have to face:

It's like, you will find that other women, especially ones who are not married, they don't have houses. They don't have courtyards. So they will be only just going out, walking around, yes, in many places.
      Interviewer: So can women build their own houses?
They cannot. Only if they pay other people money to build for them.
      Interviewer: And why can't women build their own houses?
Women can only build courtyards.

Similarly, some women believe that men are required to clear fields for plowing. One respondent claimed that since she is not married, she is limited to using a hoe to farm. Left with only a hoe, her farm will likely be much smaller in size and produce less food than it would have if it was cleared. Instead, she is left wishing that she were married, as shown in the following sentences:

> *Interviewer: Why do you want to get married?*
> That person will prepare for me the field. Right now since I'm not married, no one is preparing for me a field.
> *Interviewer: So how are you going to work in the field?*
> For now, I'm only using a hoe. So I'll just suffer like that.
> *Interviewer: So do you clear your own fields?*
> Yes, I'm only using a hoe.

Another woman similarly stated that she wanted to get married so her husband could create a larger field for her, as well as provide her relatives with cattle through his payment of a traditional bride-price. When asked why she wants to get married, she said:

> Maybe he want to help me, to help my family, to do lot of things. Maybe they're going to buy some cattles to my grandmother, to have time to go and clean our field, to make a big field.

Along with building houses and clearing fields, men are often perceived to be responsible for guarding farms. For example, one respondent discussed the importance of a husband when she was asked to comment about how the Conservancy has affected her life. She views the Conservancy as the source of wildlife, something she has experienced as a threat to her farm. She explained that she and some other female-headed households have decided not to farm because they lack men to guard the families' fields at night. From her perspective, lacking both a gun and a husband leaves her defenseless against crop-raiding wild animals. Her response implies that some people believe female-headed households are more vulnerable to

wildlife invasions than households with adult men. Perceived divisions of labor may then limit

women's abilities to protect their crops from wildlife damage, even deterring them from

farming altogether, as suggested by the following statement:

> The disadvantage is I will find that with the wild animals, we others don't even go or plow at the fields because we will find that after plowing, animals will come and then they trample all the fields. Then with us, who doesn't have even guns so that we can stay at the fields and scare animals, we who doesn't have husbands who are permanently staying with us that maybe they can help us with scaring animals.

While some women believe that marriage is the best way to meet their household's

basic needs, from men's assistance with home construction to growing food, other women find

ways to circumvent gender restrictions. As will be shown in a subsequent section, some marital

conditions make marriage unbearable, leaving cash-strapped women with no option but to

negotiate or violate social norms. Such women either find opportunities to earn cash, and/or

they perceive opportunities to do "men's work" themselves. Some women hold a metal plows,

for example, an act made possible by both necessity and possibly increasing flexibility in gender

roles. At least some women believe it is possible to cross traditional gender divides in labor,

with women doing 'men's work' and men doing 'women's work'.

Guiding an ox-drawn metal plow is typically viewed as a man's responsibility. However,

as the following respondent highlighted, some unmarried women occupy female-headed

households, households that "were born all womens". Female-headed households may not

"have a choice" but to operate a plow, as the following exchange shows:

> *Interviewer: Are there any things that women are not allowed to do with farming?*
> With farming?
> *Interviewer: Yeah, that men do that women are not allowed to do?*

Yeah, for plowing with that [metal plow]. There are few women who are doing that, but mostly they are men.
> Interviewer: Why do some of the women do it?

Because they, some they are not being married. Some they were born all womens, so they don't have a choice. They have to go… they have to follow the instructions.
> Interviewer: What happens if a woman plows a field and she is married?

Plowing?
> Interviewer: Yeah. Does that ever happen?

It can happen if the man is weak. Somehow it happens, yeah.

Some tasks are more rigidly defined by gender than other tasks. Differences in perceived levels of gender role flexibility may help explain why some respondents claimed women could plow, for example, while respondents consistently indicated that women could not build houses. When asked what kinds of things women can do that men cannot do, one respondent replied, "Cutting the fields, building houses, plowing with oxen, even though with that one, both women and men can do it". The respondent made it clear that while she considers field clearing, house-building, and holding an ox-drawn plow to be male responsibilities, the task of plowing is less rigidly defined by gender.

Another respondent perceived flexibility in the responsibility for plowing, adding firewood collection as another gender-based responsibility with more flexibility. She also claimed that gender-based responsibilities are changing overall, with more men assisting with household-based duties, or "homeworks". For example, some men, she claimed, were helping to weed farms, a responsibility traditionally assigned to women. She explained:

> Men also… Like nowadays, things are changing, so they also help with homeworks. They also help with plowing, for them it's to hold the thing while the women are planting.
> Interviewer: Okay. They hold the plow?

Yeah, they hold the plow.
> Interviewer: The men?

[Yes]

Interviewer: Okay.
But even women, some can do also. So the men holds the plow. And then they also do the weeding, but not much. It also depends to family to families. And they also do the collecting firewood. That is mostly what they do. Not much. But they have to make sure that at home, there's food there.

While some women perceive points of flexibility in gendered labor divisions, it is evident that the primarily rigid, gender-based responsibilities constrain other women's livelihood activities. For example, not a single respondent volunteered an example of women building houses, and I did not see women engaged in the activity either. Gendered constraints compel women in cash-strapped households seek alternative ways to meet their livelihood needs. Unemployed women in poorer households may feel the need to marry, seek assistance from male relatives outside their household, contravene social norms by doing 'men's work' themselves, or, as will be discussed later in this chapter, engage in taboo activities like transactional sex to obtain access to material resources.

6.1.2   Access to farmland

Like labor, access to farming space is strongly gendered. Access to farmland is mediated by men in two ways. First, Kwandu's patrilineal inheritance system means that women must access agricultural plots from their fathers and/or their husbands, or by obtaining permission from predominantly male traditional authorities who enforce the patrilineal system. Second, the task of clearing and burning shrubby vegetation to make a plot suitable for planting is considered 'men's work'. Therefore, female-headed households that obtain plots of land from a male relative may still not be able to farm much or any of the land. A female-headed household must either hire male labor, which assumes the household has sufficient cash, or contravene

social conventions by clearing the land themselves. Real and perceived strength limitations, time limitations, and/or lack of access to tools for clearing the land can reduce the amount of land a woman is able to clear, or prohibit clearing altogether.

Respondents highlighted how men mediate women's access to farmland. For example, one woman claimed of men's household responsibilities, "A man again is the one who has to look for a place to farm. Then he tells the woman that, 'Now I've got a place for you. You can come and plow here'". The respondent is likely referring to a husband's role as land provider and clearer.

Conversations with traditional authorities also provided evidence that women access land through men. The following excerpt shows that husbands and fathers are crucial to gaining land to farm:

> *Interviewer: So if an unmarried woman came to ask you for land to farm, could she get a piece of land?*
>
> She is also a person.
>
> *Interviewer: So then if a woman is married and her husband has land, can she also get her own piece of land to farm?*
>
> No. The woman is under her husband. They just share the same land.
>
> *Interviewer: So if a woman is grown up and having children but she is not married, plus she lives in her father's household, can she ask for a piece of land?*
>
> That person has to go back to her parents, and her parents will give her land to farm. [Conversation with Sesheke *indunas* on 24 May, 2011]

The Sesheke Sub-Khuta *indunas*, cited above, indicated that farmland plots belong to men. Since women are "under" their husbands, a married woman must obtain permission from her husband to farm a particular area, while an unmarried woman must obtain permission from her parents, specifically her father.

6.1.3 Formal and informal employment

Since a number of women need cash to access farmland and navigate gendered labor divisions, it comes as no surprise that employment is a prime way to earn recognition as a "real woman". As Chapter 5 shows, women highly value and seek formal and informal employment as an avenue for meeting their basic needs. It follows, then, that obstacles to employment directly affect a woman's ability to be a "real woman". This section draws upon interviews and informal conversations to describe obstacles to women's employment in Kwandu Conservancy.

Respondents described several types of obstacles to gaining employment. First, women explained that employment opportunities in the region are scarce. Second, some respondents claimed that men have greater chances than women of gaining the jobs that do exist. Third, insufficient performance in school can prevent women from gaining employment. Finally, strict gender roles and responsibilities limit women's opportunity to seek reliable, cash-paid employment. This section focuses on the first, second, and third points, as employment-related limitations of gender roles and responsibilities were discussed previously.

6.1.3.1 Lack of employment opportunities

Job scarcity leaves women with few opportunities for formal employment. When asked to describe their lives in the Kwandu area, several respondents pinpointed a lack of cash-paid employment opportunities as a primary cause of suffering in women's lives. One woman asserted, "Our life is nothing here but just suffering". What asked what was causing her to suffer, she replied, "What makes us suffer is because we are doing nothing here. There are no jobs. That is the reason I can give". Another woman lamented, "Life at home is very much

difficult. No jobs. Just to sit… Just to sit at home". A third respondent claimed that the combination of being unmarried and jobless brings her suffering, remarking, "There are many things which are causing me to suffer. Since there are no jobs, and I'm also not married".

Respondents also identified a lack of job opportunities when asked to describe difficulties women face in the area. One woman claimed, "The difficulties which I see that people are facing is most women here are educated, but it's only that they don't have jobs. They are not working". When asked to describe difficulties men face in the area, she added, "I think it's just the same. There are many men in this community who are educated, but others are just drinking *tombo* [beer] here, no job. Other men who are almost completed Grade 12, they are just in the villages doing nothing". Her remarks convey a sense of hopelessness driven by a perceived lack of opportunity for cash-paid employment. She indicates that education offers not guarantee for employment and that without a cash-paying job, people are seen to be doing "nothing". While the reasons for limited employment opportunities vary, it is nonetheless clear that many women perceive reliable, cash-paid labor to be scarce.

6.1.3.2 Men are perceived to be more likely to obtain existing employment

Not only do women perceive few overall employment opportunities, but some women see themselves as having a disadvantage in the employment sector when compared to men. For example, when one respondent was asked who she thought have more influence in her community, men or women, she replied, "It's men". When asked to explain, she replied, "Because I can see men are the ones who are always getting jobs, yes, while womens are not". While some respondents could not or would not identify the factors behind men's perceived

employment success, other respondents attributed men's success to their greater skill-levels, a greater ability to search for opportunities outside the household, and to gender-based discrimination.

Perceived differences in skill levels enhance men's employment opportunities in relation to women. For example, a respondent was asked to identify difficulties women face in the area that men don't face. She highlighted that men can more easily take advantage of cash-paying opportunities than women. She said that men can earn money from short-term, paid labor, or "piece works" because they have the requisite skills and knowledge. Men can build houses and produce or fix electric generators, as she indicated in the following excerpt:

> Men get things more easily than women. You'll find that men can do piece works of building houses, then they get whether it's money or anything. Again, they are the ones who've got more knowledges like they go out, they make other people's generators, especially this last time when there was no electricity. Then they get money from that.

When asked to explain why she believed men have "more knowledge", the respondent said, "It's like, men do things in an expected way whereby if a woman is just seated at the house, you'll find that the man is now coming with another thing, a new thing in the household". Her response indicates a bias towards cash-paid employment. While women have numerous responsibilities to their families in and around the household, the respondent does not seem to value women's traditional responsibilities as work. Women's household-based responsibilities typically do not earn them cash, and in the respondent's view, unpaid labor is dismissed as "just" being "seated".

Ironically, one of the primary reasons that men can search for employment is because women's traditional roles and responsibilities are spatially centered in and near the homestead,

freeing men to search for cash-paid labor. Spatial orientations of men's and women's gender-based responsibilities were discussed in a previous section.

In addition to having skills that can transfer into cash, men are believed to gain more jobs because they actively search for them. The following exchange shows that the respondent believes men make themselves well-known, or "famous", and are in this way able to capture more jobs than women. When asked to explain why she identified men as having more influence in her community, a respondent replied:

> They are the ones who are so famous. Most people give them jobs.
> *Interviewer: What makes men so famous?*
> I don't know. Maybe it's because they always go out to look for jobs.

While some women identified men's job search efforts or skills as enhancing their employment opportunities relative to women, others identified discrimination against women as a cause of men's employment success. For example, one respondent pinpointed a common belief that women lack the ability to do jobs, as shown in the following exchange:

> *Interviewer: What difficulties do women face in this area that men don't face?*
> Men… A lot of men get jobs, more than women.
> *Interviewer: Why is that?*
> Don't know what's the reason.
> *Interviewer: You don't know the reason?*
> [No]
> *Interviewer: Any guesses?*
> I think maybe they think women can't do jobs, like how men does.
> *Interviewer: They… they being who? Who is they?*
> Men.
> *Interviewer: Men think that women can't do the jobs like they can.*
> [Yes.]

Whether linked to discrimination, skills, or man's willingness to search for jobs, responses clearly indicated that some women believe that men have more employment

opportunities than women. Given that employment overall opportunities believed to be limited, the gendered nature of employment opportunities adds another obstacle to women seeking access to cash.

6.1.3.3   Education

Women believe that their education level affects their ability to obtain employment. As the following respondent explains, a woman graduates high school when she completes Grade 12. However, poor exam marks at Grade 12 means that a person can graduate but still "fail". When asked what was making it difficult for her to get a job in the government, a respondent replied, "Simply because I don't have qualifications. I only have Grade 12, but I failed my Grade 12. So it's difficult for me to get a job". Her remark suggests that both graduating and passing exit exams with high marks are crucial to getting some types of jobs. However, women with high graduation marks must still face seemingly unfair competition from men for scarce jobs.

6.1.4   Fear of violence outside of the household

Gendered responsibilities and a lack of formal employment are not the only factors compelling women to stay in or near their households. Several respondents described a fear of going alone to the riverside, fields, and forest, especially at night when crops need protection from wildlife incursions. Respondents explained that women may be physically and sexually assaulted if they go out alone. Their fears are well-founded, as a woman was recently raped and murdered in September 2010 when she went to the river to gather lily roots to cook, as described in the following excerpt:

I think it was last month which happened. We was having a case from Singalamwe, just nearby. There is one old woman, like this side, who went at the river to get some natural resources such as reeds. … Ah, it's not reeds. Sorry. I forgot to say lily. You know the lilies? Yeah, the lilies. (S)he went just to collect the lily so that she can… she can cook and mix together with h(er) ?beans?. After when she… after being cooking, she will just put it to the dish. And when you going to the street and start selling so that she can get a little amount for buying some soaps, or to buy a cooking oil. A boy… a boy, he followed that old… that old lady, and get raped. After being get raped, that woman, that old lady woman she just saying that "I have realized you". Then that boy, he turns again come and kill. … He killed [that] women. We as a women, we must get protection because we are powerless. Because we are powerless. We must get helped. Those men, they must get some more skills about women.

It is likely that fears of ambush at the riverside and in forests and fields compel some women to stay at home instead of going out to gather forest products. As the respondent indicates, some women feel that they are physically "powerless" against men's violence. Consequently, some women believe they have to wait for the company of other women or a trusted male relative before they feel comfortable venturing out to collect resources like thatch and reeds for future sale. The following respondent emphasized that, unlike men, women face the difficulty of having to travel in groups. She stated:

Women can go to the river, but now you are scared when you are going there. It's not the same like men. They can go there. They know how to prevent themselves, but… protect themselves. But even if women goes there… but they have to go maybe in a group. But men can go alone or maybe just the two of them. With women it's different.

In this way, real and perceived dangers may constrain women's livelihood opportunities. An elderly respondent described her fear of going to the forest, explaining that there are people who will stalk a person and kill her. She said, "What if you go in the forest? Someone will follow you that side, kill you. So there is no need of going out". Her response indicates that her fear constrains her movements to the vicinity of her homestead.

A fourth respondent shared fears about being alone outside of her homestead. When asked to explain why she does not sleep at her fields at night, she said, "We are scared". She then explained that "We are only womens. There are no men". Her reply indicates that as a female-headed household, she lacks a husband or adult male relative to help her guard her field from wild animals. The rest of the exchange with her reveals that she believes women are vulnerable to attack when they stay outside of the homestead at night:

> *Interviewer: And why should women be afraid without men?*
> Ah! It's like, a woman cannot stay at the field where it's a long distance from where there are people. But a man can stay somewhere whether it's in the dark alone.
> *Interviewer: So what might happen if a woman stays in the field a long distance from people?*
> I don't know. But it only depends on how people think, that if they stay somewhere very far, then anything can come and hurt her.

Notably, women compare themselves to men when describing their fears of violence. The preceding respondents explained that they believe men can travel farther and stay in fields at night because they know how to protect themselves. In this way, fear of real and perceived dangers limit some women from collecting resources and/or protecting their crops, unless they can access assistance from other women or men.

6.2 Insufficient assets

Not only do women face the impediments of fear and violence, lack of employment, constraints to accessing farmland, and strict divisions of labor when striving to meet their material needs, but their cumulative assets may be so low as to make improving their socio-economic condition very difficult. Household resources come in many forms, including physical strengths, skills, and health of individual household members, as well as physical assets like

food, tools, cash, and residential structures. This section shows that some women have so few assets that they have significant difficulties meeting basic material needs. Without adequate food, tools, cash, and/or physical strength, some women lack sufficient assets from which to improve their socio-economic condition.

6.2.1.1 Insufficient food

Interviews and observations reveal that some women and children do not always have enough food to eat. Some respondents claimed that they have difficulty obtaining "relish" for their households. "Relish" is prepared chicken, beef, fish, or vegetable(s), typically served with maize or sorghum porridge. Informal conversations and observations show that Kwandu residents do not consider a meal to be complete when it lacks relish. Some respondents stated that they missed meals and that their children are suffering from hunger. Observations of the following two respondents' (Excerpt 4 and Excerpt 5) residences and clothes suggest that they are poorer than many other Kwandu residents. Their comments show that they suffer from insufficient food.

The first respondent began the interview by describing what her life was like. She initially said, "My life here is not so good because we don't have clean water at this place. We have to move, walk a long distance to go and [*unclear*] for clean water. So it takes a long time for us to do it" [Excerpt 4]. She then raised the issue of limited food, stating:

> The other thing which makes me say is not a good place for us here, it's like, we are suffering from hunger. We don't have enough food to eat. And the other thing is, we are lonely here. We don't have our grandmom so that they can give us, and our parents so that they can give us some parts of their field so that we can plow from there.

Her response shows that insufficient assets have combined with a lack of food to exacerbate her poverty. She must travel longer distances than many residents to obtain clean water, leaving her less time to search for food. Her grandmother's absence not only leaves her feeling "lonely", but she is left without a source of cash that is common to households: monthly elderly pensions. Even more challenging is her inability to access an area of land to plow. Her parents have not given her land from which she might be able to grow food for subsistence. The combination of factors therefore increases her vulnerability to hunger.

The second respondent also began her interview by describing the hunger that is contributing to her suffering. When asked to describe what her life is like as a woman, she replied, "My life is not good here since we are suffering" [Excerpt 5]. When asked to elaborate, she said, "There is hunger here. We don't have enough to eat. We others doesn't even have people for us to build houses. The house which I'm using now, it's not mine. It's for the other person". She explained that her vulnerability is exacerbated by her divorced status, leaving her without "people for us to build houses". She later added that "I don't have money to give people to build for me a house so that I can pay them". Finally, when asked what causes her to be hungry, she replied:

> It's hunger. That's how it is. It's just like this that you don't have to eat sometimes during lunch. Then later again in the evening, it's when you can eat.
> *Interviewer: So do you eat twice a day?*
> Once.

The young woman's divorced status has left her reliant on a male relative for housing, yet even with the provision of a place to stay, she is unable to eat more than once a day. Observations of her child suggest that the woman's descriptions were not exaggerated. I noted that her child had a distended belly, indicative of malnutrition.

Food security fluctuates seasonally. According to one informant, Kwandu residents are most likely to experience food shortages in the months of December and January (informal conversation on 3 January 2011). While the type and amount of food deficiency is not completely clear, it is nonetheless evident that some women and children experience food shortages and suffer as a result. When one suffers from food insecurity, whether it is a deficiency in food quantity and/or quality, it is also likely that one will have reduced stamina for livelihood-generating activities like farming and gathering. Therefore, food insecurity compounds some women's difficulties with meeting the most basic subsistence needs.

6.2.1.2 Lack of tools

In addition to food, women may lack other physical assets like farming tools that improve their ability to grow sufficient food for the year. Informal conversations and observations made it clear that poorer households must use hoes for plowing, instead of the more efficient and sought-after metal plows. Female-headed households are especially likely to struggle to access metal plows since they are typically owned and operated by men, and they are relatively expensive to purchase. Hand-held hoes, by comparison, are made locally (personal observation) and are more easily obtained.

Metal plows increase the area of land that a household is able to farm, thereby increasing the yield potential. Consequently, some women struggle because they do not have efficient farming tools, reducing the area of arable land that they can access. For example, one respondent explained:

> For now, I'm only using a hoe. So I'll just suffer like that.
> *Interviewer: So do you clear your own fields?*

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Yes, I'm only using a hoe.

Similarly, another woman linked her suffering to insufficient farm tools. When asked to describe her life as a woman, she said:

> We are suffering and we have nothing.
> *Interviewer: What is causing you to have nothing?*
> We don't have tools for plowing.

Without access to a metal plow, women must rely on hoes and invest more time to clear the same amount of land. In this way, metal plows may help some women break out of a cycle of food scarcity because they can help women clear enough land to grow surplus food. However, women who can only access hoes perceive themselves to be "suffering".

Lack of enough money to invest in a micro-business

As previously discussed, cash is often needed to help female-headed households access men's labor. Cash also allows women to purchase supplies to re-sell and thereby generate more cash through operating a micro-business. However, some women, as indicated in the excerpt below, lack even enough cash to start a micro-business:

> Some (women) they are having problems of like… As I said, myself, I cannot worry so much about work. But some, this time they are worried about work. They want employment. Some they are failing to make business because they don't have money.

6.2.1.3 Lack of physical strength

Women not only have different levels of food, tools, and money, but they also have different levels of physical ability. Some women claim that limited physical strength makes obtaining a livelihood difficult. Age has especially significant impacts on a woman's ability to complete tasks in the Kwandu area because women's work so often depends on physical ability.

For example, all three of the following excerpts are from women over the age of 60, and they

show that physical constraints can limit a woman's livelihood options.

The first respondent claimed that as an old woman who is often sick, she must put in

extra effort to obtain everything she needs. She even implies that she may not have "enough",

contrasting herself to people who are able to work and get everything they need. When asked

to describe difficulties she believes women have that men do not have, she responded:

> The difficulties which I can say is, you will find that with us who are old enough
> now, we don't get many things. But we only have to struggle with everything we
> need. But with those who have enough, you will find that with especially those
> who are working, they have enough because they can feed themselves. With me,
> I am old now and every time and then I'm sick. So those are the difficulties.

Another pensioner was asked to identify what, as a woman, would make life better. She

highlighted that her advanced age has made it impossible for her to do certain tasks, like

pounding maize, saying:

> It's not good because by this time my life is getting to be so difficult since I can
> no longer pound for myself. Long ago, I was living a better life rather than now
> because I used to do things for myself.

Finally, a third older woman was asked to describe her life as a woman in the Kwandu

area. She emphasized that while her "life is good", physical pain prevents her from completing

as many tasks as she once could. She stated:

> Life is good, but it's only that by now as a woman I am not able to do as many
> things because I have pain in my body. I can't work for money. Otherwise, life is
> good.

Unlike food, tools, and money, which are physical assets, bodily strength and stamina

are considered human assets. This section has shown that both types of assets can be so

minimal that women are, at times, unable to expand their resources or even meet their

material needs. The following section expands on the idea of human assets by focusing on how illness, specifically HIV/AIDS, impacts women's livelihoods directly and indirectly.

6.2.2 Illness

Illness can undermine a woman's ability to meet her household's material needs. In its most direct form, illness can incapacitate a woman to the extent that she is unable to perform farming, gathering, and other essential tasks. In this way, illness diminishes her human capital. Indirectly, illness also exacts a toll on women as caretakers. The care women are expected to give can divert them from engaging in their usual livelihood activities. Illness also exacts a toll on a household's resources, with limited cash allocated for transport to and from medical facilities and for medical fees.

Given the high incidence of HIV/AIDS in the Caprivi region, this section focuses specifically on HIV/AIDS-related effects on women's abilities to obtain a livelihood. The importance of HIV/AIDS in Kwandu Conservancy is underscored by interviews, observations, and informal conversations. While the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS is so high that few people are willing to openly discuss their status, two women in Kwandu volunteered information that they were HIV-positive[4]. I also observed two other people with severe symptoms of illnesses commonly associated with HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, a key informant stated that there are two support groups for people living with HIV/AIDS and that the total participants number over one hundred people. Limitations in funding prevent expanding the

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[4] In following the IRB-approved guidelines for the research project, I did not directly ask anyone to tell me their status. Instead the two individuals introduced the issue of HIV/AIDS and told me their status with the understanding that they would not be identified. Interestingly, one of the individuals informed me that she had been encouraged by hospital staff to keep her status a secret from her community members because of potential persecution. However, she added that hospital staff encouraged her to be open with "outsiders" as they might be able to offer some assistance.

number of support groups and participants, suggesting that there may be many other people

affected by the illness.

While not referring to any particular illness, two respondents stressed that illness has

prevented them from working. It is notable that following respondent referred to suffering

from TB (tuberculosis), an illness frequently linked to HIV/AIDS. The respondent claimed that TB

forced her to leave her cash-paid job and return home, saying:

> [The work] was good, but the problem is, it's very cold, and the job, it's so heavy.
> … Yeah. If you work there for almost two years or three years, you can end up
> having a TB or any other disease.
> *Interviewer: Did you get sick while you were there?*
> Yeah. That's why I left the job because I got sick. I came back home.
> [This respondent is not identified even by number given the high costs of
> accidental recognition]

The second respondent was asked to explain what was stopping her from working. She

explained that frequent illness, or "mad[ness]", prevents her from working, saying:

> We, we are mad. We are always sick.
> *Interviewer: What makes you mad?*
> It's because I don't live well. Every time and then I'm sick. Every time and then
> I'm sick.

Not only does illness prevent some women from working, but the high costs of

HIV/AIDs-related illnesses and treatments have the potential to drain a woman's resources.

Whether a woman has the illness herself or a household member or relative has an HIV/AIDS-

related illness, she may find herself facing limits on both time and money. An interview with a

key informant (excerpted below) revealed that limited healthcare in the region creates high

costs for households with HIV-positive members because patients must travel long distances

with a friend or family member to obtain treatment.

Anti-retroviral treatments (ARV's) are not available in Kwandu Conservancy. Instead, patients must travel outside the Conservancy to the nearest clinic in Choi to get a monthly supply of medication. While Choi is the nearest clinic that provides ARV's, the key informant explained that most people obtain their ARVs from the Katima State Hospital in Katima Mulilo, 120 kilometers from Kongola. Patients must see a doctor before they can get ARVs, and Choi Clinic only has nurses on staff. Consequently, patients typically must take monthly trips to Katima Mulilo to meet with a doctor and obtain their medications.

Travel to Katima incurs significant cost because patients must pay for transport, food, and sometimes even accommodation for both him/herself and for a mandated "treatment supporter". As the key informant explained, travel to and from Katima can costs a patient from N$ 200 to N$ 300[5] per month. When asked how much it costs for a person to travel from Kwanud to Katima to for ARV's, the key informant replied:

> Okay, sometimes it's quite expensive because you realize coming to … coming to Katima to pick up ARVs, your transport from Kwandu to [Katima] is about 40 dollars. Now, sometimes it's 50, when you put up maybe a taxi. But when they reach [Katima]… First of all, from there, they're supposed to come up with what they call a "treatment supporter". They can't come alone – so two people. So it's just to bring somebody else who is a treatment supporter, who is treatment supporter. So when they come to Katima, they come to get their ARVs and then go back. And the bad thing is sometimes they can reach here and they fail to get their medication that very day. They are forced to sleep. So the person who is sick, who is picking the ARVs, she is now the one in charge of this treatment supporter. So she's the one to pay for this treatment supporter. You pay for this one. And then buy this one also food. And then sometimes they don't even have accommodation. Maybe they have to go to certain relatives and then they are… Because… So those are the challenges these people are facing. So it could be even… Somebody can even spend like 200, 300 dollar in a month.

In addition to the high costs for transport to and from treatment, patients and their

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[5] Seven Namibian dollars (N$) is approximately equivalent to one United States dollar (US$).

treatment supporters can lose a day or two every month that might otherwise have been used for livelihood activities. However, the travel to Katima Mulilo might also facilitate market access and could serve in and of itself as a livelihood opportunity. More research is needed to draw conclusions about the total livelihood gains and losses from travelling to Katima for medical treatment.

Illness, extremely low levels of assets, unemployment, male-mediated farm access, and strict gender roles all serve as barriers to women's ability to create dependable livelihoods. Structural constraints to livelihoods therefore make it difficult for some women to meet their most basic material needs.

6.3   Impediments to getting an education

While obtaining an education is central to being a "real woman", significant barriers prevent girls and women from obtaining a quality education. Barriers to education emanate from within and outside of the household. Inside the household, girls may face resource scarcity that prevents them from receiving adequate financial and material support to attend school. Resource scarcity can then compound with other challenges like menstruation to prevent girls from attending school. Girls who lack sanitary products may be forced to skip school during their menstrual cycle. Second, illness and death within a household can exacerbate resource scarcity and impede girls from attending or finishing school. Third, girls may experience discrimination when household resources are reserved for boys' education at a girl's expense. Finally, girls may be tasked with household responsibilities that prevent them from attending school, including imposed responsibilities of caring for younger children.

Outside of the household, girls face sexual pressures from peers and older men, teacher absenteeism, and corporal punishment in schools. Girls also face pressures to have unprotected sex, leaving them at risk of pregnancy and sexually-transmitted diseases. In school, students at times face classrooms devoid of teachers. They also face an education system that unofficially employs corporal punishment, which may deter them from attending and passing. Finally, girls in past years had no opportunity for formal education as there were no schools within walking distance. Consequently, many older women in Kwandu have had no formal education and do not know how to read and write.

The Kwandu area has a total of four public schools and one private school. The private school, called God Cares Primary School, is located in Sesheke and is funded and staffed by a European-based non-governmental organization. God Cares Primary School has offered education to 60 – 120 students annually, since 2008. Unlike public schools that charge yearly school fees, God Cares Primary School offers free education. Every year the school opens registration to a set number of students from the Kwandu area, and the first students to register are accepted.

Three of the four public schools, namely Singalamwe Combined School, Sesheke Combined School, and Kongola Combined School, cater to students in Grades 1 to 10. Sikaunga Primary School learners, on the other hand, must travel to a Combined School once they finish Grade 7. Students who have passed Grade 10 must leave Kwandu altogether to attend Mayuni Secondary School. Mayuni Secondary School provides a hostel for students to stay during their school years, offering public education for Grades 7-12.

6.3.1 Intra-household impediments to obtaining an education

Respondent interviews and personal observations indicate that there are at least four prominent factors emanating from within households that impede girls from attending and passing school. First, a shortage of financial and other material resources can prevent girls from attending school long enough to matriculate. Students are required to pay school fees in order to attend school, and they must also consume enough food throughout the day to concentrate. Responses suggested that not all households have enough or have had resources to support children going to school through Grade 12. For example, one respondent claimed that while she had planned to matriculate, she found there were not sufficient household resources to allow her to complete school. She said, "Myself, I was supposed to finish schooling, but I found that I was not having more support".

Another respondent was asked why she stopped school. She explained that her father asked her to stay home so her brother could finish, since the family did not have enough money to support both children's education at the same time. She said her father elected to support her brother's education first because she had become pregnant. The obstacles posed by pregnancy to girls' education will be discussed later. Tragically, her brother died, and likely without the support of her brother, her father could not afford household costs plus more education for the respondent. The following excerpt shows how several factors combined with limited household resources to impede one respondent's education:

> *Interviewer: And why did you stop [school]?*
> It's because my father told me that I should stay at home so that my brother could finish up. Then it's when I can repeat. But unfortunately he passed away.
> *Interviewer: Oh. I'm sorry. I'm wondering, why did your father ask for your brother to finish while you didn't?*

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It's because in 2004 I got pregnant when I was in Grade 9. Then again, I could stay at home. Again, when I finished with that, I came back to school. When I failed, my brother was already... passed. He passed. Then my father could say, because he was not working, it was not easy for him to get money, he told me to stay so that we can either struggle to pay for the other one.

In contrast to girls who grow up in resource-poor households, girls from relatively wealthy or middle-income households may have a greater opportunity to matriculate. The following respondent indicated that it was her father's access to resources through his paid employment, as well as his interest in education, that allowed her to finish school and have a "better life". She said:

Luckily our father was employed, so at least he was encouraging us always to go to school. So that at least we'd have better lives. So mostly it was the motivation from the father. But at least he could afford to send us to school. That helped us much.

Matriculating in and of itself does not necessarily provide adequate education for obtaining employment. Several respondents reported that while they matriculated, their marks were too low. Therefore, they said they needed to upgrade their scores to make their degree attractive to employers. Unfortunately, limited resources can prevent women and girls from taking necessary classes and exams to improve their scores. For example, when one respondent was asked what was making it difficult for her to get a job in the government, she replied that she lacked adequate exam scores. She "failed [her] Grade 12". While she would like to retake the exams, she does not have enough money to upgrade, as indicated in the following exchange:

Simply because I don't have qualifications. I only have Grade 12, but I failed my Grade 12. So it's difficult for me to get a job.

Interviewer: So does that mean you have a Matric?

Yes.

Interviewer: But you want to upgrade?

Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. I'm still trying to understand the school system here, how that works. And what makes it difficult for you to upgrade so you can have more qualifications?

It's financial problem. Since all our parents are not working, so it's difficult for me to upgrade. I have to get maybe a piece work where I can get money to support myself.

As with Grade 12 education, a lack of resources has made post-secondary education difficult to obtain. The following respondent claimed that she has doubts about being able to complete a certificate because she lacks money, saying:

I'm still struggling doing my study while I don't have money. But I'm just struggling doing that course that I don't know whether I'll be successful because I don't have money. I started this year doing a certificate of _____*.
*Left blank to ensure respondent's confidentiality.

Another respondent claimed that her family could only afford to pay for one sister at a time, so she had to stay home for a year and then get a job instead of going to university. She said:

When I finished school, my father could not afford to pay for both of us. I had an elder sister who was now at university, so I could not go because he was paying for her. She did not get a loan. So I had to resort… I stayed one year at home. I had to resort to [working] the next year. That was the only opportunity for me to get a living.

Lack of resources can combine with several other factors to prevent school attendance and high marks. Menstruation, for example, becomes a problem when a household does not have the resources to purchase effective hygiene products. Traditionally, women have used rags during their monthly cycle, but now women purchase them from Katima Mulilo, when they can afford them. Rags can cause discomfort and even leak, potentially causing school girls great

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humiliation. A former school teacher in the Caprivi region explained that girls would often miss

school due to menstruation:

> The first thing that comes to mind was menstrual periods. I think that was a very
> big one. You know, each week there would be a certain percentage of girls that
> didn't come to school. And the more that, like, I really watched them there and
> asked questions, that was really what it was about.
> > *Interviewer: Why would having a menstrual cycle prevent girls from going*
> > *to school?*
> That's a good question because I didn't recognize that at first either. But just the
> lack of having anything to use that wouldn't leak. I mean I had so many times
> girls come to me, say, "Madame, I must go." Or, you know, like… Because often…
> I don't know, like, often times, you know, getting to Kongola or getting… Well,
> not even to Kongola because to Kongola was even too embarrassing to have… to
> buy tampons or pads or anything like that. You know. And the amount of times
> that was… the amount of frequency to get to Katima to buy things like that just,
> you know, wasn't always very often. So… I think I just… having to deal with that
> at school was just… I definitely think that that was something that was difficult
> for girls to deal with. You know, it's a very private thing.

The former teacher suggests that limited financial resources can prevent the purchase

of female hygiene products, leaving menstruating girls with a choice between potential

humiliations at school, should rags leak, or a self-imposed absence from school to stay in the

relative privacy of their homes. Even girls who have access to money to buy tampons in Kongola

may be too embarrassed to do so because they would have to purchase the products in front of

people they know. Instead, they must make sure they can get to Katima often enough to

purchase the products.

6.3.1.1 Illness and death in a household

Illness and death of family members can greatly exacerbate a household's resource

scarcity or shift a household from a relatively wealthy position into a poorer position. In turn,

illness and death of family members can limit school attendance, both by decreasing funds

available for school fees and by reducing the amount of labor needed to maintain a family's livelihood. Additionally, personal illness can prevent girls from completing school or obtaining high enough marks to make them competitive for jobs or higher education. For example, one respondent claimed that illness prevented her from obtaining high marks on her Grade 12 exams. When asked to identify the highest grade she completed, she said, "Although at the time when I completed my Grade 12, I became critical sick. I didn't write well my test. It was 1997, at Mayuni". Given the high levels of HIV/AIDS and other illnesses, it is likely that sickness interrupts many girls' education.

Death of family members may also reduce girls' chances of matriculating. The following respondent explained that her mother's death left her without any guardian. When asked what prevented her from finishing school, she replied:

> Why didn't I finish my school? Because I was not having a guardian.
> *Interviewer: Guardian?*
> Yes. I was staying old man. My mother was passed away the time I was having two years. Yes.
> *Interviewer: Your mother passed away when you were two?*
> Yes. Even now, I don't know I don't my face of my mother.

Without a close relative to look after her and encourage her to go to school, she may have had less motivation to study hard and/or less resources to assist her school success. Both family deaths and personal illness, therefore, impede girls' education opportunities.

6.3.1.2 Bias towards boys' education

In situations where resources are already scarce, households may divert resources to boys' education at the expense of girl children. For example, one respondent claimed that she stopped attending school, in part, so her brother could attend. Another respondent described

male favoritism in the payment of school fees and provision of school supplies. When asked what kind of difficulties girls face when they are at school that boys do not face, she said," You will find that if it's at school, boys will have enough books, while girls don't. Even money for school fees, you'll find that boys have got enough money for their school fees, while girls don't". Clearly, biased allocation of household resources may limit girls' educational success.

6.3.1.3 *Household responsibilities*

Gendered responsibilities in the household may also prevent girls from gaining a quality education. Girls may be tasked with caring for younger children instead of being sent to school. For example, I observed a school-aged girl caring for an infant child during school hours while her mother collected thatching grass (personal observation 21 July 2010). When asked about the girl's schooling, there girl's guardian claimed that the girl had not yet started school. The child's labor was evidently being used to free her female relative so that she could collect natural resources.

A former school teacher in the Caprivi region made a similar observation, stating that some girls missed school because they were compelled to do household-based work. She said:

> …I think that often times, often, often times that girls had to attend to house work for, you know, caring for their brothers and sisters, or cooking, or whatever. And they weren't able to come to school because of that.

In this way, gender-based household responsibilities, male-bias, and resource scarcity all operate at the household level to prevent some girls from attending and/or graduating from school with high marks.

6.3.2 Extra-household impediments to obtaining an education

While some households have adequate financial and labor resources to send daughters to school, their daughters must still overcome extra-household barriers to obtain a quality education. Educational barriers emanating from outside the household include pressures from peers and older men to engage in high-risk and/or exploitive sex. Sexual activity places girls at risk of pregnancy sexually-transmitted diseases (STD's), both of which can become obstacles to attending school. Secondly, teacher absenteeism likely diminishes students' quality of education when they are in school, as does corporal punishment by teachers and administrators. Finally, many older women have had no formal education because they did not have schools to attend when they were children.

6.3.2.1 Sexual exploitation

Girls in Kwandu face pressure to engage in transactional and inter-generational sexual relationships. Not only may girls have to face emotional fall-out from exploitation by older men who attempt to or ultimately pay for sex with cash or goods, but girls may become pregnant and/or contract a STD from unprotected sex. The following dialogue between researcher and a respondent demonstrates that school girls face exploitation from older men. Exacerbating the problem is the fact that the nearest secondary school to Kwandu is located far from parents, leaving girls without supervision, protection, and guidance from close relatives.

The following respondent introduced the topic of multiple and concurrent partnerships, claiming that they accelerate the spread of HIV/AIDS in the Kwandu area. She explained:

The thing which cause multiple and concurrent partner, like here, we are living in a dynamic world. Most of the children, they like too much to… they like too much to… to… like let us… let us… let me talk on my behalf. On my behalf, I can just use my body. I can just use my body to exchange so that I can get money.

Later in the interview, the respondent was asked to explain why she thought women were selling their bodies. Her response made it clear that her focus was on "children" and "small girl[s]", and that the issue can better be interpreted as sexual abuse of minors than it can as prostitution. She stated:

I think so. Because even me, (laughing) I was one of them when I was schooling. The women, they are selling their bodies according how they are wearing. According how are you are wearing you can see. Because most of the men, once if they see this upper part (she points to her thighs), let me talk about the… if I am wearing a tight thing like this, whether it's a [*unclear*] or something which can tie my body, everything is… the buttocks and everything. If a man she can see, [he] will start attraction …. and follow that small girl. [He] will follow that small girl. That small girl again, [he] will go to a girl "Oh, let me buy me only a cell phone" or "Let me buy me only a ring. Then I can have sex". Then they come to agreement. After, that man… They used… the girls, they used to exchange sex with… like, transactional. Let me say shortly. I can just say transactional sex. They used to exchange, or to use sex as a… to exchange with a gift [from] a man.

> *Interviewer: But you say that in the past, that didn't used to happen, right?*

Yes.

> *Interviewer: So what… why has… why do you think that it's happening now when it didn't used to happen in the past?*

In the past, it was not happening. But now, because of the distance, you will get that long, long ago, like this size of my mom (here she was probably pointing at a child), they were not having some education. But now, after, when you pass from Grade 1 to Grade 8, you stay local to your mother's courtyard. After Grade 11, you'll go to the secondary. To the secondary, there is no parents, where there is no parents or a guardian. You can do everything that you like to do, if you are becoming from a poverty family.

> *Interviewer: So you think that the education system is contributing to people selling their bodies?*

Ah, it's not like that. The education is not contributing like that.

> *Interviewer: Okay. Not the education. It's leaving their families to get the education is causing some problems?*

[Yes] Is causing a problem. Is the distance.

Interviewer: Because the parents aren't there?

[Yes] Is the distance because lack of parental care. If I'm at a distance, I can do everything which I like to do, even to drink alcohol, I can take part of alcohol. But if I'm nearby my mom, I can just do… Because once I'll start drinking, one of the family will come and make a report to my mom, "Ah. Now that one, she's taking alcohol". Then mom, she will go there and advise me, "Why you take alcohol? Why you do this A and B up to Z?"

Interviewer: So why do you think that… So how far do people have to go from their families to go to school… to secondary school?

Ah. I think from here, to the secondary, the nearest secondary, Mayuni, is almost 18 kilometers.

….

Interviewer: Where do they stay when they're in secondary school?

It is a hostel.

….

The thing which cause multiple and concurrent partner, like here, we are living in a dynamic world. Most of the children, they like too much to… they like too much to… to… like let us… let us… let me talk on my behalf. On my behalf, I can just use my body. I can just use my body to exchange so that I can get money.

The respondent introduced a number of perspectives that merit discussion. One, the respondent suggests that some women perceive that girls who dress a certain way, particularly girls who wear tight clothing, attract older men. Clothing, then, is seen to signal and cause what could easily be interpreted sexual abuse of minors. The respondent also seems to believe that older men who "exchange" gifts like cell phones and jewelry with girls are engaging in a transaction. Her description of sexual discussions between girls and men imply that the transactions are seen to be fair, between equals, and not that the school-aged girls are viewed as being exploited and abused by older men. Instead, the girls seem to be held responsible because they wear tight clothing.

Conversely, the respondent acknowledges the girls' vulnerability by emphasizing the 18 km distance between the secondary school and girls' guardians. Given that most Kwandu residents do not own a vehicle, the 18 km distance is significant. She also suggests that girls

who come from impoverished families are more vulnerable to sexual exploitation, saying "To the secondary, there is no parents, where there is no parents or a guardian. You can do everything that you like to do, if you are becoming from a poverty family". The girls' relative poverty places them at an even greater disadvantage when men attempt to abuse them.

Whether girls engage in sexual relationships with abusive older men or boys their age, the aftermath may mean that they miss school or fail to finish altogether. As a previous respondent explained, pregnancy can prevent girls from attending school. She said, "It's because in 2004 I got pregnant when I was in Grade 9. Then again, I could stay at home. Again, when I finished with that, I came back to school". Consequently, sexual activity, whether it is with older men or peers, has a real opportunity to prevent girls from completing their Grade 12 education.

6.3.2.2 Poor education quality

Not only do girls face sexual abuse and risks of pregnancy and STD's, but they also face hostile school environments in the Caprivi. Teacher absenteeism can reduce the quality of education, as explained by a former teacher in a Caprivi school. On multiple occasions, the teacher observed classrooms without teachers, as well as teachers sleeping in staff rooms during work hours. She said:

> I often saw kids left in classrooms for hours and hours and hours at a time without teachers. You know, of course which I can talk about further, but it happens very often. You know… a learner… or you know, like going into staff rooms and just seeing teachers, you know, sleeping there, whatever, while they were supposed to go to classes. So in general, I think that, you know, that the care or the attention or the treatment of students was poor, I would say.

In addition to teacher absenteeism or poor engagement in teaching, students face

physical abuse in schools in the Caprivi Region. Although prohibited by Namibian law, corporal

punishment is still used across the Caprivi Region and in the Kwandu area. The following

respondent indicated that corporal punishment is still employed in Kwandu. She explained that

some teachers punish students by beating them and/or forcing students to dig a hole, as

indicated in the following excerpt:

> *Interviewer: If a student does something wrong, how are they punished?*
> You dig a hole.
> *Interviewer: They tell you to dig a hole?*
> Yes.
> *Interviewer: Do people… do teachers beat students here?*
> Yes, they beat.

A key informant who worked in a Caprivian school outside of Kwandu Conservancy

described witnessing several forms of 'punishment' and its deleterious effects on students. The

informant worked in a school that had Mafwe and Hambukushu pupils, similar to Kwandu's

schools. The following excerpt shows that boys and girls are physically 'punished' in public

schools and that the physical abuse can cause girls to miss school for prolonged periods of time.

Teachers were observed beating students with power cords, reeds, and fists. Students,

especially girls, were observed having to kneel on cement floors for lengthy periods. One girl, to

the respondent's horror, passed out after kneeling for 90 minutes. It was then learned that she

had a heart condition. The 'punishment' forced her to miss school for one or two weeks,a s

indicated in the following excerpt:

> …kids were literally beat with computer cords, and kids were required to kneel
> down on cement floors, and kids passed out from kneeling on cement floors for
> hours at a time. And then, you know, like the standard of, you know, using their
> reeds to hit the hands or the backs or whatever, of different students was also

very common. … Maybe it was even more of a power extension cords that were used, but, you know, I saw… I saw… Well, I saw three instances of that and two of the times was on the back of the kids was hit with. And then another time was on, like, random… you know… what's the word? Not lashing, but something like that, of just randomly.

….

> Interviewer: And can you tell me about kneeling on the floor? So are they kneeling on the floor in shorts, in pants? How are they kneeling on the floor?

Most of the time this is a punishment… and I don't know why, but this was a punishment that was given to girls a lot. And so girls… the uniform is most commonly skirts. So, you know, there were, you know, there's no layer in-between the cement and their knees. But the things, like I could give you an entire list of all the different kinds of… those are two examples, so kneeling and beating with the cords. So the ways that I saw corporal punishment was vast. I mean, there were… I mean all out… There was a teacher that punched a student in the face. That was one. Or kids that had to dig out… I don't know, this was in [a secondary school]. … like a few kids got into trouble for doing something and there was an entire… [tree]. … But they had to take out the entire root of that tree. But it took them almost the entire school year to… I think it's probably still there, but they had to… you know, in the blazing hot sun… kids were, you know, digging out this root.

….

A girl was punished and her friend came to me and said, "[Key Informant's name], you have to do something about this. You have to come here." So I was like, "Okay". And so I saw the girl kneeling in the classroom with the teacher present. And the teacher looked at me and said something to the tune of, "Oh…" You know, to the student, I guess: "You can get up now", or whatever. So after that class was done, I asked the teacher about it and I said, "How long was that learner kneeling like that?" And he said, "Oh, not for very long". And I was like, "Well, like, how many minutes?", you know. And he said, "Well, I don't know…" Like, it was like 90 minutes or something like that. And I was like, "That learner was kneeling on the ground for 90 minutes". And he sits there like, "Yeah, because they were truant yesterday, so, you know, they're not going to be truant anymore". Well as soon as I left that classroom, the girls ran to me and said that, you know, like, that the student had passed out. So I went and I ran to the kids. And then later, talking to that same teacher, I said, "Oh my gosh! Like we have to do something about this". And he goes, "Oh, yeah. I just found out that she has a heart condition. I probably shouldn't have had her kneeling like that." So I was like, "Oh my gosh!" So we took her to the hospital. I stayed with her for a while, but they, like, took her to Katima. Because this was in [area name] so they took her to the clinic in [place name] area. And then they took her to Katima. She was out of school for a week or two or something like that. I know it was considerable.

Student beatings, forced labor, and other forms of corporal punishment not only cause students to miss school, but it can threaten a girl's physical health, like it did the girl who passed out after kneeling. It also probably has a significant emotional affect and may deter students from wanting to attend school. Physically punishing students also likely ignores the root of the students' problems. The girl's truancy, cited above, may have been the result of imposed household responsibilities, for example, something that punishment cannot ameliorate. Punishing girls for truancy when their families have imposed obligations on them ignores the real problems and creates more barriers to girls' education.

6.3.2.3 No formal education in the past

While public schools offer an opportunity, albeit with limitations, for girls to gain literacy and skills, for many older women in Kwandu, schooling simply was not an option. Women over the age of 56 expressed that there were no schools close enough for them to attend when they were of school age. One older woman said, "The time when I started menstruation, the school was still very far, somewhere at Sesheke, so we could not manage to travel, to walk from here to Sesheke". She was unable to gain an education because she lacked transport to cover the long distance between her home and school. Another woman indicated a similar experience, saying "Where we were staying, there was no school". A third woman claimed that "[she] didn't go to school. In the past there were no schools". By the time schools arrived, many of the older women interviewed for this study had already passed school age, as indicated by the respondent who said, "When the schools arrived and opened, we were already grown up".

While adult literacy classes are now offered in Kwandu, many women missed the opportunity to gain an education in their younger years.

From women who had no access to education to girls who presently face barriers to educational investment and quality, women in Kwandu can have a difficult time earning the qualifications needed to gain meaningful employment. With an understanding of how intra- and extra-household barriers can limit women's education, the next section focuses on the third aspect of being a "real woman": the ability to be hard-working.

6.4   Impediments to being hard-working

Respondents claim that "real women" are hard-working. While women arguably have more control over this aspect of being a "real woman" than any of the four other criteria, a woman's ability to work hard can still be undermined by psychological, social, and environmental factors. Environmental factors like disease, especially HIV/AIDS and malaria, can limit women's energy and ability to do physical labor. Since HIV/AIDS was discussed in a previous section, this section will focus on the potential psychological and social obstacles to women's work efforts. Psychologically, women must overcome the feeling that their lives and their future are out of their control. Socially, women face threats from "witching" should their hard work bring them too much undistributed success. Consequently, while society places pressure on women to work hard, an opposing fear of witchcraft may limit them from working so hard that they reap covetable rewards.

6.4.1   Feelings of little or no control over their lives

While some women expressed hope for the future and plans for improving their lives

(see Chapter 5), other women indicated that they had little or no control over their lives and that the future looked bleak. Lacking a sense of self-efficacy and/or hope may prevent women from planning for the future and investing time in work that might enhance their lives over the long-term. Women's interview statements suggest that perceptions of control over their lives range from a lot to a little, with some women indicating despair. This section describes responses that seem to reflect feelings of limited or no control over one's life. This section operates from the assumption that women who believe they have little or no control may be less likely to plan for the future and to work hard.

A number of women tied their view of the future to their Christian faith, and some also indicated a sense of uncertainty. When asked to describe what they would like their lives to be like in five years, some respondents indicated that the outcome of their lives is determined not by them, but by God. In this way, some women conveyed reluctance to state hopes or plans for the future because they believe it is in God's hands. For example, when asked what she hoped for her life in five years, one respondent replied, "Like, myself, I cannot know. It's only God that knows what will happen. I don't know if I will reach those years or not". Another woman responded to the same question by saying, "I don't know. It depends on how God puts things. Sometimes I... how can I say it if I don't know whether I will reach those years". A third respondent replied, "God is the one who knows". The first two responses indicate that the women are uncertain whether they will survive for the next five years. It is possible then that women may be reluctant to plan for five years in the future when they are doubtful about even "reach[ing] those years".

Another respondent's uncertainty about the future was expressed her statement: "With

me I cannot change my life, but God is the one who knows what will happen in the future". Her uncertainty may fuel the lack of control she seems to feel over her life, expressed in her assertion that she "cannot change" her own life. Other respondents seemed to lack a strong sense of self-efficacy. One woman, for example, indicated that she does not decide her own life and therefore cannot know how she would like her life to be in five years. She said, "It's like, no one can know how it will be before you reach there because you don't have to decide for your life". When asked who decides what her life will be like in five years, she credited God, saying, "In years to come, with yourself, you cannot decide what will happen because you don't know. Only God is the one who knows, and he's the one who can give direction after you are in those years". Her response indicates that she believes she can exercise little choice over her own future.

Significant uncertainty about the future, even when considering only the next five years, is probably increased by high levels of illness and mortality in the area. Women may be reluctant to plan when they perceive that illness is a real and eminent threat, and when illness is seen as an act of God rather than something over which a person may have some control. For example, when one woman was asked about her hopes for the future, she indicated that the only way she could change her future was by praying to God, as shown in the following excerpt:

> *Interviewer: What do you hope for your life five years from now?*
> How can a person's life be?
> *Interviewer: So what would you like your life to look like five years from now?*
> If it was me, then I could just... my life could just continue like this and change.
> *Interviewer: How would it change?*
> It could only change if I just continue praying to God, going to church.
> *Interviewer: And how would you like God to change your life?*
> By just praying to God.
> *Interviewer: So what do you pray for?*

We pray for our days to last long in the world.

The perception that prayer is her "only" way to "change" her life suggests a low sense of self-efficacy. Interestingly, even with a positive outlook in the future, a woman may be inclined to credit an external force rather than herself for positive changes in her life. When specifically asked what parts of her life she had changed in the last five years for the better, one respondent replied:

> I would say almost every part. I would not… I will not give the credit to myself because I really don't have any power to change myself. But I give all the credit to God. Yeah.
> *Interviewer: So can you give me some examples of things-*
> That I have changed. Well, I would say that God has taken me to school. He has brought my family together. He has provided everything that I do need. He has changed me from within.

The respondent claimed that she does not "have any power to change" herself, but rather that God has provided her with education and a family, as well as provided for her needs. The corollary to crediting an external force with such relative success is to blame an external source when one suffers from insufficient material resources or a poor level of education. Both viewpoints suggest an externalized sense of control and a low sense of self-efficacy.

While the above excerpts seem to suggest that the women believe they have little or no control over their lives, there is a second possible interpretation. It is possible that their statements, all akin to the statement, "God is the one who knows", may indicate more of a verbal proclamation of a woman's adherence to religious beliefs than to actual feelings of helplessness. Many Christian religious institutions advocate that one must put one's trust in God. Followers may therefore provide verbal acknowledgement of these beliefs in

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conversations about their lives and the future, while ultimately still believing that they have some level of control over their lives. In Kwandu, the belief that God has control over one's life and that an individual has relatively little influence, (or claims to have little influence), likely comes in part from the prevalent Seventh-Day Adventist beliefs and other Christian denominations in the Kwandu area.

That some women do lack a sense of control over their lives was reflected in responses to questions about changes they have made to improve their lives over the past five years. Some women indicated that there has been no change because no one else has come yet to change their lives for them. Comments about not having external change agents convey that some women believe they alone cannot initiate improvements in their own lives[6]. For example, one woman replied, "There is no part of my life which I changed here in the past. I am just like this because no one can look or take care of me". Her advanced years probably add a physical need for assistance from another person to improve her life, since age can limit a person's physical ability to meet their own subsistence needs. Another elderly woman echoed her sentiments, saying "There is no ways. We can't change anything since we are now elder people".

One respondent implied that her wellbeing is directly linked to her husband's behavior, another indication of externalizing one's sense of control. She said, "The only part which I changed is the one whereby I was telling my husband to stop drinking so that he can be able to take care of our children. I think that's the only thing I have changed". Another woman explained that she has not been able to change her life because she lacks an externally-derived

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[6] This is worth exploring in the discussion session - about how research has shown that some people are in a "poverty trap", as suggested by some of the comments about not having enough to eat and onto having land, etc.

"something" with which to change it. She said, "There is nothing which I changed. When you see other people changing, it's only if they have something which makes them change their life. With me it's just like this". The act of waiting for someone or something else to come and change one's life is passive, and it may diminish a woman's inclination to work hard. When one believes that positive changes can only be brought by someone else, there is probably less motivation to apply one's self to work. Instead, one applies one's self to the act of waiting.

6.4.2 Feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, and/or despair

Whether women are indicating powerlessness or their religious beliefs, or both, when they claim that God is the one who controls their futures, it is nonetheless apparent that some women in Kwandu perceive a bleak future. For example, when an older woman was asked to describe what she hoped for her in life five years, she revealed a sense of helplessness and sadness, as shown in the following exchange:

> With me, I know nothing about that. God is the one who knows.
>> *Interviewer:What do you think God wants for you in your life five years from now?*
> When I talk about God is the one who knows because I don't know whether I can die tonight or die any day from now. Since I'm either lonely when I think about other things, I don't feel good. Or any time, sometimes I can spend the day just crying, thinking about other things which happens in life. So I don't know with that.
>> *Interviewer: What other things are you sad about, that you cry about?*
> It's because out of ten children which I had, only one is now left. So when I think about all those, I have to cry since I don't have my parents. I'm just now alone.

At least two factors seem to influence the respondent's negative view of the future. First, her advanced age may contribute to doubts about her ability to survive in the next five years, leaving God to decide "whether [she] can die tonight or die any day from now". Second,

the deaths of nine out of ten of her children and the absence of her parents has left her

"lonely" and "crying". Her emotional pain seems to dim her view of the future and heighten

feelings of uncertainty in the face of great loss.

A second respondent drew a clear link between her negative views of the future and the

widespread death she perceived in her community. She introduced the subject when asked to

describe what it was like growing up in the area. She said that unlike now, things were good. So

when asked why things were different in the present time, she replied: "[People now are] just

dying like flies". When asked to explain, she conveyed an apocalyptic view of the future, as

shown in the following exchange:

> It is because it is now like the world is ending.
> > *Interviewer: Who is causing the world to end?*
> It is Satan.
> > *Interviewer: Can people do anything about that?*
> There is nothing people can do. You can just wait until when your time comes
> and then you will die.
> > *Interviewer: Is that true for everyone?*
> It is true because people are dying. We were many in years back, but now we are
> only few.

Her feelings of helplessness and despair are seen in statements like "the world is ending" and

"there is nothing people can do". Instead, she says, people just have to wait until they die.

Another respondent conveyed hopelessness when asked to describe her hopes for the

next five years. She said, "There is no way I could know that. Sometimes I cannot reach there".

When then asked what would make her life better, she replied, "There is no way I could do

that". Her responses indicate a bleak view of the future, a view that may be influenced by her

lack of formal education and relative poverty. She seems to view herself as trapped, unable to

improve her own life.

That poverty may increase feelings of helplessness and hopelessness is suggested by a respondent's reply to questions about her hopes for her life from years in the future. She replied, "If it was me alone, I think it was fair if I was having... I was on a better level. Yeah. But right now, even when I say 'I want to be like this', while I have nothing, it's not going to be like that". The interview with the respondent and observations of her home suggest that she is relatively more impoverished than other Kwandu residents. Her poverty probably compels her to want to improve her material situation, to reach a "better level". However, she indicated that she does not see improvement to be possible as long as she believes she has "nothing".

Another woman who did not know her age, but who appeared to be in her mid-twenties, similarly conveyed hopelessness when asked about her hopes for her life in the next five years, She responded, "There is nothing, just being suffering". Like the previous respondent, the young woman also appeared to live in relative poverty. Her and her children's clothes were dirty and worn. She had a thatch house with no courtyard, no meal plow, and conveyed having no dependable supply of money. Plus, she informed us that she had no formal education. Like some other uneducated and relatively impoverished women, she seemed to view no way out of her materially-poor situation.

The above responses suggest that several factors contribute to women's feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, and even despair in Kwandu. First, some women face high levels of uncertainty, particularly regarding deaths of friends and relatives and the timing of their own deaths. The statement that people are "just dying like flies" because "the world is ending" suggests that the future is viewed to be highly uncertain and unpromising. Second, some women fight loneliness after losing relatives. Similarly, some women perceive nothing but a

suffering with no promise of an end. Third, relative poverty and lack of education leave some women feeling trapped in an uncomfortable situation over which they believe they have little or no control. Finally, some of the women cited above were over the age of 60 at the time of their interviews. Their descriptions of no future suggest that they have adopted the view that their lives will soon come to an end and that they are in effect, "just waiting for death". While the data do not show a direct link between feelings of helplessness or an externalized sense of control and an inability to work hard, it is nonetheless logical to assume that such beliefs about one's self and the future may very well diminish a woman's motivation to work hard.

6.4.3 Fears of jealousy and witchcraft

Witching, like hopelessness and a poor sense of self-efficacy, may diminish women's motivation to work hard. Witching poses a psychological threat to people in the Caprivi because many people believe that sorcery can kill or maim, or protect. Women use witchcraft for a variety of reasons, including the protection of children and husbands and to punish people they perceive as both more successful and uncharitable. Jealousy, as will be shown in the excerpts below, arises when one person or household has more resources than other people and when those resources are believed to not be adequately shared. There is a cultural expectation that resources should be distributed amongst relatives and neighbors. Consequently, people who accumulate resources without perceivably sharing them elevate their risk for being witched.

The following excerpt from a relatively wealthier woman in Kwandu shows how increased wealth brings jealousy, and with jealousy, increased exposure to witching. Note that the respondent states that since her family is "planning to do many things", meaning they are

enhancing their wealth, people are becoming jealous. She then says that when people are jealous, they will witch her family. She indicates that she suspects her father's recent illness may have been the result of witchcraft aimed at harming her family. Then she explains that her family will not stand idly by if someone dies in her family. A death in her family will be ascribed to jealousy and witchcraft, and her family "will look for that person who kill[s]" her relative. Since her relative will have presumably died from witchcraft, they will turn to a sorcerer, a *ñanga*, she explains, to identify the person who witched her deceased family member. Then they in turn will witch the perceived murderer for a fee of "just" 300 Rand. The following excerpt shows how jealousy is perceived to take material from through sorcery:

> Now [my family is] planning to do many things. They are planning to do many things. But the thing which is found there now, is jealousy. People are now becoming jealous of us.
> > *Interviewer: In your family, or…*
> Yeah, in our… outside the family, they are jealous of our family now.
> > *Interviewer: And what happens when people are jealous?*
> Oh, something can come.
> > *Interviewer: Like what?*
> Witching.
> > *Interviewer: Have you had that happen?*
> Not yet, but since like it is coming now (she laughs). Because our father last week, when I was in Johannesburg, he was really, really sick. He was sick. Yeah.
> > *Interviewer: Is there anything you can do to stop that from happening?*
> No. Nothing. We are only looking forward to see who is going to be out. Anyone who is going to be out, we do something. We act now.
> > *Interviewer: What do you mean, "out"?*
> Who is going to die, from our family, because of jealousy.
> > *Interviewer: You'll do something about it?*
> Yeah.
> > *Interviewer: And what do you do when someone dies from jealousy?*
> When someone dies from jealousy, you go… you go somewhere and look for that person who killed it, who killed her, must also die.
> > *Interviewer: How do you find that person?*
> Go to the *ñanga*. Do you know the *ñanga*?
> > *Interviewer: [Yes.]*
> Witch doctor.

> *Interviewer:* Ñanga?
>
> Yes.
>
> *Interviewer: Where do you find* ñanga *around here?*
>
> Here, there are many. You know, *ñanga*'s they are many. Even here, when you want to kill someone, you can go and kill someone. You just give him or her 300 Rand, is enough to kill a person.

Similarly, another relatively successful woman expressed her fear of jealousy and witching. Like the previous respondent, the following respondent also has the enviable status of being employed. The respondent claimed to be worried about being witched, especially when her "friends" are gathered somewhere without her. She explained that a refusal to share goods with someone can spark jealousy, then witchcraft. A person may see another person as having more material goods, believing that life that is good for the person with the resources, but "is not good for me". Consequently, when the (relatively) materially-deprived person comes to ask for something, and then is refused, being told "I don't want [to give you anything]", jealousy will arise. The jealous person will see him or herself as having less material resources and will witch the person who refused to share. In this way, a relatively successful woman who is perceived to refuse sharing her material goods with others risks being witched, as indicated by the following exchange:

> *Interviewer: Do you worry about witching?*
>
> Yes.
>
> *Interviewer: Why do you worry about that?*
>
> Because I don't hear them.
>
> *Interviewer: You don't hear who?*
>
> Those who is gathered with the… who is gathered that place to talk at my name.
>
> *Interviewer: At which place?*
>
> Anywhere which is gathered there.
>
> *Interviewer: So what do people do when they're gathered?*
>
> To participate in their programs.
>
> *Interviewer: So you're afraid of people witching you?*
>
> Hm? In this… under the sun, the life which you are busy doing… We are always witching each other, when we are gathered together. When we are gathered

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together, somebody or two, your friend is not there, you can witch him or her…
and… with the other friends.

> *Interviewer: So I know very little about this, so this is why I'm trying to clarify, so when people gather and you can't attend, they might witch you…*

Yes.

> *Interviewer: …when they're together?*

If me, I'm not there, they can witch me.

> *Interviewer: Why do people witch people?*

I don't know. When… You know that woman. Yes I know that. You know the life which you always doing? Yes I know that. Is good or not? Is not good for you. Is not good for me. Somebody can say, "Is good for me". Somebody can say, "Is not good for me. Why? Because yesterday while I was there in her house, I asked him, 'Can I give me this and this?' She said that 'I don't want. I don't want. I don't want'. That is why I'm saying that is not good for me."

The previous respondent indicated that hard work may come at a price. When a woman accumulates material goods, she must prove that her activities are of benefit to others. If she accumulates possessions in a way that does not convey benefit to others, she believes she will be witched. In this way, social pressure likely serves as a double disincentive to work harder, as a woman not only fears being witched, but must then distribute the fruits of her labor to people around her to protect her social standing.

A male key informant similarly shared the connection between jealousy, employment, and fears of witchcraft. When asked what people do when they get jealous, he said, "Or say, if someone is jealousy, it might end up as a result of someone being witched, yeah, that he should get out of that position". In other words, a jealous person is believed to be capable of witching someone in a way that forces them out of a job.

Similarly, when I asked an employed, female, key informant whether she feared being witched, she replied that there is not much she can do about being witched except to avoid informing certain people that she now has employment. She explained that she feared what

might happen should a particular woman learn that she has a job, as that woman might be prone to witch her.

The terror that witchcraft instills in people was also attested to by a key informant who works in a Caprivi-based non-governmental organization. The key informant described the physical effects she observed in people who believed they had been witched. She witnessed people shaking in fear and observed terror in their faces, as indicated by the following statement:

> Many times, we heard people… they asked go to pray for them with, you know, like they were… some of them, they were shaking. People in… you know, like, adults. Like, you meet them and they are normal people. You may talk with them. You know. And in a moment when they fear that someone witch them, they are… like, their face is transformed. It's a real, deep fear that they have. They really think in the power. They believe the power of witchcraft it's strong. They feel it. Maybe already they saw it. I don't know. And, yeah. For them it's important. It's a big, big important role.

As the previous respondent attested, witchcraft plays a "big, big important role" in the Kwandu area. Respondents' descriptions of witchcraft show that even relatively educated women believe in its power and fear its effects. It would not be surprising then if women weighed potential work opportunities against the risk increased success might pose to their wellbeing. In this way, fears of witchcraft may limit some women's willingness to work hard.

Just as fears of witchcraft and jealousy may inhibit women from investing in work, feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, as well as a belief that one has little control over one's destiny, also likely impede women from working hard. While the research does not draw a clear link between work effort and feelings of self-efficacy, it does show that some women believe they have little control over their own lives.

6.5 Impediments to being a nurturing woman who does not fight with others and assists people in need

Responses show that "real women" are believed to assist people in need and to not fight with others. "Real women" are supposed to assist people in need by providing goods and services. The first section showed that women face numerous constraints to meeting their material needs. So it follows that women from resource-poor households have limited ability to offer material assistance. Resource-poor households may also be strapped for time, preventing them from spending time with ill and/or elderly individuals. Therefore resource-scarcity is an impediment to being a "real woman" from the standpoint that it leaves women less able to assist others. However, women must also have the motivation to assist others, and as will be shown, the potential to be considered a "real woman" may not provide adequate motivation.

In addition to offering assistance, "real women" are regarded as avoiding conflicts. However, there are ample opportunities for testing a woman's patience and tolerance. When women perceive they have been wronged, they may feel compelled to quarrel or fight with the subject of their anger, and in so doing, jeopardize their status as a "real woman". This section focuses both on reasons that women engage in quarrels, as well as on an social aspects that may diminish their motivations to assist other people. First, respondents indicated that women often quarrel over infidelity. Second, responses suggest that some women may decline offering support since they perceive other women to be only looking out for themselves.

Women sometimes blame other women for a man's infidelity. A man's infidelity may therefore increase the likelihood that women will fight with each other. While a "real woman" by definition does not quarrel with people, women faced with a husband's adultery may have a

difficult time adhering to the norm of silence in the face of betrayal. For example, one respondent was asked to elaborate on her discussion of what people do wrong. When she was asked to describe what kind of things women do wrong, she explained that some women will have sex with other women's husbands. She said, "Womens also will go and get into other women's households whereby that women is married. Then [s]he will be like taking her husband. So they fight for that". Her explanation suggests that infidelity is believed to cause some quarrels.

When another respondent was asked to describe the kinds of things people quarrel and fight about in the area, she also pinpointed adultery, saying:

> There is nothing. But women only fight for their men, if they realize he is going out with another woman.
> *Interviewer: So do women fight with each other, or with the men?*
> I only fight with a woman, because she's the one who took away my husband. Since my husband doesn't love me, now loves the other one. So I only have to fight with the one who took him away from me.

Consequently, women who believe themselves to be wronged by a woman's adultery with her husband may "fight with the one who took him away", and thereby potentially jeopardize her standing as a "real woman". In this way, infidelity poses an indirect constraint to "real woman" status.

Having limited decision-making power, whether it is experienced as helplessness in the face of a husband leaving a marriage for another woman, or as having little voice in community decisions, may increase the likelihood that a woman will "quarrel". It stands to reason that what a person in a position of power may deem as "fighting" could also be construed as a woman insisting that her rights and wishes be respected. For example, women who speak out against a husband's infidelity can be accused of "talking too much", an issue that is discussed in

the next section. Therefore, infidelity, domestic abuse, and other forms of mistreatment by men and women in power may make it difficult for women to fill the requisite peaceful and passive behavior expected of a "real woman".

6.5.1 Feelings of declining social support

Feeling that women are only out there for themselves may also make women less likely to invest time and resources in their community members. They may feel that their efforts will not be reciprocated and will therefore not be worth the resources invested, even if it can improve their perceived social standing. When asked how women help each other in the area, several respondents commented on a perceived lack of support from women. For example, one woman said, "there is nothing", while another said, "there is no ways they help each other". Both women indicated that they perceive no support whatsoever from other women. Another respondent replied:

> What I see here is like there is nothing like helping each other here because you will find that it's just like it's see for yourself. You can see that someone is struggling, then no one can say, "Let's go and help that person". You only have to see for yourself.

Even when a person is seen to be having difficulties, she claims, women will not offer other women assistance. Instead, women who are struggling will just have to look after themselves. A third respondent made a similar observation, claiming that only informal work, or "piece work", will improve her situation. She replied that there "there is no way" she believes women help each other, as shown below:

> There is no way we help each other. With we others… maybe with others who you have just talked to. But with me, I find that no one helps me, only if I go out to make some piece work.

While the women cited above did not say that perceived lack of support prevents them from assisting others, it is likely that their motivation to assist others may be dampened by a foreseen lack of reciprocation. Consequently, they may believe offering assistance to be a waste of time and resources. Similarly, women who have experienced betrayal by a husband may lack adequate motivation to restrain themselves from quarreling.

6.6   Impediments to fulfilling expected roles as wife and mother

While marriage improves a woman's chances of being considered a "real woman" and carries with it possibilities for an improved livelihood, it can come with significant risks and costs to women. Real and perceived costs of marriage may prevent women from getting married and staying married. Women reported that domestic abuse and infidelity can make marriage miserable. This section shows how women's experiences with and fears of domestic abuse and infidelity can prevent them from entering into marriage altogether or lead them to abandon a marriage. It also demonstrates that women perceive divorce as a real possibility, and sometimes something over which they have little control. The section also shows that while "promiscuity" can tarnish a woman's reputation, women are nonetheless propelled by poverty and other factors to engage in multiple and concurrent sexual relationships, jeopardizing their social standing as "real women".

It is important to note that the term "marriage" was employed by respondents to denote both informal and formal sexual relationships between a man and a woman. Traditionally, long-term sexual relationships were formalized through the payment of a brideprice, termed *lobola*, to the bride's or bride-to-be's inlaws. Ongoing, informal

conversations with a female informant in the Caprivi indicated that *lobola* is still typically paid in the form of cattle or other material goods.

Informal sexual relationships are considered here as relationships between a man and a woman for which no *lobola* has been exchanged. Respondents used the word "marriage" to describe two kinds of informal sexual relationships. First, the word was used to describe long-term domestic partnerships between a man and a woman, partnerships that involved living in the same residence and sharing lives over a lengthy amount of time. Second, the word "marriage" was also used to indicate short-term sexual relationships in which little or no long-term commitment was indicated. "Marriage" in this section refers to a relationship between a man and a woman who share the same household, whether or not the partnership has been formalized through the payment of *lobola*.

6.6.1 Domestic violence

While women may feel compelled to improve their social standing through marriage, fear of domestic abuse may prevent women from getting married or staying married. Women may consciously choose to sacrifice social status in order to escape abusive or potentially abusive situations. On the other hand, the desire to be viewed as a "real woman" in her community may drive some women to remain in abusive marriages.

In this section, evidence is first offered to show that domestic abuse threatens women in Kwandu. The section then describes circumstances when physical abuse of women is believed by some people to be justifiable. Understanding that some people believe domestic violence to be justifiable at times shows the extent to which women face potential violence in

marriage, providing more insight into women's reluctance to enter or stay married. Finally, the section concludes by showing that a dearth of family and community support can prevent women from leaving abusive relationships. The end result of these constraints may leave some women unwilling to enter into marriage at all, even if it means a loss of social standing.

Respondents described a variety of difficulties and challenges in the Kwandu area. Among the issues raised by respondents was domestic abuse. Respondents and male and female key informants described abuse of women and children primarily at the hands of men and often in association with excessive drinking. However, one female respondent, not quoted here, revealed that women are also known to physically abuse elderly female household members. When discussing violence in the Kwandu area, one respondent said, "Some of them, the women, they still get beaten by their husbands. And also the children, they are still having some rape by the old mens". Her remark indicates that both physical and sexual violence are perpetuated against women and children in the Kwandu area.

Another woman commented on the perceived link between alcohol abuse and domestic violence when she was asked to identify difficulties women face in the area that men do not face. She said:

> Being beaten by their husbands, especially men who drinks beer when they are from the... when they are drunk back home, they end up beating their wives, while they did nothing wrong. Again, this time of plowing season, you'll find that the woman is at the field plowing, while the man is at the shibeen drinking.

Her comment highlights two difficulties some women are believed to face in marriage. First, women may be abandoned to work in the fields alone while their husbands drink alcohol

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at informal bars, termed "shibeens". Moreover, the same women may be beaten when their inebriated husbands return to the homestead.

Another woman responded to the same question about women's difficulties by saying, "You will find that womens are every time and then being beaten by men". She then added, "I'm giving an example: in the household, you'll find that even when a woman speaks out, the points are not taken by a man. A man will just say, 'That is out. Then you have to follow what I tell you'". Her comment suggests that men may beat women in an effort to enforce their perceived decision-making authority. When a woman "speaks out", her husband may force her, possibly through beatings, to "follow" what he tells her to do.

The concept of a woman facing physical violence for verbalizing her needs and wants was also introduced during informal conversations. The phrase "talking too much" was used to describe women who verbally demand too much from their husbands and women who refuse to do what their husbands have commanded them. That some people believe "talking too much" merits physical violence was also made evident by the following exchange with a male key informant. When asked, "When is it okay for a man to hit a woman", he replied:

> No. It doesn't mean that maybe a solution for anything is maybe hitting or maybe beating someone or beating the wife. That is not the solution. But that things just comes because of the abuse of alcohol, that drug which have maybe drunk. Is the, yeah, is the influence of that alcohol. So I don't think there is something else which makes… Yeah. Some other things like some other womens, they are so… they talk much, maybe talking every now and then just one thing, "Wa-wa-wa-wa-wa", then the man, he became angry.
> *Interviewer: And that's okay?*
> [Yes.] That is okay. It's when he can beat.
> *Interviewer: Is there any other time?*
> What again can make a man beat a woman? What? Yeah. Yeah. I think, yes. Sometimes if a man, maybe he says, "Ah, yeah. Please, okay, you may do for me this, this and this and this. Okay, I'm going to work, so I need… you may prepare for me this". Maybe a man where… the man… when he comes back, you'll find

that that… that task is not done. Or maybe he cannot beat her by that time. If that thing repeats, repeats, then it's when she can maybe, okay, "Maybe I can beat this woman because she cannot understand me".

While the previous respondent initially asserted that hitting or beating a wife is not a remedy for discord between a husband and wife, he later admitted that women who "talk much" can justifiably be beaten. Women who insist over and over that their demand or opinion be honored are believed to "talk [too] much". In this way, they are seen as refusing to submit to the husband's normative status as head-of-the-household. Similarly, wives who repeatedly refuse to do a task that husbands have assigned them are also believed to deserve a beating. Violence is then used by some men to enforce their perceived authority over their wives.

Discussions with male leaders in the community also indicated that physical violence is believed by some men to be an appropriate response to women who "talk too much". For example, a male community leader asked me during a group discussion whether a husband should not strike his wife if she insults him in front of their children. His question was delivered with apparent sincerity.

That violence against women is perceived by some people to be widespread was underscored by a comment from a female key informant. The informant was asked to share any stories that might provide a sense of women's challenges or experiences in the Kwandu area. She replied, "I know a lot of sad stories about women here. Sad stories like when they were beaten by husbands. They were abused. It's usual there to be abused verbal". Her response indicates that both physical and verbal abuse may be common in the Kwandu area.

Not only do the above statements reveal the existence of domestic abuse in Kwandu, but they offer clues about beliefs that perpetuate the abuse. Women are expected to fulfill

household responsibilities like food preparation and to submit to their husbands' authority. If

women do not fulfill their roles and responsibilities, they may incur beatings. The previous

statement, "while [the women] did nothing wrong", implies that the female respondent

believes that wife beatings are justifiable when a woman does do something "wrong". Another

previous respondent indicated that women are expected to prepare food and that some men

may beat wives who fail to fulfill their prescribed household responsibilities. Additionally,

claims that beatings follow alcohol consumption suggest that alcohol may be blamed for a

husband's abuse rather than the husband himself being held accountable for his behavior.

Given the widespread acceptance of domestic violence, some women must find ways to

cope if they want to stay married. Some women cope with violent husbands by encouraging

each other to conform to husbands' demands for submissiveness. For example, one woman

conveyed her belief that women can prevent beatings by silencing themselves when they are

confronted by an intoxicated husband. When asked what kinds of things women discussed with

each other after formal meetings, she replied:

> Sometimes we are, we are having being taught and then finish, someone can come with a discussion, "Ah, you know, these men in this area, how do you see them, they drink too much!" Then they are going to talk, "Ah, like my husband, he drink too much. Like mine." So someone can come and question "How do you usually help you?" Ah, then you are going to say, "Ah, to me, sometimes when he talk, I don't answer him because I know if he's drunk he can beat, whatsoever." That sort of discussion can be.
> *Interviewer: So have you had those kind of discussions?*
> You know, our tradition, even when we go to church, after talking, we can say "How we are going to protect ourselves?" Like those men who can beat. Some, they beat. Someone can just help you there. (S)he can just say to you that "Ah, if your husband he drink, when you see him is talking or… just leave him. Don't answer him." So you are going to study that "Ok, if I am having a…" We don't mean that all of our husband they drink. So you are going to change. Then the husband one day when he go and come into the courtyard, he's going to see that

"Ah-ah, this woman now is changed. Long time he was talking too much, but now I can talk and [she] don't answer me".

Her statement suggests that some women will encourage each other to "just leave" their husbands alone when the husband is drunk, believing that by refraining from conversation with an intoxicated husband, a woman can avoid being beaten. Instead of "talking too much", she will greet her husband with silence and submissiveness and, in doing so, presumably protect herself from his violent temper.

In contrast to the previous respondent, not all women believe that they should remain silent when their husbands behave in hurtful ways. The following excerpt shows that some men will divorce wives who complain about their husband's infidelity. The respondent asserts that while some people subscribe to an unfaithful man's accusations that his wife "talks too much", she believes that it is the men who cheat on their wives who are deserving of blame. Wives who ask questions, she says, are not at fault for an ensuing divorce. The following excerpt shows how the respondent questions the "talk too much" label so often ascribed to women:

> Interviewer: I'm also wondering, so in this area, when a man divorces a woman, do people blame the woman or do they blame the man? Or what do they say about it?
> Here people will blame the woman. They say we women talk too much. But what usually brings that is you will find that your husband is having a girlfriend. Then when you realize that, when you ask, that's where the divorce will come from.
> Interviewer: So who do you blame for that?
> It's like we blame the man now for that because the man should not divorce the wife just for asking her about all those which happen.

Given that some women and men believe that beatings are justifiable or deserved in some circumstances, women may tolerate domestic abuse and stay married. Adding to their reluctance to leave an abusive marriage may be a lack of understanding of their own human

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rights. For example, when asked what women can do if they are beaten, and how they can

protect themselves, one respondent replied:

> Here there is nothing which a woman can do. They just sit. Maybe they don't
> even know their rights. They don't even take those people to the court.
>> *Interviewer: What rights do women have when it comes to men and*
>> *beating?*
> Here, when a woman is beaten, we have to go to the court and report. Or you
> just stand in the road, then you… when you see the police vehicle, then you stop
> and you tell them. Or just locally in the villages, there are *indunas*. You can
> report that.
>> *Interviewer: What do the* indunas *do when a woman reports beatings?*
> If the *induna* has heard about what happened, he will report that to the *khuta*.
> Then they will charge a man to pay for the women.
>> *Interviewer: What happens if the man keeps beating the woman after*
>> *that?*
> There is nothing, unless if they just end the relationship.

While the previous respondent knows that women have the option to seek temporary

intervention by the police and/or assistance from the traditional courts, not all women, she

says, realize they can access help. When traditional courts find a woman to have been wronged

by her husband, she claims that they will force the man to pay a fine. Another respondent

identified the same two options for women who are abused by their husbands. When asked

what happens when a man beats a woman, she indicated, first of all, her belief that beatings do

not solve problems. Next, she identified the police and the traditional courts as possible

recourses for women who are being beaten. She stated:

> In the household you will find that when a man beats the woman, it doesn't
> solve that. There will be just a misunderstanding.
>> *Interviewer: So if a man hurts a woman, by beating her, what can a*
>> *woman do about that?*
> We can take that to the *khuta* or the police.
>> *Interviewer: And what do the* khuta *and police do?*

> They will have to talk on it and find out whether… if… They'll have to sit and talk about that in the *khuta*. And then sometimes if they don't finish… if they don't solve it well, a woman can be released to go to her parents.

The previous two excerpts indicate that while traditional courts can impose fines on an abusive husband, a woman in the end may have no alternative but to leave the relationship. Interestingly, the previous excerpt implies that women cannot leave a husband of their own accord. Instead, they must "be released" by verdict of the sub-*khuta*. The perspective that women must be given permission to return to their parents is likely connected to the tradition of paying bride-price, or *lobola.* Ongoing personal communications with a female Caprivi resident indicated that if a woman leaves her husband without pleading her case with the sub-*khuta*, her parents will be expected to forfeit the bride-price previously paid to them. Consequently, only through negotiations with the sub-*khuta* can a woman potentially prove she has been wronged and thereby safeguard the *lobola* her husband paid to her parents.

While women can seek some intervention from the police and community authorities (sub-*khutas*), they may ultimately need to return to their parents' homes. There they may face scorn for not continuing the marriage. Her maternal family may chastise her for leaving her husband, as indicated in a conversation with a woman who had recently left an abusive partner. When asked to explain why she did not have a husband, she replied:

> The reason which I can give is the father of my kid, he used to beat me. That's why I left him and came back home.
>> *Interviewer: I'm very sorry. So was there any punishment for him for beating you?*
> There is nothing. Maybe it's because I don't have my father.
>> *Interviewer: Did you report it to the khuta?*
> No. I only left him.
>> *Interviewer: And why didn't you report it to the khuta?*
> I saw that he won't afford to pay anything because he was not working.

> *Interviewer: And the police?*
> It's not good, because he could end up in jail forever. (She laughs)
> ….
> *Interviewer: So this is one thing I don't understand is… you say that you're not respected because you're not married? But it was your husband who was beating you. It wasn't you. So who's fault was it that you're not married?*
> The fault now is mine because I'm the one who left the man.
> *Interviewer: Even though he was beating you?*
> Yes. Because I have nothing to do.
> *Interviewer: So do people blame you or him?*
> They are blaming me, that I was supposed to just stay.

Even though the man was beating her, she believes her family blames her for leaving him and that her family would have preferred she stay with her abusive husband. It is probable that in moving back into her maternal home, she is seen as adding an additional burden to her family's resources, especially since her father is absent. She implies that since she does not have a job, or "nothing to do", her presence is resented. Some of the resentment may also stem from the fact that her relationship with the man was never formalized with a *lobola* payment, something she indicated in a follow-up interview. She may be viewed as returning from an informal marriage penniless, having wasted an opportunity to have earned cattle or other material goods for her family. Overall, the exchange with the respondent suggests that a lack of social support for abused women can make it difficult for women to leave violent relationships.

Interestingly, a male *induna* commented on some women's reluctance to leave abusive relationships. During a meeting with the Singalamwe Sub-*khuta* at the end of the fieldwork, I commented about how some (unidentified) women had said they were experiencing abuse by their husbands. A male *induna* responded with the following comment about domestic violence in households (paraphrase):

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> There is another thing I heard about how women are being mistreated by their husbands on a daily basis. But the same woman is the one who brings food into the household, clothes, etc. But when this woman is being beaten, she will just sit going nowhere. So that's why I'm raising this point to you.

The *induna's* observation that materially-independent women will stay in abusive relationships is likely explained by the social pressure to tolerate domestic violence. Where women refuse to stay in abusive marriages, they may face stigma from family and community. If a woman moves back with her family after an informal marriage to an unemployed man, she may be viewed as a burden because she returns with nothing to show for her time with him. Furthermore, an unemployed man who abuses his wife is likely unable to pay a penalty of money or cattle to the woman or her birth family. Foreseeing these constraints, women may refuse to enter into marriage at all. They may choose to risk losing social standing as a "real woman" than put themselves at risk of domestic abuse, whether or not they conform to expected roles and responsibilities.

Given the risks of entering into a marriage that becomes abusive and then finding one's self unable to leave, some women refuse marriage altogether. The following respondent explained that poor treatment of wives is the reason she has not yet married. When asked whether she wanted to get married, she said:

> Ah! I don't even think I want to get married. But I'm still thinking of that. I haven't yet made a decision if I want to get married or not.
> *Interviewer: What kind of things are influencing your decision?*
> I see people who are married that some of them, they are… they are not happy. So I think I… I always think that I might be like them. And some of the decisions, ah, I don't like that. But people are different. You might think that that one is not… just because that husband is not treating the wife accordingly does not mean the other person is not going to treat the wife accordingly.

Her fear that she "might be like" the unhappy married people she observes keeps her

from entering into a marriage herself. While she does not directly mention abuse, she makes a clear reference to a husband's mistreatment of a wife when she refers to men who do not treat "the wife accordingly". Her fear of mistreatment by a husband, whether from abuse, infidelity, or other problems, influences her status as a single woman.

That marriage poses difficulties to women in Kwandu is summed up well by a comment from a male *induna*. The *induna* explain that "Women's lives here is very hard. The reason I say is you'll find that most women are not married. And those who are married are also still suffering from their husbands. That's what we are fighting for. We want women to live a better life" [5 January 2011]. His comment draws a striking correlation between woman's perceived suffering and their husbands' treatment of them.

Clearly, Kwandu residents, both men and women, have a range of views about the causes and acceptability of domestic violence. However, a predominate view that women deserve beatings for certain behaviors likely compels some women to risk social standing by leaving marriage or refusing it altogether.

6.6.2 Infidelity, divorce, and staying single

Not only does domestic violence deter women from getting married or staying married, but some women express reluctance to enter into marriage or to stay in a marriage when they have heard about or experienced infidelity. While fear of betrayal and neglect deters some women, others express that even when they want to stay married, men will sometimes choose to leave them. Female respondents indicated that a woman's desire to stay married can prove irrelevant when the husband finds a new woman. This section describes how these three

aspects of infidelity serve as obstacles to marriage, and hence, to gaining recognition as a "real woman".

6.6.2.1 Potential costs of infidelity

Weighing social pressure to be a "real woman" against the risks of infidelity, and with it the potential for HIV/AIDS, humiliation, and material and emotional neglect, women may choose to forgo marriage altogether. Current or past experiences with a husband's infidelity may increase a woman's desire to stay single because infidelity takes a material and emotional toll on women.

Respondents indicated that a man's infidelity is believed to make a woman "miserable" and/or leave her with sole responsibility over children. When one respondent was asked to explain her claim that men "...do not understand what the women face", she raised the issue of infidelity. She said:

> Like, men do not understand... Let me say for example that a man gets a job, gets a job, and he starts working. The woman is unemployed. He provides for the family, but then later on... all of a sudden he starts cheating on the wife. And now the wife is miserable because of the job that the husband got which supposed to be a blessing to all of them. So sometimes... I don't know how to put this in words... Like men don't listen or see women's views and opinions.
> *Interviewer: How often do men cheat on women here?*
> Quite a lot.

Her response suggests several beliefs about adultery and its effects on women. First, the respondent believes that men are often unfaithful to women because she said they cheat "quite a lot". Second, she links infidelity with a lack of perceiving and listening to women's "views and opinions". Third, she indicated that she believes employment can exacerbate a man's tendencies to cheat on his wife. She said later in the interview that "...mainly the people

who do cheat are the ones who are financially stable". Finally, her response indicates a belief

that a man's infidelity causes his wife misery.

In addition to causing emotional pain, respondents indicated that infidelity causes

material hardships as well. When asked to identify any difficulties men face in the area that

women do not face, a female respondent replied:

> With the men, I don't think there is any difficulties which they are facing. But women are facing a problem of they are the ones who are taking care of the children.
> *Interviewer: So will you tell me more about that, about women taking care of children, but maybe men not taking care of children?*
> You'll find that a man, after impregnating a woman, he is going to leave that woman just suffering like that. And then the woman is the one that now is going to carry that kid until when he gives birth, and then taking care of that kid when he is born, looking for food and other stuff. Again, a man can be just somewhere else.
> *Interviewer: Why is okay for a man to leave a woman like that?*
> (The translator and the respondent both laugh.) Men are just like that. You'll find that immediately when he sees that "My wife is now breast-feeding", he will go out again looking for other womens. I don't know how their feelings are. They can't stay for a long time waiting for a person to breast feed.

Like other respondents, the previous respondent seems to believe that men are

commonly unfaithful to their wives. She states, "men are just like that", as if it is a well-known

fact that all men want to leave their wives to look for other women once the wife has given

birth to his child. The costs to a man's perceived nature, she explains, are born by the women

who bear his children. The wives left to care for a man's children will have to take care of the

child and provide the child with food and other material resources. Meanwhile, the man is "just

somewhere else" not taking responsibility for his children.

In this way, the emotional and material costs of perceived and anticipated infidelity add

uncertainty to the prospect of marriage. The real and perceived costs are at times so high that

some women simply refuse to get married. Distrust of men and past hurts from marriage compel some women to forgo marriage altogether. For example, a divorced respondent was asked whether people treat women differently when they are married versus when they are not married. She replied:

> By now I live well, since I'm not married. When I was married, it was like I have to go around hunting for him while he's out with other womens. So for now it's fine.
> *Interviewer: And how do you make sure that if you get married again that doesn't happen?*
> Where am I going to get another man? By now I just feel like it's better if I just stay alone.

The previous respondent credits living well with not being married. Since she used to have to search for her husband when he was out cheating on her with other women, she finds that her life is better now as a single woman. Furthermore, she indicates that she would like to "stay alone" and not get married in the near future.

Another woman described her experiences with emotional pain as the primary reason she never plans to get married. The following excerpt is from a female key informant who was born and raised in the Caprivi, but who has not lived within the Kwandu area. Her statements are provided because they reflect sentiments that were expressed by Kwandu women during informal conversations and formal interviews. When asked why she decided not to get married, the key informant replied:

> Because like this, I'm fine. Yeah, because here, as I see things how they are… Because it's like giving stress on here with these our men. They don't understand. They don't cooperate very well. And they cheat a lot. You see? All these kind of stuff. They can make a person sometimes… Because it's like inviting problems to yourself.
> *Interviewer: Getting married?*
> Yes. Yeah. Because people, they… Most of the people, they do lie. They do cheat. Sometimes they might be having already a wife, married. And sometimes they

went even to magistrate. Now they still come to you and say, "Ah. I am a single person. I never married" or "I was married. We divorced already. What what". Now they will cheat. They will say those lies. At the end of the day, you will fall in love. Now you give them your heart. And now when you... you will just find out with other different persons about the whole thing. Now it's so painful. It's a sore. For you again to erase that, it will take you even a year. Yeah. It's so painful. And these are the type of things. Some of the things, they will lie. And they will cheat. When they go, they will just go. Because they are married, they will just go. Sometimes they even leave you with kids, you see. So it's not healthy to... for someone to be treated like that. As we are human being, we've got our own rights. You can suggest to stay because like me, I need peace.

Like the respondents cited earlier, the previous respondent believes that men's adultery is so common it is almost a foregone conclusion. Her distrust of men's courtship is almost palpable. She has experienced married men lying about their marital status, claiming to be single. She sees the act of marriage as "inviting problems" on one's self, problems in the forms of increased stress and emotional pain so severe it can take a year to heal. Not only does marriage have the potential to bring heartbreak, she claims, but it can leave a woman with children to care for on her own. For these reasons, she has chosen "to stay" as a single woman and not risk the material and emotional losses commonly associated with men's infidelity.

6.6.2.2 Divorce

While some women refuse marriage, others choose to marry despite the potential for infidelity and other problems. However, once married, women can still potentially lose recognition as a "real woman" through divorce. Some women indicated, for example, that women are often not the ones to end a marriage. As one woman claimed, "Men are the ones who used to divorce us [women]". Respondents indicated that some men are believed to leave women after impregnating them and/or when they find a new love interest. For example, when

one respondent was asked whether she had ever been married, she replied:

> I was living with a man who married me in 2009. Then I got a baby. Then again he divorced me.
> 		*Interviewer: It sounds difficult. Why do you think he divorced you?*
> He said I'm old now. He's looking for the younger ones.
> 		*Interviewer: Are you trying to get married again?*
> Yes, if he comes, then if I love that person. But for now, there is no one.

From the respondent's viewpoint, her marriage ended because her husband lost interest in her, not the reverse. His apparent preference for younger women left her single and with a baby, contrary to her wishes. Similarly, another respondent expressed that her husband divorced her for another woman. She explained:

> When he came from Rundu coming here to come and see his son, in the way it's where he met another woman he got married to. Then that woman, they even came to the situation whereby he took all the money, then he gave that woman. Then it's when he came. When he came here he was now asking money from me that he need money to go back to Rundu where he was working. Then, again, I had credit from someone with a 150 [Namibian dollars], and I gave him then again, it was like just giving him to take to another woman.

From the previous respondent's perspective, her husband left her for another woman. Not only did her husband initiate a divorce, but he apparently took money from her to give to his girlfriend before the marriage was over. The betrayal described by the previous two respondents may help explain why some women believe that men in the Kwandu area "don't respect women", as claimed below. The following respondent poignantly claimed that men are predictably unpredictable, inclined to leave their wives at any time for another woman. She adds that to men, marriage is like a temporary job ("piece work"), as shown in the following excerpt:

> *Interviewer: And do you think it's women's fault when they aren't married?*

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No.

> *Interviewer: Whose fault is it?*

It's men's fault.

> *Interviewer: Why?*

Because men, they don't respect women.

> *Interviewer: How… Why do you think that men here don't respect women?*

Because men, they are not very serious with us, marriage. They don't respect marriage. And marriage here is like a piece work. Yeah. At any time, your husband can leave you and without any reason, just for another woman.

Clearly, some women believe that it is men, not women, who initiate divorce. As the previous respondent claimed, "it's men's fault" when women are not married. The implication is that the real and/or perceived power that men exercise over marital relationships limits a woman's ability to stay married. Women who want to get married and stay married may then have relatively little control over their marital status, leaving their identification as "real women" in the hands of men.

6.6.2.2.1 Refusing to tolerate infidelity: divorcing a husband

While the previous section showed that some women believe their marriages to be at the mercy, even whim, of men, it is also evident that other women actively choose to divorce husbands. Women may be inclined to divorce when they find a man's infidelity and/or neglect to be intolerable. So while some women may choose to physically and symbolically sever their marital ties, their actions could be a direct response to a husbands' rejection. In this way, even women who choose to divorce may be responding to behaviors that were initiated by a man, indicating that men have significant influence over a woman's ability to obtain "real woman" status.

One respondent described divorcing her husband in this way, she said:

My first husband took me to his parents. Then he left there. He said, "I'm coming. I'm still going to Katima to look for a job". Then there at Katima again, he married the other lady.

Interviewer: And then what did you do about that?

I even followed that man there at Katima. But he didn't show that he really wanted me to be there. Then he just accommodated me somewhere else, at the other house.

Interviewer: And then what did you do?

I only told him that, "Ah-ah. It's like, as I can see now, it seems like you don't love me". Then he just looked for me money so that I could go back home and stay with my mother. Then he got some of the money. Then he gave me. Then I came back home and stayed, to stay with my parents.

She explained that, as is traditional in Kwandu, she married and then moved to live near her husbands' parents. However, after she relocated, her husband left the home to live in Katima in the hope he would find paid employment. Once in town, he found another woman to marry. While the respondent initially tried to continue the marriage, she soon realized that her husband no longer loved her. Consequently, she decided to end the marriage and move back to her parents' homestead.

Another respondent described leaving her first husband after he married another woman. She realized his neglect was intolerable when he brought his new wife to live in their village in Sibinda and then stopped looking after the respondent. The respondent then divorced her first husband by leaving his village and returning to her parents' place. When asked to explain why she was no longer with her first husband, she said:

When I was there at Sibinda, my husband married another lady and brought that lady – that wife – in the village, so he was now not taking care of me. That's why I just decided to come and stay here with my parents.

Finally, a third respondent described leaving her second husband of nine years after she became tired of his drinking and lack of productivity. She claimed that instead of plowing, he would sit and drink while she worked at the farm. His drinking would be so severe that he

would disappear for almost a week at a time. Furthermore, his relatives would be asking for

material assistance from her since he was not providing it. In the end, she decided to divorce

him, as she indicated in the following statement:

> And this other one is the one whom I stayed nine years with… with that person. So because of… you know what you talked about, drinking, the other men, what difficulty of the other men and the women in the courtyard, I find that the man was not even practicing plowing. You find when we go to the field, he just pick six beers and go and seated drinking. You'll find that he was having a lot of families. So that family were looking on me. And also those family find him seated not doing anything. I find it's too difficult. Once he went to drink, almost a week not seen. Then I find that it's too… it's too bad. Why… What life is this? I decided it's… He didn't divorce me that… The second [husband], it's me who decided to go to my… to my grandmother. Because I [grew] up with my grandmother, my father and my mother left me like… I was that side. I grow only with my grandmother.

It is worth noting that while previous respondents indicated an unwillingness to tolerate

open infidelity and neglect, some women may feel compelled to stay with a husband who has

taken another wife or who is openly cheating. Wives who disapprove of openly unfaithful

husbands may believe they must remain with their husbands, possibly because they perceive to

need or physically depend upon a man's material support for their household. The following

excerpt shows that at least one women believes she must tolerate a new woman because there

is "nothing" she can do about it. The respondent had just claimed that her husband had "now

married another lady again", so I asked her how many wives her husband had. She replied:

> I'm the first wife. But since he married me when I was still young… it's only that I don't know the years. I could tell you, but we all came to grow up at the same age. Yes. Then now he's marrying another lady. Yes.
> ….
> *Interviewer: What do you plan to do about your husband?*
> There is nothing because I'm just seated because it's how life is in the world.

Given that polygamy has been a traditional part of life in the Kwandu area, the respondent's willingness to tolerate "another lady" may stem in part from beliefs that it is normal for men to take multiple wives. However, an additional explanation is that she may feel dependent upon her husband's paycheck. She claims that she is "just seated", indicating that she herself does not have a job, though she would like one. Since she has six children, his monthly salary would seem important to her material subsistence. Indeed, at one point in the interview, she claimed that "…with us, we others, we still have to wait for our husbands' salaries. Until when they are paid, it's when we take some for our children". Her comment suggests that her dependence on his salary for her household's livelihood compels her to stay married.

6.6.2.3 Taboo activities

An important part of being a "real woman" is playing the role of wife and mother. Implied in this role is that both married and single women should refrain from having multiple and concurrent sexual partners. Interviews and informal conversations indicated that it is commonly believed that married women should not have sex with anyone but their husbands, while single women should refrain from sex or, at minimum, stay committed to one man, and women should not steal another woman's husband. Violating any of these social norms can cause a woman to lose social standing. However, several social and material factors promote participation in multiple and concurrent sexual relationships. First, girls face exploitation from older men who attempt to exchange goods with them for sex. In many cases, girls lack the

support and maturity to refuse men's coercion. They may in this way acquire a reputation for being promiscuous.

Second, women simply may not know that a man they choose to have sexual relations with is already married. Some men lack transparency and honesty about their sexual partnerships. In this way, a woman may have every intent of showing "respect" to a man's wife, but still face social and religious condemnation.

Thirdly, widespread poverty contributes to multiple and concurrent relationships. Given that the previous two constraints to refraining from promiscuity were discussed previously, this section focuses on how poverty can make it difficult for women to avoid 'losing respect' from other people. Several women explained that poverty compels both married and unmarried women to engage in transactional sex. One respondent's comment illustrates the role that financial disparity plays in contributing to multiple and concurrent partnerships When asked to explain why she believed men's cheating was common, the respondent stated, "Because mainly the [men] who do cheat are the ones who are financially stable, I would say, because they are… Most women just need money sometimes". In her view, most women in Kwandu are living in need of cash. Consequently, employed men, married or otherwise, offer impoverished women away to meet their material needs.

The possession of a scarce resource provides employed men with the power to dictate terms of exchange to resource-poor women. When a respondent was asked to explain why she had claimed that "women will just go out, just to sell their bodies", she replied, "Maybe it's because of this poverty which is here, so that people try to sell their bodies so that they can get something from there". Another woman asserted:

It's like, you will find that other women, especially ones who are not married, they don't have houses. They don't have courtyards. So they will be only just going out, walking around, yes, in many places.

Note that when she refers to women "just going out, walking around", the respondent is using common terminology for women who engage in a number of different sexual relationships. Her statement also suggests that some women's physical assets are so minimal as to leave them without a courtyard or house. Women in similarly impoverished situations may feel a need to engage in transactional sex just to survive, even if it means diminishing their opportunity to be considered a "real woman".

6.7   Conclusions and a framework of constraints

In this chapter, I have described a series of constraints to realizing the five core aspects of a "real woman". I have shown that meeting one's material needs through respected livelihood activities can be curtailed by limited employment opportunities, illness, fears of physical assault, and other factors. Similarly, barriers to education like household resource scarcity and mistreatment in schools can prevent girls and women from matriculating with high marks. To work hard, one must likely overcome the inertia of feeling like one's life is controlled by external forces, especially given perceptions of widespread illness and death. To assist one's community members requires a minimum level of personal resources and a willingness to overlook wrongs like infidelity. Finally, marriage requires a willing partner, something numerous respondents indicated is rare or even impossible to find.

Results in this chapter suggest that a single constraint may have multiple impacts on person's ability to attain the "real woman" ideal. For example, a girl or woman who has HIV/AIDS-related illnesses may not only lack the ability to obtain a respectable livelihood, but

she may also lack the ability to attend school enough to be considered educated. If her status is publicly-known, she may face not be able to enter into or stay in a marriage.

Additionally, the results suggest that one type of constraint can synergistically feed into other constraints to create a vicious cycle. For example, a woman who has scarce resource may believe her only way to access needed money or food is to engage in transactional sex. Engaging in transactional sex then increases her likelihood of contracting a serious illness like HIV/AIDS. Acquiring HIV/AIDS then increases the likelihood that she will get sick and will have to expend precious resources to obtain medical treatment, further depleting her ability to meet her material needs.

At the same time, the results also suggest that overcoming a major constraint to becoming a "real woman" may assist women from overcoming other constraints, allowing them to enter a virtuous cycle. For example, a girl who completes secondary school with high marks has a greater likelihood of obtaining dependable employment. Her employment can then bring her the ability to meet her household's basic needs, which may allow other people in the household to complete their education and so on and so forth.

6.7.1   A framework of constraints

It is evident from this chapter that becoming and remaining a "real woman" is like entering a minefield. The journey is fraught with difficulties that range from material and financial constraints to a tolerating a husband's mistreatment. The results suggest that while the Conservancy system aims to "empower" community members, the system operates confronts a context of constraints that has most likely pre-dated the Conservancy.

In order to evaluate the Conservancy's effects on women, I have grouped the previously identified constraints into a basic framework. The framework is comprised of eight core constraints, termed indicators, from which the Conservancy will be evaluated in the next chapter. The constraints are: 1) supply of opportunities for generating cash income, 2) physical assets at the individual and household scales, 3) socially-constructed gender roles and responsibilities, 4) social support, 5) perception of control over one's own life, 6) access to land and natural resources, 7) education, and 8) health. Collectively, the framework's eight indicators incorporate all of the constraints described in this chapter. Each indicator can be viewed as ranging from very constraining to not constraining, depending on its severity. I describe the indicators that comprise the constraints framework in the following paragraphs.

Supply of opportunities for generating cash income includes the supply of formal and informal employment and general cash flow into the Kwandu area. It has a theoretical range of no cash-generating opportunities to cash-generating opportunities that provide all the income a person could ever want to every Kwandu resident.

Physical assets at the individual and household scales can range from having no physical assets to a theoretical point of having every imaginable physical asset. Physical assets include food, tools, and money.

For this framework, the *socially-constructed gender roles and responsibilities* indicator includes time demands placed on women, gendered spaces, and discrimination based on ideas about what is appropriate work for men and women. The constraints framework incorporates the assumption that gender roles and responsibilities can range from very restrictive, rigid definitions of roles and responsibilities to highly flexible notions of socially-appropriate

behaviors based on one's gender.

Social support represents the level of support a woman actually receives and believes that she receives from other individuals and the community as a whole. It ranges from a complete lack of support to felling completely supported by other people. *Social support* incorporates community-based issues of jealousy and witchcraft, as well as household-scale concerns about jealousy, infidelity, divorce, and domestic violence.

Perception of control over one's own life ranges from the belief that one has no control over one's own life to the theoretical point where a woman believes she has complete control over her life. The indicator includes fears of experiencing violence outside of one's own household, whether from people or from wildlife, as well as uncertainties about the future.

Access to land and resources includes the ability to own land, access to arable farmland and its produce, and access rights to natural resources. It ranges from no rights to complete ownership of all land and land produce in the Kwandu area.

Education refers to the quality of formal education, as well as access to information and skills. It ranges from no knowledge to knowledge of everything.

Finally, *health* encompasses a woman's personal health as well as the health of her household members, as household members' health has been shown to have a direct impact on a woman's time and resources. It ranges from complete incapacitation of a whole household from illness to complete health of every member in a household.

By operating from the assumption that each constraint indicator has a broad theoretical range, one can approach constraints as forces that can be ameliorated to the point of nonexistence, exacerbated to the point of incapacitating an individual woman, or left

unaltered. In this way, a full set of Conservancy impacts can be ascertained by examining how

Conservancy programs interact with the constraints framework. With a framework for

constraints in place, I use the following chapter to explore how the Conservancy system

interacts with existing obstacles to influence women's ability to achieve their goals for their

lives.

Chapter 7   An Overview of Income-generation Opportunities Supplied by Kwandu Conservancy

Development is a fundamental goal of CBNRM, driving efforts to supply new and expanded income opportunities to communities. The effort is well-placed, as I showed in the previous chapter that limited opportunities for generating cash income is a primary constraint to becoming a "real woman". Kwandu Conservancy's effects on women's empowerment are therefore best understood by examining the Conservancy's supply of income-generation opportunities. In this chapter, I show that the Kwandu area has limited employment opportunities. While the Conservancy has provided some opportunities, they are a small part of the overall economy. Nonetheless, direct Conservancy employment, natural resources harvest and sales, craft production and sales, and Conservancy dividends offer Conservancy residents avenues for earning cash income. Within those sectors, women have varying levels of access to income. Limited cash and physical and human assets pose a structural constraints to women's access to the Conservancy's income-generation opportunities.

7.1   Pre-existing income-generation opportunities

While it would be ideal to have rigorous Conservancy baseline data on income-generation specific to the Kwandu area, it does not exist prior to 1999, the Conservancy's year of registration. Namibia's Household Income and Expenditure Survey 1993/1994 (NPC 1995) does offer some insights into economic conditions prior to 1999. It suggests that the Caprivi region as a whole had limited cash-generation opportunities, with 40 percent of households categorized as "poor" and 7% of households considered "extremely poor" (*cited in* NPC 2006). The NHIES also states that the annual household expenditure in 1993/1994 was N$ 5763. The

NHIES report computes household income as the sum of total consumption and non-consumption expenditures.

7.2   Current income-generation opportunities

Currently, the primary household income sources in the Caprivi are wage-work (32.5% of households), subsistence farming (17.8%), business (17.0%), pensions (12.9%), and remittances (10.4%) (CBS 2006). Formal employment opportunities are scarce in the Kwandu area, so most people must pursue work in Katima Mulilo or more distant urban centers. Government employment is available to educated individuals who must compete for limited opportunities. However, when obtained, it can provide lucrative salaries. One respondent reported that her husband earns N$ 4200 in monthly government salary.

Alternative cash income sources in Kwandu include informal labor like agricultural work, operating a small business like a cuca shop and/or shibeen, and social cash transfers. Kwandu residents grow maize, sorghum, millet, beans, and pumpkins, as well as other crops for personal consumption and sale. Artisanal fishing, gathering wild fruits and vegetables, and collecting forest products also contribute to livelihoods in Kwandu Conservancy.

There are seven types of social cash transfers in Namibia: Old Age Pensions, Disability Pensions, War Veterans Subvention, Child Maintenance Grants, Special Maintenance Grants, Foster Care Grants, and Place of Safety Allowances (Levine *et al.* 2011). Numerous respondents indicated receiving or indirectly benefiting from Old Age Pensions. Old Age pensions are provided to permanent residents aged 60 and over, male and female, regardless of work history (Levine *et al.* 2011). In 2008/09, Old Age Pensions were N$ 450 per month (Levine *et al.* 2011),

but by March 2012, they had increased to N$ 550 per month (Namibian Sun 2012). By comparison, the average monthly salary for female Conservancy employees in 2009 was almost N$ 200 more than the Old Age pension.

A number of female respondents also claimed to receive child grants, which include the Child Maintenance Grant, the Foster Care Grant, the Special Maintenance Grant, and a Place of Safety Allowance. Foster Care Grants, for example, are paid to people who agree to temporarily care for a child (Levine *et al.* 2011). Several female respondents reported that they were caring for children of deceased relatives. In 2008, the Foster Care Grant paid N$ 200 per month per child (Levine *et al.* 2011). As a point of comparison, a loaf of bread cost approximately N$ 7 in 2011.

Finally, operating a local, informal business can be lucrative, provided one has the resources necessary to establish it and can withstand local competition. For example, an atypical respondent reported that operating a shibeen earns her N$ 6000 every month. While lucrative income is available in the Kwandu area, only a select few can access the limited opportunities.

7.3 Income-generation opportunities offered by Kwandu Conservancy

The Conservancy offers a range of income-generation activities to its members and area residents. The income-generation opportunities directly offered to male and female members and residents are direct Conservancy employment, stipend-based positions in Conservancy committees, the harvest and sale of forest products, the production and sale of handmade crafts, and the distribution of cash dividends. Indirectly, Kwandu Conservancy facilitates cash

flow to local businesses, and it links residents with income-generation opportunities that originate outside the Conservancy system. While an overview of the offered activities is provided in this chapter, the particular impacts of the activities on women's constraints are discussed in the next chapter.

With the exception of forest product sales and craft sales (discussed later), there is no evidence to indicate that the Conservancy has overtaken or outcompeted previous types of income-generation activities. Consequently, it is assumed that the opportunities discussed in this chapter, save for craft and forest-product sales, are additional income-generating opportunities rather than substitutions for pre-existing opportunities.

7.3.1 Direct Conservancy employment

Kwandu Conservancy has been lauded for its "firsts" in providing women's employment opportunities. In 2006, Kwandu Conservancy hired the nation's first female conservancy Manager, Coedilia Muyoba, and the region's first female Game Guard, Peris Mbami (Baker 2006). While these barrier-breaking accomplishments deserve praise, it is important to situate the Conservancy's ground-breaking accomplishments in the overall opportunities offered to male and female residents. As only a few individuals in the community can serve as Manager or Game Guard, it is important to understand the basic ways that employment opportunities are structured within Kwandu Conservancy and the extent to which all women can access employment.

The Conservancy offers three types of direct employment, two of which will be discussed in this chapter. The first type of direct employment is salary-based. Salaried

employees are paid monthly, provided there are enough funds in the Conservancy's account, and they are employed on a permanent basis. The second type of employment is stipend-based. Employees who earn stipends are paid less and are hired to participate in a committee. Finally, temporary employees are hired for one day to several months to complete a specific task. For example, community members might be hired for a day to cook for an Annual General Meeting. Given the gaps identified in some of the Conservancy records, it is not clear how many temporary employees have been hired, nor the sex of the listed temporary employees. Temporary employment offers significantly less income than salaried and stipend-based positions, for which there are more detailed records. Therefore, temporary employment is not discussed in this dissertation.

7.3.2 Salaried employment

Salaried Conservancy employees can be separated into three main groups: the Executive Committee, Bum Hill Campground staff, and general staff. Comprised of the Conservancy Manager, Secretary, Treasurer, Enterprise Officer, and Field Officer, the Executive Committee makes many of the decisions about the Conservancy and its members earn higher levels of income than the general staff members who work from the main office (see **Table 2**). Bum Hill Campground staff work primarily at the Conservancy's campsite, which is located away from the main office in Bwabwata National Park. Conservancy employees with lower salaries occupy the following types of positions: Community Resource Monitor (CRM), Game Guard/Ranger, Nursery Worker, Cleaner, Security Guard, Camp Manager, Camp Maintenance Officer, Camp Treasurer, and Tour Guide (Kwandu Conservancy pay records).

The number of salaried positions offered by Kwandu Conservancy has varied from year to year. Between 2004 and 2010, the Conservancy employed a total of 19 to 28 salaried employees annually, with women variably comprising 21-28% of the workforce (Kwandu Conservancy records for 2004 to 2010). While the Conservancy employs only a small fraction of the estimated population of 4300[7] people in the Kwandu area (NACSO 2011b), it nonetheless has created types of income-generating opportunities that did not previously exist in the area.

Once employed by the Conservancy, staff tend to remain employed, but male staff have slightly higher retention levels. For example, in 2007, 80% of female and 86% of male salaried employees had worked in KC since 2004. In 2010, KC had retained 40% of female and 57% of male salaried employees from 2004 and 40% of female and 71% of male salaried employees from 2007.

Conservancy records indicate that average monthly salaries for male Conservancy employees have ranged from N$ 587 to N$ 781, while average female staff salaries have ranged from N$ 620 to N$ 758 between 2004 and 2010 (see **Table 3**). Female staff earned slightly more, on average, than male employees in four out of the seven years.

It is important to note that the monthly supply of pay to existing employees is sometimes delayed. For example, a key informant told me in June 2011 that Conservancy employees had last been paid in February 2011 (personal communication 9 & 10 June 2011). The regularity of employees' monthly pay may be undermined by the Conservancy's limited income and cash flow management. However, Institutional Audit Data shows that Kwandu

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[7] This number may be much lower than the actual number of people in the Kwandu Area. A key informant claimed the population is much higher: "…Our conservancy is having more than 7,000 people residing in. Some are registered members. Some are not registered members". At the time of writing, the results from the 2011 national census were not available.

Conservancy had the second highest total income in 2008, compared to 5 of the 8 other Caprivi-based conservancies registered in 2008[8].

Conservancy records indicate that average monthly salaries for male Conservancy employees ranged from N$ 587 to N$ 781, while average female staff salaries ranged from N$ 620 to N$ 758 between 2004 and 2010. Female staff earned slightly more, on average, than male employees in four out of the seven years. However, average salaries do not reflect the additional types of income earned by some of the Conservancy's employees. CRM's, Game Guards, and the Field Officer are all eligible for field allowances. Conservancy records from 2004 indicate that 7 Game Guards, all of whom were male, each earned a total of N$ 300 to N$ 900 in field allowances between March and June 2004. Since gaps were identified in Conservancy records for some of the years studied, the accuracy of reported field allowances is not guaranteed. This limitation means that at least some of the staff members' monthly earnings are underreported, and that the earnings gaps between employees may be larger than is indicated by base salary comparisons.

7.3.2.1 Selection process for salaried employees

The Conservancy employs two different processes for hiring permanent staff. A few positions are advertised and filled by interviewing candidates, while the remaining positions are filled by the sub-*khutas* (personal communication with a Conservancy staff member on 23 May, 2011). Treasurer, Manager, and Secretary are all chosen through an interview process that

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[8] 2008 Institutional Audits were conducted by Doug Vilsack and Ryan Knight of Elephant Energy. Vilsack & Knight collected data from IRDNC records and through meetings with conservancy staff. Income comparisons are based on reported "validated" income, which is the income recorded in IRDNC records. Kwandu income was compared to income from Sobbe, Salambala, Wuparo, Impalila, and Kasika Conservancies. At the time of writing, no validated income records were available for Balyerwa, Mashi, or Mayuni Conservancies.

receives assistance from IRDNC (personal communication with a staff member on 23 May, 2011).

Despite my attempts to learn how and why specific female employees were hired, interview responses generally referred to the official hiring processes and women's unwillingness to speak in front of other people. It was therefore not clear whether women tended to be hired based on their relationships to sub-*khuta* leaders, age, marital status, or other factors. Conservancy records did not provide information about age of hire, marital status, or other factors, providing primarily employee names, pay scale, position titles, and dates of employment. Some female employees have since passed away or left the Conservancy.

7.3.3 Stipend-based employment

In addition to having salaried employees, the Conservancy offers stipend-based positions. Stipended employees primarily consist of Members of the Management Committee (MCM) who act as communicators and decision-makers in the Conservancy[9]. The MCM has employed a total of 11 to 14 people annually from 2004 – 2010 (Conservancy records). Management Committee Member income is less than salaried employees. In November 2010, the 11 MCM's earned N$ 320 each month, while the Management Committee Chairperson earned N$ 490 in monthly income (Kwandu Conservancy records). Analysis of Conservancy records from 2004-2005 and 2007-2010 suggests that women have variably comprised 7% to

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[9] The Conservancy's pay records for the Hunting Committee have significant gaps, making it difficult to draw significant conclusions about its potential contribution to individual earnings. However, it is clear that since at least 2004, the Hunting Committee has been comprised of four members or fewer each year (Kwandu Conservancy financial records). The Hunting Committee meets with the hunter regarding hunting issues, and meetings tend to be held quarterly (personal communication with a Conservancy staff member). Pay coincides with the numbers of meetings held, meaning that Hunting Committee Members' stipends are not month-to-month like they are for Management Committee Members.

43% of the Management Committee (see **Table 4**), with no history of a female Chairperson. However, gaps in the Conservancy's MCM records render the MCM gender ratio an estimate based on months where records were complete.

7.3.3.1 Selection process for stipended employees

The Conservancy Constitution outlines the selection process for filling the Management Committee. The 2010 Constitution stated that Management Committee Members (termed the "District Village Committee" Members in the 2010 Constitution) must be comprised of ten members "democratically elected by members of the Conservancy and Forestry". The Chairperson, however, was to be nominated by the Executive Committee and then appointed at the General Assembly, according to the 2010 Constitution. Given that the Kayuwo Sub-*khuta* was not part of Kwandu Conservancy until after the original Constitution came into effect, the number of Members was increased to 12, plus the Chairperson (Kwandu Conservancy financial records).

As with the majority of salaried positions, MCM's are selected by vote at sub-*khutas*, meaning that a mixture of *indunas* and area residents select MCM's (informal conversations with three Conservancy employees on 9 and 10 June, 2011). Traditional authorities exercise influence over the selection process at their sub-*khutas* by nominating MCM candidates prior to general vote (personal communication with a Conservancy staff member on 12 June 2012).

A Conservancy staff member explained that Management Committees should be comprised of a male and female from each area (personal communication). The Conservancy will therefore send a letter to a sub-*khuta*, requesting that the sub-*khuta* select a new MCM

based on the sex that is missing from the Management Committee (personal communication

with a Conservancy staff member). While a number of sub-*khutas* have adhered to the gender

representation guidelines, other sub-*khutas* will fill the position with a male, even when the

second position is already occupied by a male MCM (personal communication with a

Conservancy staff member).

Table 2: Kwandu Conservancy Employee Roster, November 2010

Position	Monthly Base Salary (N$)	Sex
Manager	845	m
Enterprise Development	780	m
Treasurer	780	m
Secretary	780	f
Bum Hill Camp Manager	780	m
Field Officer	750	m
Forester	750	m
Bum Hill Treasurer	750	m
Bum Hill Maintenance Officer	750	m
Bum Hill Tour guide	750	m
Senior Ranger	715	m
Senior Ranger	715	m
Senior CRM	715	f
Ranger	650	m
Ranger	650	m
Ranger	650	m
Ranger	650	m
CRM	650	f
Cleaner	650	m
Ranger	650	m
Ranger	650	m
Ranger	650	f
Ranger	650	f
Cleaner	520	f
Security Guard	520	m
Security Guard	520	m
Forest Monitor	520	m
Nursery worker	520	f

Source of data: Kwandu Conservancy employment records from 2010

Table 3: Total Salaried Employment and Base Salaries of Male and Female Staff Members of Kwandu Conservancy, 2004-2010[10]

Year	Male Staff	Female Staff	Total Staff	Percent Female Employees	Average Monthly Salary, Male (N$)	Average Monthly Salary Female (N$)
2004	14	5	19	26%	657	650
2005	19	5	24	21%	587	620
2006	18	7	23	28%	642	714
2007	17	5	22	23%	676	720
2008	18	6	24	25%	781	758
2009	20	6	26	23%	728	733
2010	21	7	28	25%	689	641

Source of data: Kwandu Conservancy pay records, 2004 - 2010

The actual selection practices for the Management Committee may differ from the democratic intent, as the level of influence exercised by the *indunas* versus the general community at each sub-*khuta*'s selection process may vary. For example, when I asked a Management Committee Member how she was selected for the position, she replied, "When I became a Committee Member, before the AGM [Annual General Meeting], there were some GM [General Meetings] meetings in all the sub-*khutas*. That's where they selected me to be part of the Committee". She was then asked who chose her to be a Committee Member, and she said:

> It's the community.
> *Interviewer: So can you just explain to me how that happened again?*

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[10] "Staff" are the people listed in Conservancy records as being employed at the Main Office, which consist of the Executive Committee and general staff members, or at Bum Hill Campsite in November of each listed year. In several of the listed years, employees were listed in months prior to November, but passed away before November of the same year. Consequently, they are not included in the table. Average monthly salary does not include per diem or "field allowances". Rather it reflects the base salary of each staff member. Annual General Meetings are frequently held in December, so reporting employment data for November of each year reflects the period before changes take effect for the following year.

Like what?

> *Interviewer: So do people vote? Do just a few people choose you from the community? How does it work?*

They voted for me. But the voting system which was there was just either they say "If you want this person to lead, then you just raise your hand up. And if you don't want, you don't".

Table 4: Management Committee Employment in Kwandu Conservancy, 2004 - 2010[11]

Year	Male MCM's	Female MCM's	Total MCM's	Percent female MCM's
2004 (April)	7	4	11	36%
2005 (April)	8	6	14	43%
2007 (April)	11	3	14	21%
2009 (October)	13	1	14	7%
2010 (June)	10	3	13	23%
2011 (June)	8	4	12	33%

Data source: Kwandu Conservancy financial records.

Given the power that traditional authorities hold over Kwandu residents as dispute arbiters and judges, it seems probable that voting could be influenced by opinions held, or believed to be held, by traditional authorities (TA's). As shown in the previous excerpt, men and women's must vote publicly by raising their hands. Therefore their votes are subject to public

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[11] Data is provided for months where the Conservancy records were most clear, so the table does not show intra-annual fluctuation in staff. However, MCM's are typically elected for a term of 3 years (2010 Constitution), so intra-annual fluctuation is minimal. The count of MCM's includes the Chairperson each year. From 2005-2009, the Chairperson travelled often outside the Conservancy, so the Conservancy employed a Vice-Chairperson to assist with leadership. The Vice-Chairperson is included in the tallies. Years 2006 and 2008 are not included because the Conservancy's records were unclear.

scrutiny by TA's, household members, and community residents alike. Women's views of the

MCM selection process are discussed in the subsequent chapter.

7.3.4 Harvest and sale of forest products

In addition to offering employment, the Conservancy mediates the harvest and sale of

forest products, giving individuals opportunities to derive incomes. In interpreting the potential

incomes from forest products, however, it is important to keep in mind that forest products

have been harvested prior to the introduction of the Conservancy. This point was emphasized

by a key informant who had been asked to describe what harvesting rules existed prior to the

Conservancy's establishment. He replied:

> See in those days before a Conservancy has been formed, everyone was entitled
> to go and thatch grass or either reeds anywhere in their area. Yeah. And then it
> depends on how energetic you are, then you can harvest lot of thatch or either
> grass.
> > *Interviewer: So did you-*
> Yeah, they were not prohibited. But, yeah, they could get permission from
> *indunas* that would want to go and cut the reeds, yeah, with permission was just
> around that.

The key informant's response indicates that prior to the Conservancy, anyone could

harvest as much grass and reeds as he or she wanted, provided permission was granted from

one' traditional authority. It is therefore difficult to argue that the Conservancy has created an

additional supply of income through its current management of forest product harvest and

sales.

While a wide range of forest resources have traditionally been gathered in the Kwandu

area, the Conservancy has focused its efforts on regulating and facilitating cash income from

timber, thatching grass, reeds, and Devil's Claw. The following paragraphs describe the

Conservancy's harvest and sale permitting process, the fees imposed by the Conservancy, as well as some of the individual incomes reported for the four products. This section does not provide an interpretation of respondents' viewpoints about forest product income, as their viewpoints will comprise the subsequent chapter and future publications.

In 2004, the Conservancy adopted a permit system (personal communications with a Conservancy staff member 13 June 2011), whereby community members were required to obtain permits before harvesting forest products. The permit system operates both as a way to control harvests and to direct money to the Conservancy (personal communication with Conservancy staff member on 30 September 2010). The system was introduced by the German Development Service (DED) and the Community Forests in North-east Namibia (CFNEN) (personal communication with Conservancy staff member on 30 September 2010). The two organizations trained staff members to survey community members and learn how they were using different trees and other forest products (personal communication with Conservancy staff member on 30 September 2010). DED then gave the Conservancy advice about how to sell the products and the prices to use for each product (personal communication with Conservancy staff member on 30 September 2010).

7.3.4.1 Timber and poles

The Conservancy allows residents and non-residents to harvest timber and poles from the forest, provided they acquire a permit. In 2010, the price to harvest a single teak tree was N$ 200, with the price being the same for residents and non-residents. Poles, typically used for building houses, are harvested from dry teak (personal communication with Conservancy staff

member on 30 September 2010). In 2010, the Conservancy charged N$ 85 for a pole harvest permit (personal communication with Conservancy staff member on 30 September 2010).

Timber is a lucrative forest product[12]. However, its harvest is considered to be men's work in the Kwandu area. For example, a Conservancy staff member claimed that typically only one or two women will get a pole harvest permit each year, and that the women will then hire men to do the actual harvesting (personal communication with Conservancy staff member on 30 September 2010). None of the female respondents claimed to benefit from harvesting and selling timber or poles. Consequently, little information was gathered in this study about an individual's potential earnings from selling timber.

Reeds and grasses

While the permit system was adopted in 2004, the specific rules for reed and grass harvesting were put into effect in 2007. To legally harvest reeds and grasses in Kwandu Conservancy, residents must first travel to the Conservancy office with identification, and then pay either N$ 5 for an own-use permit or N$ 15 for a commercial harvesting permit (personal communication with Conservancy staff member on 30 September 2010). The commercial permit allows an individual to sell the bundles of reeds or grasses he/she has harvested (personal communication with Conservancy staff member on 30 September 2010). After receiving the commercial permit, the harvester has thirty days to harvest. After harvesting, the resident must return to the Conservancy office and pay an additional N$ .50 for every bundle of grass harvested and N$ 2 for every bundle of reeds. However, if an individual chooses to transport the bundles out of his/her area, he/she must pay an additional N$ 15 for a transport

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[12] When time allows, I would like to locate secondary research that indicates 2010 prices for teak trees.

permit (personal communication with Conservancy staff member on 30 September 2010).

Finally, an additional payment of N$ 15 gains the harvester a marketing permit, allowing him or

her to advertise products for three months (personal communication with Conservancy staff

member on 30 September 2010). In summary, an individual may pay as little as N$ 5.50 to

legally harvest one grass bundle for own-use, or as much as N$ 45.50 to harvest, market,

transport, and sell a single grass bundle.

The selling price for individual bundles varies according to the size of the bundle. One

female respondent claimed that she sells bundles of reeds and grass for N$ 10 per bundle,

while another claimed she could sell bundles of grass for N$ 20 per bundle. A third respondent

claimed that bundles of grass or reeds can be sold for N$ 15 to N$ 30 per bundle. Given that the

harvest of grasses and reeds is highly time- and labor-intensive (personal field observations),

the amount of money an individual can earn in a month is limited, especially when a harvester

has no access to transport. For example, one respondent reported that she could earn about N$

200 per month selling reeds or grass.

Like timber, reed and grass harvesting is a strongly gendered activity. Women are the

primary harvesters of grass and reeds in Kwandu Conservancy. Interviews and personal

observations indicated that while men can apply for reed and grass permits, it is women who

most often harvest these resources.

7.3.4.2 Malamatwa (Devil's Claw)

The Conservancy also mediates the harvest and sale of Devil's Claw, or *malamatwa.*

Devil's Claw (*Harpagophytum procumbens*) is a plant that is native to southern Africa. Its root is

dried and sold in Africa, Europe, and North America to treat osteoarthritis, back and neck pain, and other ailments.

As with timber, reed, and grass harvests, the Conservancy requires that harvesters acquire a permit prior to harvesting (personal communication with Conservancy staff member on 30 September 2010). However, permits are issued to groups of harvesters, rather than individuals, and each group is assigned a harvest location (personal communication with Conservancy staff member on 30 September 2010). Unlike reed and grass harvesters, the Conservancy requires *malamatwa* harvesters to then conduct all sales through the Conservancy office (personal communication with Conservancy staff member on 30 September 2010). In return, the Conservancy finds a buyer for the harvesters, gleaning a fraction of the sales proceeds (personal communication with Conservancy staff member on 30 September 2010).

In mediating *malamatwa* sales, the Conservancy helps to ensure that harvesters receive pay. Illegal harvesting of Devil's Claw was common from 2004 to 2009, with buyers driving into the forest to purchase *malamatwa* from harvesters (personal communication with Conservancy staff member on 30 September 2010). Without oversight, some of the 'buyers' would allegedly tell the harvesters that they would take the produce and deliver the payments later, only to never return with the money (personal communication with Conservancy staff member on 30 September 2010). The harvesters were left with no recourse, as the 'buyers' were not known to the Conservancy or its partners (personal communication with Conservancy staff member on 30 September 2010). In contrast, Kwandu Conservancy now works with the Directorate of Forestry to identify a single buyer, offering harvesters more assurance they will be paid (personal communication with Conservancy staff member on 30 September 2010).

Respondents reported having earned from N$ 40 to N$ 4000 per year by digging and selling *malamatwa*. Conservancy records for 2009 show that the Conservancy paid at least 27 people for their *malamatwa* harvests in August and September. Of the 27 harvesters, 14 were women, indicating that unlike timber, grass, and reed harvesting, *malamatwa* harvesting is not strongly gendered. The 2009 earnings, paid by the Conservancy, ranged from N$ 59 to N$ 4800 per registered harvester.

7.3.5 Craft production and sales

In addition to forest product sales and employment, the Conservancy promotes craft-based income by teaching crafting skills and marketing and selling crafts on behalf of men and women. IRDNC has facilitated yearly and multi-yearly craft-making training sessions for some women in Kwandu, and Kwandu Conservancy employs two Community Resource Monitors (CRMs) who facilitate women's craft groups and gather resource and craft-making activity data (personal communication with a Conservancy partner on 14 September, 2009).

The CRMs visit craft makers every month and collect their handmade crafts, then they take the crafts to Mashi Craft Market (Mashi) (personal communication with a Conservancy partner on 14 September, 2009). CBNRM partners established Mashi as a place for crafters from several conservancies, including Kwandu, to sell crafts to passing tourists. Its location next to a gas station on the Trans-Caprivi Highway and on the road to several high-end guest lodges makes it accessible to regional tourists.

Mashi sales records indicate the amount of sales for each crafter, enabling CRM's to collect the proceeds and deliver them to individual craft makers (personal communication with

a Conservancy partner on 14 September, 2009). Between 2006 and 2010, there were 50

women and 6 men from Kwandu Conservancy registered as crafters at Mashi Craft Market. The

total recorded sales from all Kwandu crafters in that time period was N$ 16,475, with the

highest earning female crafter collecting a cumulative N$ 1853[13] (Mashi Craft Market financial

records). The highest-earning male crafter collected a cumulative N$ 2208 between 2006 and

2010 (Mashi Craft Market financial records). **Table 5** shows that Kwandu crafters had wide-

ranging incomes, with some of them having no sales between 2006 and 2010.

Women from Kwandu and other Caprivian conservancies have also sold crafts through

the Omba Arts Trust and the Rössing Foundation. I was unable to ascertain the income

generated by Kwandu crafters through sales to Omba and Rössing Foundation, introducing a

limitation to understanding the full incomes women have derived through crafts sales.

A quantitative analysis of individual crafters and their craft incomes was complicated by

several factors. First, not every crafter is listed in Mashi's records. Some crafts are sold by

Conservancy employees on behalf of individual crafters who are not listed in the records.

Instead, the sales are listed under the names of the two employees. Mashi records indicate that

the two employees collectively sold N$ 3329 in crafts between 2006-2010 on behalf of

themselves and an unspecified number of other male and female crafters.

Second, since the craft income results are derived from the records listed at Mashi Craft,

there are no guarantees about the reliability of the record-keeping. Nonetheless, the records

do give an indication of at least a minimum amount of Mashi Craft income flowing into Kwandu

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[13] This ranking does not include craft incomes reported for the two conservancy employees, as they were collecting money on behalf of an unknown number of other crafters.

Conservancy as a whole, as well the minimum number of women who receive income from crafts sold at Mashi Craft.

Also complicating an assessment of the Conservancy's impacts is the fact that like forest product harvesting, craft-making and bartering existed prior to the Conservancy. Marketing crafts like baskets to tourists may add relatively less income than one might first be inclined to believe. However, the extent to which crafts were previously exchanged for cash is unclear. The Conservancy has most likely improved the linkages between cash-wielding tourists and craft sellers. While numerical data on craft income is limited to Mashi Craft sales records, respondents' interviews provide a window to the meanings and values women ascribe to craft income, as will be shown in the subsequent chapter.

The data suggests that craft sales via Mashi Craft provide much less income than other types of opportunities created by the Conservancy, especially when one compares craft sales to Conservancy employee salaries. For example, the lowest base monthly salary in 2010 was N$ 520 for a Nursery Worker. In comparison, only 5 of 48 female Kwandu crafters earned N$ 500 or more during a five-year period (2006-2010).

Table 5: Range of Cumulative Earnings (N$) for Kwandu Crafters Registered at Mashi Craft Market from 2006-2010[14]

	No income	1 – 99	100-199	200-499	500+	Total number of craft sellers
Female	11	14	7	11	5	**48**
Male	3	1	0	0	2	**6**

Source of data: Mashi Craft Market records, 2006 - 2010

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[14] Table VW does not include craft incomes reported for the two conservancy employees.

7.3.6 Dividend distribution

Dividend distribution is another way that Conservancy members can gain income. The Conservancy has twice distributed cash dividends since the Conservancy was registered in 1999 (Kwandu Conservancy financial records). In both distribution years, the money was given to the sub-*khutas*[15], leaving each traditional authority with the power to decide how to distribute the money (Kwandu Conservancy financial records). In 2004, each sub-*khuta* received N$ 10,000, whereas in 2008, each sub-*khuta* received N$ 5,000 (Kwandu Conservancy records).

Interview data indicates that the sub-*khutas* chose to distribute the cash dividends differently. Some sub-*khutas* distributed cash dividends to each area household, while others used the money for the traditional authority itself. Respondents from Sikaunga, Kongola, and Kayuwo sub-*khutas* reported that their households received from N$ 10 to N$ 30, at least once, when money was distributed. They reported that money was variably given to men and women, with only one person receiving it per household. Gender was not a limiting factor in an individual's ability to receive dividends.

In contrast, respondents from Singalamwe, Mwanzi, and Sesheke sub-*khutas* claimed that they or their households never received a dividend. Interestingly, several respondents from Sikaunga also claimed they or their household never received cash dividends. Respondents from Singalamwe indicated that while they did not receive cash dividends, their sub-*khuta*[16] provided food for area residents and purchased a metal roof for the meeting house

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[16] A *khuta* is a hierarchical traditional authority body that governs people in the Kwandu area. A sub-*khuta* is a traditional authority that governs one of the six traditional areas in Kwandu. It is termed a sub-*khuta* since its leaders only have authority over the area within Kwandu, and the area is subject to the authority of higher-ranking Chiefs outside of Kwandu.

in lieu of distributing cash dividends to individuals or households. The disparate distribution of dividends likely contributes to some of the different viewpoints expressed about Conservancy benefits in the subsequent chapter.

7.4 Indirect contributions of cash-generating opportunities

While the Conservancy directly contributes cash-generation opportunities in the forms of employment, stipend-based positions, forest product harvests and sales, craft production and sales, as well as cash dividends, it also indirectly contributes cash flow to local businesses and links residents with income-generating opportunities that emanate from outside the Conservancy. The remainder of this chapter provides an overview of the two indirect opportunities provided by the Conservancy.

7.4.1 Contributes flow of cash to local businesses

Conservancy employees spend money in their communities, supporting local business owners and operators. Cuca shop and shibeen owners and operators gain income, in part, from Conservancy employees (personal observations). The amount of income funneled to local businesses was not determined by this study. However, one female respondent reported that she reaped a financial benefit from employees-turned-customers. When asked if there was anything she liked about the Conservancy, she replied:

> Yes. It's like, by this time you will find that there are many people who are working [at the Conservancy], rather than last time. So to me, I benefit from that because you'll find that when those people are paid, they'll come and buy in my shop.

The indirect impacts of Conservancy employment to shop owners is worthy of more

investigation. However, given the paucity of data generated by this study on impacts to small business in Kwandu Conservancy, the issue will not be discussed in the subsequent chapter.

7.4.2 Links residents with income-generating opportunities from outside the Conservancy

The Conservancy provides an entry point for individuals or organizations seeking to enter into partnerships with people in the Kwandu area. In this way, the Conservancy serves as a link to potential income-generating opportunities from outside the Kwandu area. An illustrative example of this characteristic is seen in the relationship between Kwandu Conservancy and Elephant Energy, a non-profit organization based in the United States. Elephant Energy distributes sustainable energy technologies to people living in rural areas.

Elephant Energy offers individuals based in the Caprivi and elsewhere in Namibia the opportunity to profit from the technologies. As of 2011, Elephant Energy was paying a female Kwandu resident approximately N$ 400 per month for her part-time assistance with coordinating technology distribution in the area. Additionally, Elephant Energy founded a women's rent-to-own program in 2011 which facilitates earnings by female salespersons and/or women's rent-to-own groups in the Kwandu area. Women act as independent sales agents, earning a commission from every product they sell.

The Conservancy has played a role by facilitating the income opportunities. Elephant Energy used Kwandu Conservancy as an entry point into the Kwandu area and broader Caprivi Region. A key informant explained that, while imperfect, the Conservancy provided a more approachable institution than did other institutions in the Kwandu area like schools and

traditional authorities (TA's). Unlike TA's, the Conservancy is viewed as an institution that cannot demand bribes for entrance to an area. The key informant asserted that TA's can ask, "What are you going to give us?", or "How is this going to benefit [us]?". In contrast, Elephant Energy, and presumably other organizations, can build a constructive relationship with the Conservancy because it is believed to be more transparent (less likely to demand bribes or payments) and more approachable than other institutions.

Given that Elephant Energy's technology distribution is a relatively new activity in Kwandu Conservancy, there is less information about its income potential. Consequently, it will not be explored in relation to the constraints discussed in the following chapter. However, Elephant Energy has been introduced here to illustrate that the Conservancy's institutional arrangements may offer an incentive to other organizations in the future, organizations that may be looking to engage with women who live in rural areas.

7.5 Limited cash and physical and human assets can impede women's participation in the Conservancy's income-generation activities

For all the good intentions of Conservancy staff and CBNRM partners, it is crucial to recognize that their efforts may simply not reach all intended beneficiaries. The Conservancy, as an institution, entered a context where men and women alike face great difficulties, from hunger to limited education to debilitating illness. While CBNRM and Kwandu Conservancy aim to reduce many of the challenges facing Conservancy residents, it is understandable that not only may challenges be too great to overcome, but the challenges themselves can prevent residents from participating in the very programs aimed at ameliorating the challenges. For example, poor health can limit women's strength, prohibiting them from harvesting Devil's

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Claw and other natural resources. An inability to collect and sell natural resources limits income and can prevent an illness sufferer from getting adequate health care. A vicious cycle persists, in part, because the Conservancy does not have the capacity to provide health services that might free women to engage in Conservancy income-generating activities. In this section, I show that limited physical assets like food, tools, and money are a structural constraint that can impede some women from engaging in the Conservancy's income-generation activities.

7.5.1 Direct employment

Direct employment offered by the Conservancy is more accessible to people with limited cash than other forms of employment. Since the office is located at the center of Kwandu's six residential areas, Conservancy employees walk to work rather than hire transportation. Additionally, the Conservancy does not require employees to purchase uniforms or otherwise produce cash in order to gain employment.

Comparing direct Conservancy employment to regional alternatives suggests that it has fewer cash-related impediments. For example, employment in the nearest town, Katima Mulilo, requires money for transport, relocation expenses, and possibly uniform purchases. Unlike employees based in Katima Mulilo, Conservancy employees do not have to pay rent or buy the majority of their food from shops, significantly reducing start-up and maintenance expenses. From the standpoint of cash, KC offers a comparable advantage over alternative employment opportunities, and limited cash does not pose a significant obstacle to participating in Conservancy employment.

7.5.2 Harvest of natural resources

Conservancy regulations stipulate that residents must purchase permits prior to harvesting reeds and/or grass (see section 7.3.4). Some female respondents claimed that the permit requirements prevent them from harvesting. However interview analysis shows the reality to be more complex than what some women suggest. Instead, it is evident that while some women resent the permit requirements, it does not necessarily stop them from harvesting. Some women simply harvest without permits.

Permits cost money, as detailed in section 7.3.4, and some women claimed they cannot afford to pay for permits. When one woman was asked why permits were a problem, she replied, "...it's because sometimes you don't have that fifteen dollars to go and buy and get a permit. So there's no way you could do what you wanted to do unless if you just sit". Her explanation indicates that the fee required to harvest prevents her from doing what she would like to do, leaving her to "sit" at home.

When another respondent was asked whether the Conservancy had in any way affected how women give each other support, she replied, "You can decide that I want to go and get a permit, but when you go there, they will say, 'You have to pay for that permit'. So sometimes you don't have such an amount". She interpreted support to mean an ability to harvest and sell natural resources with other women. A lack of money, she claims, prevents her from harvesting. She then elaborated that there are a lot of demands on limited income, making it difficult to purchase a permit. She explained that she has a limited budget to begin with because she is not farming, saying:

Since we are not plowing, our budgets are more. You'll find that if they say… if they give a permit, then they say you only have to cut certain bundles of grass. Sometimes that's not your target. You'll find that there are many things which you still need to use the money for after selling.

While obtaining a permit to harvest gives women *de jure* rights to harvest, women seemed to have retained their *de facto* right to harvest without a permit. A key informant stated, "They are busy harvesting, but no permit which they have taken here". A head *induna* in Kwandu explained that (paraphrase) "there is no rule about collecting reeds and grass because people are not always going to get a permit. They are just going to cut on their own". Additionally, a Conservancy staff member stated that only 2 to 4 women per year apply for reed/grass permits (personal communication 30 September 2010), yet I personally witnessed at least a dozen women carrying bundles of grass or reeds in May and June 2011. That women continue to harvest without permits is most likely due to a failure of Conservancy staff to enforce reed and grass harvesting rules.

It is not clear how many women have actually stopped harvesting reeds and/or grasses because of the permit requirement, but it is evident that some women are unable and/or are refusing to pay for a harvest permit. It is noteworthy that the Conservancy's harvesting policy is angering some women, even while it fails to stop illegal harvesting.

7.5.3   Craft-making and selling

Craft-making and selling requires little to no upfront investment or transportation fees, unless an individual resides in the Singalamwe area. Only one respondent claimed that the lack of physical assets limited her ability to benefit from the Conservancy's income-generating opportunities, and she lived in Singalamwe. When asked whether she sold crafts, the

respondent replied that she sold them, but not at Mashi Craft Market. She claimed that lack of transportation prevents her from selling them anywhere other than her local villages. She said, "Sometimes you'll find that I suffer from transport because I don't have anything". Living in Singalamwe, her residence is located outside the areas served by the Community Resource Monitors. Consequently, she has no Conservancy employee to collect her crafts for sale at Mashi. The other five traditional areas are either adjacent to areas inhabitated by Community Resource Monitors (who collect the crafts) or to Mashi Craft Market itself. Outside of limits to craft production in Singalamwe, physical assets did not emerge as a significant impediment to residents' participation.

7.5.4 Dividend collection

Collecting Conservancy dividends is a passive act, requiring that an individual wait for the money to be brought to his or her household. Consequently, no assets are required to collect dividends, meaning that asset-poor households are not impeded from earning dividends.

In conclusion, limited assets can impede women from participating in craft selling as well as natural resource harvesting, but assets do not pose a limit to collecting dividends or gaining direct Conservancy employment. The Conservancy has thus assisted some women to overcome asset-based constraints to cash income, while still having barriers to overcome.

7.6 Conclusions

In this chapter, I examined the supply of income-generation opportunities offered by the Conservancy and some of the gender- and asset-based limits to benefitting from the

opportunities. I have shown that few cash-generation alternatives exist in the Kwandu area, making Conservancy employment a coveted opportunity. Over time, women have held fewer full-time and stipended positions than men in the Conservancy, while on average earning base salaries equivalent to men's. At the same time, men have had more opportunities than women to earn additional income through field allowances. While resource collection and sales, craft sales, and dividends expand income opportunities to a broader percentage of the Kwandu population, they are less lucrative than Conservancy employment. Additionally, gender roles, a topic explored further in the next chapter, constrain women's access to timber resources. Finally, limited physical assets prevent some women from selling crafts and harvesting natural resources.

In the following chapter, I provide insights into the meanings that women ascribe to the material realities of Conservancy income supply. I explore how gendered roles and responsibilities limit women's access to Conservancy employment. In doing so, I illuminate some of the underlying beliefs and social structures that contribute to the unequal employment ratios exposed in this chapter.

Chapter 8   Impacts of Gender-based Constraints on Women's Income-generation Opportunities in the Conservancy

In this chapter, I explore the structural roots of income opportunity inequities exposed in Chapter 7, while describing ways that the Conservancy ameliorates some of the inequities. Using gender-based roles and responsibilities as a lens, I show that income-opportunity inequities arise from numerous sources, namely beliefs about women's abilities, responsibility-induced time scarcity, and fear of transgressing gender role boundaries. As with income opportunity supply and assets, gender-based roles and responsibilities pose a structural constraint to becoming a "real woman" by limiting women's access to the Conservancy's income-generation opportunities. At the same time, the Conservancy has taken action to reduce gender-based constraints by recruiting female employees, offering flexible work schedules, and providing public-speaking training. The Conservancy's actions should be expanded to further reduce gender-based inequities, but recognition of discriminatory forces emanating from outside the Conservancy's control is also needed to understand the limits of Conservancy influence.

8.1   Sources of gender-based inequities

In the first half of the chapter, I discuss three core structural constraints that limit women's access to the Conservancy's income-generation opportunities: beliefs about women's inherent (in)abilities, time scarcity derived from household responsibilities, and women's fear of transgressing gender roles.

8.1.1 Beliefs about women's inherent abilities and inabilities

Beliefs about women's inherent abilities, or lack thereof, have contributed to the low ratio of female to male salaried employees, a ratio that has fluctuated around .25 every year from 2004-2010 (see **Table 3** in Chapter 7). Women have comprised only 7% to 43% of stipended employees (see **Table 4** in Chapter 7), and there has never been a female Chairperson. Additionally, women do not harvest timber or poles because women are said to lack the physical ability to handle them.

Beliefs about women's inherent abilities and inabilities influence women's access to the Conservancy's income-generation opportunities. In this section, I show that beliefs impede women's representation among Conservancy staff, even when those beliefs are contested. I also discuss how beliefs about women's abilities prevent them from harvesting timber resources.

Conservancy staff, *indunas*, and voting residents all exercise direct decision-making power in selecting employees (see Chapter 7), so I use this section to explore their attitudes and behaviors towards women's employment. While CBNRM partners do not exercise direct decision-making power, they exert influence over employee selection, leading me to include their perspectives in this section as well. I focus particular attention on women's perceptions of their employment opportunities and their competing claims of employment discrimination versus fairness. I show that perceptions of gender-based employment discrimination differ, but interviews and employment data together suggest that beliefs about women's roles and responsibilities limit women's employment opportunities in the Conservancy.

In this section, I begin by showing that some women claim the Conservancy discriminates against women in regards to salaried employment, with some women and men rationalizing discrimination as a natural response to women's inferior abilities. I then show that while other women believe the Conservancy does not discriminate at all, beliefs about women's abilities and roles limits both their selection as employees and their on-the-job training.

8.1.1.1 *Perceptions of gender-based employment discrimination*

While the Conservancy provides opportunities for some women to bypass constraints posed by rigid gender role constructions, it in other ways falls prey to culturally-rooted notions about women's abilities and inabilities. Some female respondents claimed that the Conservancy discriminates against women's employment, explaining, in part, the relatively low female-to-male employee ratio. The following excerpts show that some women believe gender-based discrimination is embedded in the Conservancy's hiring processes.

The first excerpt comes from a woman who claimed that the Conservancy is "kind of a bit discriminatory". She has observed that most of the employees at Bum Hill Campsite are male. She believes that men have more work opportunities, in part, because "they", most likely meaning Conservancy staff, believe that women should not be asked to work in the forest alone and might be too scared to do the work. When asked what opportunities from the Conservancy are provided to men but not to women, she replied:

> Like the way I've seen, most of the people there at Bum Hill who are working there mostly are men. Maybe because I don't know whether it's a bit far from the road to go and… Those who are recording, who are assisting the people going that side, I've seen that it's men. So it's kind of a bit discriminatory. It's more with the men than with women. I don't [know] whether women are there,

but most I've seen there, it's just men. So I think maybe it's… they have got some of the opportunities. Because they think maybe a woman cannot be there alone for the whole day, stand the bush and kind of scared. So maybe that's why.

When another woman was asked whether there were opportunities from the Conservancy provided to men but not to women, she replied in the affirmative. She explained that it is "not good" that the number of male employees do not equal the number of female employees. She believes that the previous and current male Chairpersons are to blame for selecting mainly male Game Guards. Like the previous respondent, she believes that some men believe women are too scared to work in forested areas. She stated:

> In the Game Guard, you will find that it's only men and few women, maybe it's only two women.
> *Interviewer: And why do you think that is?*
> It's because I used to see that it's only men who are mostly involved. And women, they are few.
> *Interviewer: Do you think there should be more women Game Guards, or do you think it's fine how it is?*
> With me, I want it this way: it should be the number of men should balance with the number of women. That should be better. But for now it's not good.
> *Interviewer: So what is stopping it from balancing?*
> For now, it's like the former Chairman who was there is the one who selected only male because he said women were scared to sleep in the forest.
> *Interviewer: And the Chairman now?*
> It's also the same. It's like he doesn't see things that way.

Gender-based discrimination was cited again when another respondent was asked to identify difficulties women face in the Kwandu area that men do not face. She replied, "I'll talk on behalf of the Conservancy. You will find that mostly they are men who are working there and few women. There is discrimination".

Another woman described witnessing more than one male-biased employee selection process. She claimed that at meetings she would hear of open Conservancy positions but then would be told that men, not women, were needed to fill the positions. When asked what was

preventing her from trying to seek a job in the Conservancy, she explained that she had sought

employment, but found her way blocked by both a lack of positions and a male-biased hiring

process. She said:

> We used to go and seek jobs there at the office, but they used to tell us there is
> no job. But when there is a post, they will come in the villages when they address
> meetings. Then there at the meeting, they will say "We need a man. Not a
> women".
>> *Interviewer: Have you been at a meeting where they've said that?*
> Yes. I used to be there. There was another meeting which was held here where
> they chose a person. Then in the other one [in] Singalamwe, I was also there.

When asked which jobs the Conservancy was trying to fill, she said it was "those for

being Game Guards". She believed that the male-biased announcements originated from the

Conservancy office, and were then conveyed to the *indunas*. The *indunas* then held a sub-*khuta*

meeting for village residents to select the new employees. While the Conservancy Constitution

provides that community members select non-executive employees by vote, the following

response suggests that Conservancy staff and *indunas* exert significant influence over the

selection process. She explained that:

> The announcement usually used to come from the Conservancy office and then
> straight to the *indunas* in the villages.
>> *Interviewer: So when you heard someone say that they were looking for a*
>> *man only to fill a position, was it an induna saying that, or was it a staff*
>> *member saying that?*
> The announcement used to come from the office where they used to say, "We
> only need a man".

Perceived discrimination was also reflected in a statement from a fifth respondent.

When asked why there are not any women who work at Bum Hill, she claimed that the Ministry

of Environment and Tourism had requested that only men work at Bum Hill Campsite. While I

was unable to confirm whether the Ministry had in fact written such a request, the perception

itself is worth considering. Like two of the previous respondents, the woman believes that men

use women's alleged fear as 'justification' for precluding them from campsite and/or Game

Guard positions. The respondent stated:

> Ok. As I was saying about fearing the elephant, whatever, when the Ministry
> started putting that letter for Bum Hill to operate, they said in Bum Hill maybe
> only men should work there because there are more wildlife there.
> > *Interviewer: The Ministry said that?*
> Yeah.
> > *Interviewer: When was that?*
> When it started. I don't know whether it was 2004 or what.
> > *Interviewer: So around 2004?*
> [Yes.]
> …..
> > *Interviewer: Do you know other women who aren't afraid of that – who
> > work in the Conservancy?*
> Who could not be afraid? Yes, I know. Many women cannot be afraid to work
> there, but only the men are the people who thought about us that maybe we are
> afraid to work there. They thought on our behalf. But they could not even ask us.

8.1.1.1.1 Some women subscribe to the belief that women have inferior abilities

While the previous excerpts reveal that some women perceive gender-based

discrimination to be both prevalent and unfair, the following quotes show that other women

subscribe to the belief that women are less capable, or even incapable, of completing certain

types of Conservancy work. In other words, some women acknowledge gender-based

discrimination, but they believe it is appropriate. In fact, interview data suggests that both

women and men are reluctant to vote women into the electable positions, ultimately limiting

women's opportunities to obtain stipend-based positions. The following two respondents

revealed that some women think that women cannot perform several of the duties required for

employment, namely shooting, walking long distances, and possessing the courage to work in

the forest.

When one woman was asked what life is like in the Conservancy, she replied that "It's hard", adding, "the other things which we are facing is you will find that mostly men are more, who are working in the Conservancy, then women are few". When asked to explain why she believes there is a gender discrepancy in Conservancy employment, she replied, "I just don't know whether [men] are the ones who knows how to shoot or they are the ones who are not scared to go around in the forest". So while she finds life in the Conservancy "hard", she pinpoints women's fear and lack of skills as reasons for limited their employment opportunities.

Another woman responded to questions about challenges she believes are unique to each gender. With regards to women, she replied:

> The things that women they are not more in the Conservancy, only men. The reason, those people are having duties to go in the bush and go for long distance. Yeah, the men. So womens they are not employed mainly in the Conservancy. They are few. So men, they are more. So the reason that... that the men they can walk two hours, three hours in the forest for patrol, but womens they cannot. Yeah, that is the difference which I see.

Like the previous respondents, she observed that there are more men than women employed by the Conservancy. However, she explained the difference in terms of ability instead of illegitimate discrimination, saying that men can walk long distances when women cannot. From her viewpoint, men's inherent abilities allow them to go on patrol as Game Guards, legitimately precluding women from the job.

Given that both women and men have adopted the belief that women lack the ability to fulfill employment-related tasks, positions filled through vote are also influenced by discriminatory beliefs. The following key informant suggested that women do not often receive nominations or votes. Consequently, conservancy support organizations have taken an active role in encouraging conservancy members to vote for women. He emphasized that at least one

conservancy support organization promotes gender equality by encouraging women to vote

women into MC positions. He credited such efforts for making Kwandu Conservancy a leader

among conservancies in providing women with employment opportunities, as indicated in the

following excerpt:

> *Interviewer: But I just wonder why there, why [Kwandu] Conservancy, out of all the Caprivi, was having women, or why they were trying that.*
> Yeah. I really don't know, but it's not the only one. There were also other conservancies that followed. Like Sikaunga [Conservancy], which has got a female Chairperson and so on.
> *Interviewer: Okay.*
> So other conservancy were also following just to put. But also gender equality. You know, whenever we are going in meetings, we are also encouraging gender equality, to put women in decision-making positions
> *Interviewer: So how do you do that? Tell me more about how you encourage gender equality in meetings.*
> We just talk to the committee. Yeah.
> *Interviewer: Committee or community?*
> Community and also the committee. The community, we encourage them, especially for women, to stand up. Because what we have seen mostly is that women, they don't want to vote for their fellow women. And that's strange. I think even in the country, it's really very alive. So we have been encouraging women to vote for their fellow women, to be in these positions. So and the same time, at the committee level, once we have… we discover that it's only men, we really discourage that. We said, "We need some women to be in the committees, not only men". Yeah.

Comments from women who believe that the female sex lacks the ability to hold certain

positions in the Conservancy were paralleled by comments from several male key informants.

Collectively, the comments show that beliefs about women's inherent lack of abilities most

likely influence the Conservancy's hiring processes. Such beliefs likely influence women's

willingness to apply for positions as well as employers' and voters' willingness to hire female

applicants.

8.1.1.1.2 Some male CBNRM-partners believe that women have inferior abilities

Like the female respondents cited previously, some men in positions of authority view

women as having an inferior ability to complete employment duties. Specifically, male CBNRM

partners explained that women were unable to run fast, walk long distances, arrive to work on

time, and/or be "gifted" leaders.

When a key informant was asked how he felt about women working at Bum Hill

Campsite and whether or not he thought it was a good idea, he said:

> By now it's not good. That area is not really good because there's no good
> proper accommodation. There's no… There's lot of elephants. Lady cannot run
> very fast. And also their salary they're getting is very little. So I don't think it
> would help them. So men, they can struggle themselves and have something.
> [The women] can be given a soft job, but hard job like Bum Hill, those thing by
> this moment… Maybe when… in future when… if they upgrade it, then they have
> people who can look after the camp, washing… washing. If they are having
> something like a chef and other things, certain jobs, yeah, maybe lady can be
> there. By now, there's no big job which [can be done] by a lady… There are few
> things which [can be done] by a lady. But most of them, men can do it.

His response reveals several beliefs about women's inherent abilities. First, he believes

that women need "proper accommodation". Since such accommodation does not exist at Bum

Hill, he claims the place is not a suitable work environment for women. Second, he believes that

women cannot run fast. From his perspective, employees at Bum Hill need to run fast to evade

elephants and other wildlife prevalent in the area. Third, he alleges that women require larger

salaries than men. He claims that since Bum Hill staff salaries are "very little", the job is not

attractive to women. However, it is worth noting that staff salaries at Bum Hill are relatively

large in terms of other salaries offered by the Conservancy (see **Table 2** in Chapter 7). Finally,

he believes that women cannot do some of the "hard" jobs that men can do. Instead, he claims,

women must wait until there are "soft jobs" like washing and cooking. Note that the "soft jobs" he identifies are tasks that are culturally ascribed to women.

A second male informant echoed the previous informant's beliefs about women's innate abilities. When asked if there are specific jobs that are more suitable for women in conservancies, the following informant claimed that Game Guarding is too dangerous for them. Women, he claimed, cannot walk long distances nor run fast enough to escape dangerous animals. To employ women as Game Guards, and presumably as campsite staff, would be risking their lives. Instead, the following excerpt shows he believes that women should be kept out of the forests and assigned office work:

> Yeah. I think women can [do] everything. They can. Yeah, it's only that some jobs are too dangerous, like the ones of Game Guarding because you have to go and patrol in the forest. And now with these lot of wildlife like elephants and so on, it's very hard for women to cope up with that one. But office work, I think women can do it, yeah.
> *Interviewer: And why do you think it's harder for women to do Game Guarding than men?*
> I think because... Maybe it's nature. Yeah. Some women, they have that there are... It's only few can really walk long distances, who can run, and so on, who can really escape things. So that's how we thought that maybe if you give them a dangerous job like this one you are risking that person's life.

While the previous two informants focused on perceived dangers that certain types of employment create for women, another male informant alleged that women lack the qualities needed for leadership positions. When asked what it was like when a woman served in a certain position in the Conservancy, he described a weakness he "always" sees in women. He explained that the female employee he described, like all women in his view, would be absent from work for days at a time without giving an explanation. Her inability to "keep time" undermined her leadership authority. Additionally, he claimed that most women charged with

organizing projects usually fail to call meetings because "they are not gifted" with leadership

abilities. He said:

> Because womens sometimes, mostly even in those higher positions, what I've learned, like to the previous [Conservancy staff member], you'll find that she cannot keep time on work. So... but if you are a leader, you have to be exemplary. So if they gave [her] such a kind of position, then she cannot maybe work with time, then people can lose interest on [her].
>> *Interviewer: What do you mean, "work with time"?*
> For example at work, that is what I'm meaning, you'll find that other time maybe you're absent, you're absent yourself without reason. You are just at home without a reason, just seated there, maybe three days-
>> *Interviewer: Oh, not coming to work.*
> Not coming, yes, yes. But you are the head.
>> *Interviewer: Oh, okay.*
> That is the weaknesses which we always see to the womens.
> ….
>> *Interviewer: Has this also happened with other women in the*
>> *Conservancy, or are you referring to women in other positions elsewhere?*
> Yeah, it is happening. Yes, in most cases. For example, like if you gave a group, or most of the other groups which we have organized… maybe you organize something, then you say, "Oh, you are a Chairlady for this", then we are organizing a project, you will find that that woman, if it's a Chair of that group, she will be failing even to call a meeting to combine those group.
>> *Interviewer: Why is that?*
> I don't know. Maybe they are not gifted, the women are not… not to be leaders. (He laughs.)

8.1.1.1.3 Some male CBNRM partners expressed a belief in women's abilities

While the previous comments indicate that some Conservancy partners stereotype

women as unable to complete certain tasks, other Conservancy partners believe that at least

some women have the ability to perform traditionally male tasks. For example, when a male

key informant was asked what makes the Game Guard position different for women than for

men, he replied:

Currently we saw that the positions for Game Guard is a heavy one because they need to walk longer distances. We have twenty kilometers which a Game Guard should travel. And then-
> *Interviewer: In what time period?*

What?
> *Interviewer: So twenty kilometers in a day? In a week?*

Twenty kilometers in a day.
> *Interviewer: Oh wow.*

Then for other women, they cannot afford. But there are other women born like men. They are strong. They can do what men can do.

While the informant adheres to the belief that women in general cannot walk long distances, he believes that there are exceptions. Some women, he claimed in the excerpt below, possess the strength to walk far and can therefore serve as Game Guards. He explained that gender equality considerations, exemplified by the Ministry of Environment, have propelled women's employment in traditionally male jobs like Game Guarding. He sees that women, like men, can write reports, as long as they are properly educated. His remark implies that he sees education, not gender, as the greater limiting factor in Conservancy employment. When asked what made a specific female employee qualified to work as a Game Guard, he replied:

> Yeah, she qualified to work as a Game Guard because we concentrated on gender equality. Even in Ministry of Environment and Nature Conservation, there are men and women serving there. And we saw that the reports which the Game Guards used to write are… does not discriminate whether a man should write them or a woman. Anyone who went to school can just fill those forms.

8.1.1.1.4 Some women believe the Conservancy does not discriminate against women

In contrast to people who believe the Conservancy discriminates against women's employment, some women believe that there is no discrimination. Instead, their comments

indicate that they perceive the Conservancy to practice gender equality. Their viewpoints may reflect a particular belief about discrimination - that as long as some women are employed, there is no discrimination. In contrast, women who allege discrimination may view it to mean discrepancies between numbers of male versus female employees. Alternatively, respondents' denials that that the Conservancy discriminates against women could also reflect attempts to portray the Conservancy in a positive light to outsiders. However, the latter interpretation is less likely since one of the following respondents provided some negative remarks about the Conservancy in another part of her interview. Regardless of their motivations, the following three excerpts show that some women claim the Conservancy practices gender equality in regards to employment.

The first excerpt shows that some respondents believe the Conservancy chooses equally between men and women. When asked if there are opportunities from the Conservancy that are provided to men but not to women, a woman replied, "I don't know. But it's like everything is just the same that side. They choose equally".

Another respondent held a similar viewpoint. When asked the same question, she replied:

> There is nothing.
>> *Interviewer: Or to women only, but not to men?*
> I usually used to see that both men and women used to work together.
>> *Interviewer: Worked together doing what?*
> I used to see with the Game Guards. I used to see there are men, and there are women.
>> *Interviewer: And do you think men or women should make decisions about the Conservancy?*

With me I can see that there is a right which came which says it's fifty-fifty, meaning both men and women have to work. Then, it's like, I can see that they are all working, working together.

The respondent claimed to see both men and women working together as Game Guards. In this way, she believes that the Namibian citizens' Constitutional "right" to equal employment opportunities, or "fifty-fifty", has borne fruit in Kwandu Conservancy. Consequently, she does not believe that men have any more opportunities from the Conservancy than women do.

A third respondent declared that the Conservancy does not discriminate against women. The following excerpt reveals that she believes the Conservancy offers the same employment opportunities to men as it does women:

> *Interviewer: Are there opportunities from the Conservancy that are provided to men but not to women?*
> Womens also usually used to get some of the… whether its positions, yes, when people choose that person.
> *Interviewer: And are there any opportunities provided to women but not to men in the Conservancy?*
> Also men used to get those positions. You'll find that there is no discrimination. It is just the same.

While some women believe that the Conservancy provides equal employment opportunities, it is clear that other people perceive women to have fewer opportunities than men. Some respondents and informants conveyed their belief that fewer employment opportunities are a 'justifiable' result of women's innately inferior abilities, but other women believed that the Conservancy exercises unfair discrimination against capable women. The differences in perceptions and opinions show that Kwandu Conservancy hosts contested beliefs about women's abilities, roles, and responsibilities. The differences suggest that tensions over

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the degree to which women should be involved in Conservancy employment influence hiring processes, helping to explain disparate employment ratios between men and women.

8.1.1.2 Disparate on-the-job training

In addition to facing gender-based discrimination in hiring processes, interview data suggests that women must also contend with disparate on-the-job training opportunities. While such training occurs only after a woman is hired, perceptions about training and on-the-job skills acquisition likely influence women's willingness to apply for Conservancy employment. Beliefs that female employees are not adequately prepared, especially for riskier work in the field, likely deter women from entering the workforce.

A key informant explained that beliefs about male-specific jobs have prevented some female employees from receiving adequate training. He gave the example of Game Guards and guns, explaining that female Game Guards in some conservancies have been provided with guns but no proper training to use them. Consequently, female Game Guards have had to depend on male Game Guards to shoot. To train women to use guns, he explained, requires a "culture-break", so empowering women to shoot and perform other traditionally "male" tasks is a challenge. When asked whether women belong in the forest as Forest Guards or Foresters, he replied:

> Yeah. But that is a challenge, actually, because that job was seen to be for men. And I heard…. It was revealed that yes, we have some few Game Guards, women Game Guards, they carry guns. But they still cannot perform the function. They have to wait for a man to shoot if there is a problem animal or… They will not really do that. They will wait for a male Game Guard to shoot and things like that. So I think it's a slow process to really empower certain functions that were regarded as male dominant to the women. It's something that is a culture-break.

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You must break the culture. And maybe also give special incentives to attract women. I don't believe men being equal pay or what, but there could be some extra allowance that can attract a woman to go out in the field and do the Game count, you know things like that.

While the key informant spoke of conservancies in general, communications with Kwandu Conservancy staff suggest that at least some female Game Guards in Kwandu do not know how to operate firearms. Kwandu's female Game Guards have been provided with a single training, provided in 2008 (personal communication with a Conservancy staff member on 12 June 2012). A look at Conservancy records indicates that two female Game Guards were hired after 2008, meaning they could not have benefitted from the training. Without firearm skills, female Game Guards must depend on male employees to defend them from dangerous wildlife during the course of their job duties. This dependence likely increases their work-related stress and places them at increased risk of attack by wildlife.

The key informant raised a second issue in his response, contending that women need additional incentives to accept Conservancy employment. In continuing the interview, he revealed his concern that women's household responsibilities can deter them from working for the Conservancy, as shown below:

> *Interviewer: So do you think that women should get paid the same amount to do that job or not?*
> No, I'm saying, the women could even get more.
> *Interviewer: Income?*
> More… more income, yes. How could justify that? I don't know. Like women have… they leave a lot of functions at home, so it could be like bush allowance or something like that. Because she will leave the women responsibilities behind. Some of them might have children that are suckling and… or babysitting. So for them to be attracted, I think there should be some kind of incentives for them. It might not be a salary, but maybe something else. I can't think of any, but I'm sure that people can come up with something. But they should be given special attention of some sort, yeah-

The key informant explained that household responsibilities like child-care must be left behind in order for women to pursue employment. He argued that conservancies should offer women extra financial incentives so that they can pursue employment and still manage existing responsibilities. His comments suggest that gender-based roles and responsibilities can prevent women from applying for or accepting Conservancy positions. Household responsibilities may make work in the Conservancy unfeasible and discriminatory staff training can increase risks for female employees.

8.1.2   Beliefs about women's (in)ability to harvest timber-based resources

Culturally-prescribed gender roles and responsibilities relegate timber harvesting to men. Interviews and informal conversations revealed that women do not typically harvest and sell timber or poles because it is viewed as physically-demanding 'men's work'. In 2010, no women visited the Conservancy office to pay to cut trees (personal communication with Conservancy staff member on 30 September 2010). An informant stated that only men buy trees "because they are very hard to harvest" (personal communication with Conservancy staff member on 30 September 2010).

Similarly, when asked whether there were opportunities from the Conservancy that are provided to men but not to women, a female respondent replied in the affirmative, listing "cutting poles" as an example. Another female respondent claimed that women do not benefit from timber because they lack the physical ability to work with it. When asked what opportunities the Conservancy provides to men but not to women, she replied:

> The men, they are always doing some timbers to make even more things, even chairs. They're always getting their permits at the office, buying in a little amount of money.
>
> *Interviewer: And why do women not benefit from timbers?*
>
> They are… A timber is a big thing. A woman cannot make it. Yes.

Similarly, a third respondent was asked about women's versus men's opportunities and claimed that "no ladies can cut the timbers". When asked to explain, she replied that, "They only employ the men who are strong". Her response and the previous ones suggest that beliefs about women's limited strength prevent women from benefitting directly from timber harvesting. So while the Conservancy will sell timber and pole harvesting permits to men and women, pre-existing gender roles constrain women's abilities to profit from harvesting timber.

Both timber harvesting and employment show that beliefs about women's inferior abilities pose a real constraint to their opportunity to earn income. Beliefs are widespread, held by male and female residents, as well as Conservancy staff, CBNRM partners, *indunas*. At the same time, not all men, women, staff, CBRNM partners, or *indunas* believe that women lack the ability to harvest timber or do excellent work for the Conservancy. Instead, the beliefs about women's (in)abilities are highly contested, even as they influence women's opportunities in the Conservancy.

8.1.3 Household responsibilities

Household responsibilities can limit the time available for women to participate in income-generation activities. In particular, women's many responsibilities can prevent them from having time to invest in harvesting natural resources like Devil's Claw, reeds, and

thatching grass. In order to benefit from selling natural resources, women must have ample time to invest in obtaining a harvest permit and in actually harvesting the resource.

Female respondents indicated that obtaining a harvesting permit is time-consuming. For example, one woman described permit acquisition in this way: "We sometimes get scared because it almost take a long time. It's a process to do those things". Women must travel to the Conservancy office two times for every permit. Since some villages are located far from the Conservancy, and wheeled transportation is scarce, obtaining a permit may require a significant time investment.

Household responsibilities can also impede the harvesting itself. The following respondent indicated that her existing responsibilities delayed her Devil's Claw harvesting activities. When asked whether she planned to dig *malamatwa* that year, she replied:

> So this year I'm not going to dig [Devil's Claw] since I'm having a lot of work to do at my new house there. So even though I already have a permit, so any time I can still go and dig when I am free from my house.

Her response shows that digging Devil's Claw is contingent on the completion of her new house. Consequently, her collection of natural resources is of secondary importance to her household responsibilities.

8.1.4 Fear ("shyness")

Fear of transgressing gender role boundaries can limit women's access to the Conservancy's income-generation opportunities. A number of female and male respondents and informants referred to women's fear when addressing the subject of women's

employment. The terms "shy" and "shyness" were used to denote a woman's fear of speaking

in public. It was argued that "shyness" limits women's employment opportunities since it

prevents women from interacting with community members, *indunas*, and staff members, as

required for a number of salaried Conservancy positions. Informants and respondents referred

to "shyness" as both a fear of speaking in public as well as a lack of public-speaking skill.

I begin this section by showing that fear, or perceived "shyness", has limited women's

employment opportunities. I then examine some of the root causes of women's public-speaking

fears by showing that cultural norms have marginalized women's voices in the public arena.

Finally, I provide excerpts from women and men to show that the term "shyness" is used by

some respondents to convey women's fear of public speaking, showing that women's fears of

public-speaking, or "shyness", are rooted in the subordinate roles culturally-ascribed to women.

Informants explained that women's employment depends on an ability to speak in

public. For example, when asked whether there are jobs that women should do or not do in the

Conservancy, a male key informant replied:

> That depends on the level of people who have been chosen from the *khuta*.
> Because if… those people here on the community level, they used to select
> people from their *khuta*. Even those womens, they used to attend the meetings
> at their *khutas*. Then there are those people, they will be chosen to come and
> join because the people select the person who they say that… who they've seen
> that they can talk something. Then they can give him a job to come and work
> here.

The respondent contends that sub-*khutas*, comprised of *indunas* and community

members, will select a woman for Conservancy employment only when she has shown that she

"can talk something", meaning that she has been observed speaking in public. This means that

women who are regarded as too "shy" to speak in public may not be considered for employment.

Furthermore, when a woman is elected to a Management Committee position and then fails to communicate as needed, her perceived failures may dissuade residents from voting for women in the next election. The following excerpt shows that women must prove themselves capable of participating in group dialogue if they want to be elected. When asked why there were presently fewer women in the Committee than in the previous year, the key informant replied:

> The thing is that some of the womans, when they are in a meeting, they are unable to speak. Just why you see that few of them are being chosen to be members of Management Committee. Even during the meetings for the… Let me say, community meetings, if they do some meetings, if they happen to see some of the women rising up, they should come in to do some things, then hopefully they can choose her to be in the Management Committee. So… and again, the thing is that some of the Members, womans who are on the committee, some of them can speak, some they cannot speak. Yeah. Just why I say that if they happen to get that this lady, she is unable to speak, the other election they will not choose a lady. They won't because there is no use of choosing them. If they see that this ladies, they can make it in meetings, I think the number of women, they can increase.

The reluctance to speak publicly places women at a disadvantage in the job application process, as many Conservancy positions require that staff openly express ideas to groups of men and women. To gain employment, women "…must able to speak in public". A male informant indicated that it is possible that women are not included very much in Conservancy employment because women are too shy to speak publicly (personal communication 13 June 2011). Another male key informant explained that there are few women employed by any of

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the conservancies because women are "shy at meetings" (personal communication 6 July 2010).

8.1.4.1 "Shyness" is rooted in women's relatively low levels of power

While "shyness" can be interpreted as a lack of self-confidence and skill, it can also be interpreted as an expression of a woman's compliance with gender roles that require women to show deference to men. In a context where women have traditionally had limited opportunity to openly speak in mixed-gender settings, public speaking requires a willingness to contravene gender norms. As discussed in section 6.6, women are expected submit to male authority because men are considered the "heads" of household and community. Women's roles oblige them to keep their opinions to themselves and thereby refrain from "talking too much". For some women, fear undoubtedly accompanies the contravention of these gender norms. Women afraid of acting outside the traditional role of a subservient woman will therefore act "shy" in mixed-gender settings. Consequently, "shyness" should be considered from the perspective that normative gender roles in the Kwandu area relegate less power than men, ultimately limiting women's ability to speak in public settings.

Interviews indicated that women's fears of speaking in public are likely rooted in gender norms that place men as "head of the household" and as community leaders. Men's normative role as leader requires that women defer to their authority. That women's shyness is directly attributable to men's greater level of power was suggested by a male informant. When asked why he thinks women have been shy at meetings, he said:

> You know… Let me say, I don't know. It depends to our culture. It's different with you white people, with Africans. We Africans in the first sense, women, they

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were not involved themselves in making decisions because they were too shy. They didn't get any education. So things can go badly if there is no education.
Interviewer: Did men have education when women didn't?
Yes.
Interviewer: Oh, okay.
There was a little bit discrimination. Just why I say that now, womens can be involved in making decisions.

The informant ascribes women's "shyness" to cultural influences that discriminated against women. He claims that women did not receive education. While it is unclear whether he was referring to formal or informal education, his point remains that, in his view, structural forces historically marginalized women from participating in decision-making processes. He implies that education can dispel shyness, giving women decision-making power. So while women were too shy to make decisions in the past, their shyness was due to entrenched differences in power that neglected women's education and decision-making opportunities.

Another male informant equated being "shy" with being afraid and then provided a clue about the underlying source of some women's fear. The informant emphasized that women were especially shy "where there [were] a lot of men", lending support to the idea that fear of speaking is linked to women's relatively low level of power. When asked to describe some of the benefits of conservancies, the informant stated:

....And also trainings, like for example public-speaking workshops that is offered to our women. And I think this one has really changed the women because it… they… when you look previously, they were very shy to stand in public and speak, especially where there are a lot of men. But now women are very vocal, even at AGMs [Annual General Meetings], the most vocal people are women. So I think it has really… they are able to speak without fear. Yeah.

While I observed that not a single woman at Kwandu's 2010 AGM spoke in the public meeting, it is possible that public-speaking workshops (or training) have enhanced participation at other AGMs. Public-speaking training is discussed in the next section. What is salient in the

previous excerpt is the informant's assertion that women can "speak without fear", even in the

presence of a "lot of men". His statement indicates that women's "shyness" might best be

viewed as a fear of speaking in front of men.

An interview with the following respondent supports the notion that "shyness"

emanates from differential levels of power between women and men. She claimed that women

did not participate in Conservancy activities in the past because they were "intimidated".

People would only listen to men speaking because they believed women were not worthy of

respect. Women, she claimed, were not even invited to meetings because it was believed they

did not "have minds to think about things". She credited three forces for giving women more

opportunity to speak and to be respected by men: 1) the Namibian Parliament's call for

women's equality (referred to as "fifty-fifty"), 2) IRDNC's public-speaking workshops, and 3)

increased education of women. A question about women's past versus present participation in

the Conservancy culminated in the following exchange:

> In the past, the women could not participate. Women have started now these days to participate in things because that time, as you know, women were intimidated.
> > *Interviewer: So tell me about that. You say women didn't used to participate. So what kind of changes have you seen? Can you describe those changes to me?*
> Yeah, the changes which I say is that by that time they were not even called to the meeting. Again, what I could see in those days-
> > *Interviewer: And which days do you mean? Which days?*
> Starting from 1999 up- back. Yeah. People… some of the people would say, even, could not listen to the speech for a woman. They could only listen to the speech for the man. I don't know how they will like it. Maybe they think we don't have minds to think about things. I don't know.
> > *Interviewer: (Laughs.) So what brought about that change? Because I clearly have seen a change from what you're describing as happened in 1999.*
> The thing which brought the change is… ah, since the Parliament was talking about fifty-fifty-

Interviewer: The Parliament?

Yeah. The *[unclear]* started to think about women, that maybe they are also people. Yeah. But by that time when they were talking about fifty-fifty, they were talking of government workers, whatever. But even in the courtyards, that thing have improved because other men, they were thinking of a woman… When he can think of the woman, he will just say, "A woman is a woman," is what he could say. But now, they think that "Maybe these people, they are also people".

Interviewer: What do you mean, "a woman is a woman"? What does that mean?

A woman is a… When I say, "A woman is a woman," it is saying that a woman is not respected to men. They were not trying to respect them. They were saying, "Ah. You." They could only say, "You woman, go". Yeah.

Interviewer: What other reasons do you think women are able to participate now more in the Conservancy, other than the Parliament decision?

I think it is because of this CBNRM. Some people, they were… Let me say like this company of IRDNC, out in this area. There was a lesson which was taught last time, long ago that… It was teaching about public speaking. Other ladies, they could not talk at the meeting, but since they were taught those lessons… or since they were heard that we were also people, no they can also stand and speak. So by this time, they are also invited because they know that the one even… When we call her to the meeting it will be nice.

Interviewer: Did you participate in public speaking workshop?

Yes.

Interviewer: And how did it affect you personally?

I think it helped me to know what I should speak. Yeah. Or to know how I should stand and speak in public. Yeah.

Interviewer: And any other reasons that you think women can participate more?

Yeah, because they are now valid. The men also, they are now thinking of them that maybe they can participate.

Interviewer: Why do you think the men think that?

Because some of the ladies now are also having… gone education, further studies. Yeah.

Responses indicated that "shyness" can best be interpreted as having internal and external components. Internally, women may feel that they are inferior to men and fear the outcome of sharing their ideas. Externally, enduring social structures have marginalized women, limiting their education and effectively silencing their opinions and viewpoints. In a society where men have had more access to education than women and more control over

decision-making processes, women genuinely have a lower level of power. Prevailing "shyness" is one indicator of their marginalization.

8.2   Conservancy action against inequities

The Conservancy has taken actions to ameliorate limits to women's opportunities. In this section, I discuss ways that the Conservancy has worked to counter beliefs about women's inferior abilities, to create employment conditions flexible enough to allow women to complete their household responsibilities, and to provide women with skills needed to speak in public.

8.2.1   Counters beliefs about women's abilities

The Conservancy has countered beliefs about women's inferiority by actively recruiting women into some Conservancy positions. Both awareness of gender-based discrimination and past failures to acknowledge women's abilities have contributed to efforts to recruit women. For example, the Community-Resource Monitor (female-only) position was created, in part, to provide women with employment throughout the conservancy system (Jacobsohn & Owen-Smith 2003).

Interview evidence suggests that in some cases, Conservancy support organizations and male Conservancy staff have specifically recruited women. Kwandu Conservancy has gained recognition for advancing women's opportunities in comparison to surrounding areas. When a key informant was asked to describe specific benefits conservancies offer to women, she replied:

> If you look specifically in Kwandu, Kwandu was the first conservancy to employ a female Manager. So… and the Conservancy was running very, very well. And

Kwandu was also the first conservancy to employ a female Game Guard. So… and a lot of the [Management] Committee Members were women. So I think those are some of the benefits that have come to women, especially in Kwandu.

In order to understand why Kwandu employed women in traditionally male Conservancy positions before other conservancies, a key informant was asked why Kwandu staff wanted to employ a woman. He said:

Yeah, you know, in the meetings that we had, there were some complaints that it's only men that has got these jobs for Game Guards. And also, they felt they could do the same what men does. And then that's why we took that initiative that we could also include women in that position. And with men also, they felt women are very soft, they can't do that kind of a job. But when one was employed, we could see that "Oh, women can also do hard work".

The informant indicated that they initiated hiring women into traditionally male positions for two reasons. First, complaints about discrimination were surfacing. Second, women were insisting that that they were capable of doing the same work as men. The result was that men began to recognize that women were capable of doing traditionally male tasks. Consequently, an indirect effect of women's employment has likely been the relaxing of belief-based barriers to women's employment. As more women fill Conservancy positions, and do so successfully, beliefs about women lacking employment abilities may wane, and general awareness of women's wide-ranging abilities may increase in the community.

Some Conservancy staff, traditional authorities, and Conservancy members have sought to instill gender equality in the selection of Management Committee Members (MCM's) as well. The following informant explained that a female colleague gained her voice through encouragement and translation assistance offered by fellow staff members. Where once she was quiet and shy, he said, she eventually grew "used" to speaking in public. When asked whether he had encouraged women to become MCM's, the informant replied:

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Yes. We did. But the problem that we had with women in the Committee is that if you have a meeting, they won't speak. Then we tried to encourage them that they should also have to speak because that's the reason why they are in the Conservancy Committee that they should have to get feedback from the Conservancy office and also give feedback to the community, vice versa also from the community to the Conservancy. So we encouraged women. Say, for example, _____. She was very quiet. And then we encouraged her, then we… she became the best woman-

Interviewer: How did you encourage her to speak?

Yeah, we encouraged her. Say, like, if you want to do anything, or say, like, for example, if the language was not very good for her, she could speak in the local language and then we could translate. And then that's where she now become used that... Because she was, like, very shy to speak and so forth. Yeah.

Encouraging women to learn and grow into their positions is one way the Conservancy has countered beliefs about women's inferiority. By hiring women, the Conservancy has also offered counter-cultural examples to the whole community by showing that women can complete duties that many have traditionally believed they were incapable of completing.

8.2.2 Creates opportunities for pursuing household responsibilities while retaining employment

The Conservancy creates opportunities for female employees to fulfill their household responsibilities. In offering flexible work schedules and in providing work near women's household, the Conservancy allows women to meet socially-constructed obligations while earning cash income.

The flexible nature of Conservancy employment permits some women to engage in the responsibilities imposed by socially-constructed gender roles. Given that women are generally expected to clean, cook, care for children and the elderly, farm, and complete many other tasks (see Chapter 6), it follows that women may have difficulty finding the time to complete tasks required of Conservancy employees. However, interview responses suggest that the

Conservancy offers its employees the time and flexibility needed to complete additional

required and/or desired livelihood activities.

When one respondent was asked why she had decided to continue with Conservancy

employment rather than move on to something else, she credited the Conservancy with

providing her with time to pursue her farm work. She explained that working with the

community is cyclical because there are times when residents are too involved with their own

farming activities to require her professional services. She said:

> By this time I like to stay with this job because it's easy. Sometimes you work. Sometimes you cannot work. Because let me say, when you are working with the community, there is time when they are busy with their fields, which means you cannot disturb them. You just leave them. Then you can also join your work to the field because the people, they are busy.

The work flexibility extends to other livelihood activities as well. The same informant

explained that Conservancy work offers her the ability to take leave and pursue small business

ventures. In another part of her interview she claimed that she can sometimes "...ask

permission even to take leave. Then off I go, looking for whatever I want to sell". She views the

Conservancy as offering her the freedom to pursue things she deems important.

Similarly, a key informant explained that the Conservancy serves as a sympathetic and

understanding employer because it is comprised of community members. Consequently, the

Conservancy does not impose a "complicated" work schedule on its employees like a large

company might. He believes that the Conservancy accommodates illnesses and funerals, for

example, giving employees time off from work to meet family needs. The following excerpt

indicates that the Conservancy offers both men and women the freedom to attend to their

personal and household priorities:

> *Interviewer: Why did you want to work with the Conservancy after they granted your request?*
>
> Yeah. I think the most interesting thing to work with the community. And what I was more interest about is you'll find that some of other works of yours, you can do them. You don't have so many complicated times, so maybe like as you work in the company, big company, is where they cannot maybe allow you, to give you chance, whatsoever. But in the Conservancy, there is a certain ways because it's a community-based organization. Then you can understand each other. If I have got a problem at my side, when I come to them, they gonna understand me.
>
> *Interviewer: Okay. You mentioned that one of the reasons you originally joined was because people would give you a chance, because you were working with community members. Can you give me an example of that, of what you mean by that?*
>
> For example, if I… maybe one of my family is maybe passed away or maybe is sick somewhere, then here, because we are locally, we know each other, when I come maybe and talk with the Manager or Chairperson of the Conservancy, "You know, I've got such and such a problem", they can understand me because we are together.

Like its work-hour flexibility, the location of Conservancy employment also permits women to engage in gender-based responsibilities. Conservancy positions are located within the community, something that is probably important to women given that their gender roles and responsibilities are often located in and around the household. Women can attend to their farms during their days off from Conservancy work, for example. In contrast, women generally must relocate to an urban center like Katima Mulilo, a tourist lodge outside of the Conservancy, or a commercial farm or other place elsewhere in Namibia in order to gain formal employment. Consequently, Conservancy employment does not confront a place-based impediment to offering women income-generating opportunities.

8.2.3 Provides women with skills needed to overcome fear of public speaking

To combat women's "shyness" and improve their participation, the Conservancy has offered public speaking training to some female residents. While presented as skills-development, public speaking training helps to combat women's fears of transgressing gender roles that command women to remain silent and subordinate in public settings. By learning to overcome their fears of speaking publicly, women have greater access to the Conservancy's employment opportunities.

A male informant, excerpted below, claimed that women's difficulties have diminished because they have gained learned to "stand in the public" and talk openly, in addition to learning how to make and sell crafts and earning positions in the Conservancy. Public-speaking and craft-making training from IRDNC and women leaders, he claimed, have opened more opportunities for women's employment. Now women do not fear working in mixed-gender settings, and they have basic income-generating skills. When asked whether women's involvement in the Conservancy has changed over the years, he replied:

> Yeah. There is a little bit change.
>> *Interviewer: Can you describe that change to me?*
> Let me say, again our womens are involved in education activity, yeah, craft education. And among them, we have got some of the womens who try to train the other people to do the crafting. And also there's a little bit change saying in other organization while… with the woman leaders. Like Mashi Craft, the Chairlady there, she's a lady. And again, there is a change in our community, especially in womans. Now they are able to stand in the public, and they can talk.
>> *Interviewer: Why? What changed? Why are they able to do that now when they didn't used to?*
> Because they received trainings.
>> *Interviewer: From?*
> From IRDNC.
>> *Interviewer: Oh, okay.*

Yeah. They had a power. They have taught them how to speak in public and they have taught them how to involve themselves. So like, in the first sense, females were unable to be among the men. So if a man is... The... if a lady, she is one there, there are more than five mens there, she cannot be there. Because she say, "Okay. I cannot be among the men". Yeah. They were too shy. But at this moment, even you'll see us working while two, three Game Guards are females. We were working with them yesterday. They were helping. Yeah. Yeah, just why we need the involvement of women among the men.

A female respondent described a similar viewpoint. She explained that she used to be too shy to speak in front of a group. It was only after attending a public-speaking workshop that she gained the confidence to speak in front of a group of people. When asked what she thought about her experience at the workshop, she replied:

> That experience is good for me. Since I was born, I could never stand even for three to four people to talking with them. After that [public-speaking] workshop, I think that now I can stand in more people talking to them and looking face to face. Yes.
> > *Interviewer: Do you feel like you've been able to speak out more in Conservancy meetings as a result of that or...?*
> Yes, I can speak.
> > *Interviewer: More than before, or is it the same?*
> No. Now I can speak, but the past years, [no].

Women's experiences with public-speaking training suggest that Kwandu Conservancy can overcome some of the impediments to female employment posed by gender roles. It is clear that some women and men view public-speaking training as a way to facilitate women's employment in the Conservancy. Public-speaking training helps some women overcome their fears and improves their ability to do tasks required to earn some types of Conservancy income.

8.3   Conclusion

There are at least five ways that the Conservancy assists women to overcome gender-based constraints to Conservancy employment. First, the Conservancy offers flexible work

times which allow women to meet household roles and responsibilities while still holding a salaried position at the Conservancy. Second, the location of Conservancy employment, within the Kwandu area, overlaps with the community-based location of women's roles and responsibilities. Third, the Conservancy has, in some instances, intentionally recruited women for particular staff positions. Fourth, recruitment of women into Conservancy positions has provided evidence to contradict myths about women's limited abilities, possibly increasing women's willingness to apply for positions. Finally, the Conservancy has offered public-speaking training which provides women with an increased ability to speak in front of groups. The training therefore equips women with a skill required for several Conservancy positions.

While the Conservancy has taken commendable steps to enhance women's income-generation opportunities by countering gender-based constraints, more actions are needed to give women equal opportunities. Structural constraints to women's earning opportunities have existed long before the introduction of the Conservancy, and Conservancy staff, residents, CBNRM partners, traditional authorities, and women themselves all have an active role in perpetuating, or preferably ameliorating, gender inequities. Countering beliefs about women's inferiority, offering ways for women to juggle household responsibilities and employment, and countering women's fears of transgressing gender roles are all important areas for creating equal opportunities for women in Kwandu Conservancy.

Chapter 9   Impacts of Income-generation Opportunities on Participants' Constraints

In this chapter, I focus on women who have accessed the Conservancy's income-generation opportunities. In doing so, I examine how participation in Conservancy activities has impacted constraints to becoming a "real woman". Having discussed the constraint of income opportunity supply in Chapter 7, and impediments to accessing income opportunities in Chapter 8, I address how participation in Conservancy programs impacts the remaining seven core constraints identified in Chapter 6, namely: assets, socially-constructed gender roles and responsibilities, social support, perception of control over one's own life, access to land and natural resources, education, and health. I show that while participation in Conservancy activities can both exacerbate and ameliorate women's constraints, participation has had an overall positive impact on women's lives.

9.1   Impacts of income-generation activities on individual and household cash

In this section, I focus on the cash women gain from Conservancy participation, describing how they chose to spend their earnings and the meanings they assigned to their increased income. Women reported having more money to meet their material needs and social responsibilities. They used their increased access to cash to pay for food, clothing, shelter, school fees, cattle, burials, and starting a business. The type of income-generation activity influenced the level of cash increase a woman experienced. Employment was perceived to bring the most income, while dividends were perceived to bring almost "nothing". However, earning income does not guarantee its control, so increased cash pay did not always translate into control over its use.

Interview responses indicate that income-generating opportunities provide women with the ability to purchase basic material goods for meeting their subsistence needs. Conservancy employment, *malamatwa* harvesting and sales, craft sales, and Conservancy dividends have all provided women with money for purchasing goods. The activities ranged in terms of the quality of good they helped provide. For example, employment was mentioned as contributing to home construction, a longer-lasting physical asset, while dividends were used for smaller, rapidly-consumable purchases to like food and soap.

Employees' comments about their income and expenditures were enlightening. One respondent explained that her salary has made her life less difficult because she is now able to get everything she needs. When asked whether she saw herself any differently compared to the time before she worked for the Conservancy, she explained that the Conservancy had strengthened her ability to obtain what she needs. She said:

> By this time there is a very high difference. Because last time when I was not working, it was so difficult for me to get other things. By now I can only suffer between when it's too… either towards the month end. But when it's month's end, I get money. Then I use that money to use for anything which I need.

Another employee described using her income to provide for her household's most basic material needs, as well as to hire people to work on her farm. She used the money to build a house, to buy clothes, and to purchase food. When asked what she uses the money for that she earned from the Conservancy, she said:

> I use the money for people to work for me in the fields. I use the money for people to build for me my house. And also here in the household, I use that money for my kids to buy clothes and to get food.

A third employee similarly emphasized using her salary to purchase household supplies. When asked what kinds of things she buys when she gets paid, she listed "soaps, body lotions, relish, and also maize meal".

Like employment salaries, *malamatwa* income is used by some women to purchase household necessities. A Devil's Claw harvester explained that while she finds harvesting difficult, the money she earns from it makes it worth the struggle. She is an older women, entitled to a government pension. Consequently, her *malamatwa* income is surplus money that she can direct to her extended family or convert to household-level physical assets. She claims to buy clothes for her grandchildren, food, and sometimes cattle. When asked to explain how her views about her own abilities have changed since she started harvesting *malamatwa*, she explained:

> With digging the *malamatwa*, I see that that is again a good idea because the Conservancy are the one who got that project and told people in the Conservancy to do. Then it's like when you are from digging the *malamatwa*, you are very tired but at the end you earn money from there. And then you end up buying something for you to eat like that.
> > *Interviewer: So what does your household do with the money you earn from digging* malamatwa?
> As you can see, we are now elderly people. We have nothing to use that money for, but sometimes you can just end up buying clothes for our granddaughters and sons, and also for ourselves. And then sometimes we buy food for us to eat. But if you earn more, you get more money from there, then you sometimes you can either buy cattle… something like that.

Income does not always go to purchase physical assets, as it can be used to pay for needed services, business ventures, or burials. One woman explained that she had been saving her *malamatwa* income, but then the sudden death of her son meant she needed to use it for funeral costs. When asked what she buys with the money from *malamatwa*, she explained:

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That's why I'm saying when I… the little I got, I just kept it aside so that I can add. But unfortunately my son passed away, then I just used that money for the burial and for food because there were many people who came to visit.

Another woman claimed that *malamatwa* income has helped her by giving her enough money to start a business. When asked what she usually earned from selling *malamatwa*, she identified the amount and then described the importance of the income, saying:

Then from there, when I sold those *malamatwa*, I got money from there. Then that money really helped me much. Let me say, in these times when you are not yet in the farming, even though we are already in the farming time, but if I was not farming now I could be there digging *malamatwa* most of my time. Then if I go up to ten big sacks, then it could be better because when you get money, that money will really help you if you know how to use it wisely. Yes, I can even start a business from there.

Craft-based income has also been used to help supply households with material resources, although some women interpreted the income to be small. For example, one respondent explained that she made and sold traditional wallets for three years. She added that it provided only a small amount of money for household supplies, saying, "I used to get a little for soap". When another craft-maker was asked what she did with the money she earned, she replied, "There is nothing. I only use that money for when I get, I just buy relish. When I get, I just buy maize meal. That's all I use it for". She believes that her crafts income is too small to purchase anything other than food items like maize meal and relish.

While craft income may only provide relatively little purchasing power, the food it purchases can mean a meal for household members. When another crafter was asked what she liked about her job, she said, "What I usually like from there is… because I usually make some other crafts which I usually take there at the craft center. So at the end of the month, I always get some little amounts which I usually use to feed my family with". She then added, "The other

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thing which I usually do is I use that money for paying for my children's school fees". Her responses show that craft income is sometimes used to purchase food, basic supplies, and to pay school fees.

While the previous respondents viewed their craft income to be relatively small, another crafter viewed it differently. She explained that not only does she use her income to pay school fees, but she has money left over for other uses. When asked how she first became involved in selling crafts, she replied:

> How I firstly started participating is, because I've got school children, I need to... I decided to start making crafts by selling. After making them, then I sell to people. Then I pay for my school children. Later on, I decide with the money left, how to use it.

Respondents applied different meanings to the craft income opportunities created by the Conservancy. Views ranged from interpreting crafts programs as a tangible benefit to perceiving limitations posed by declining tourism dollars. Some respondents believe the Conservancy's craft activities have created opportunities for women to benefit from their natural resources.

When another respondent was asked how women's access to income has changed as a result of the Conservancy, the respondent also drew attention to craft-making and selling. She believes that prior to the Conservancy, women could make crafts but not sell them for cash. Now, she claimed, Mashi facilitates craft sales and allows hardworking people to convert natural resources into monthly income. From her perspective, natural resources were wasted, essentially left to decompose in the forest prior to the Conservancy. She said:

Because before the conservancies, those natural resources, they were just lying there and being eaten by ants. But nothing will come out. That [*unclear*] trees when a person will pick it and makes it very nice, he will get something out of it. But long time back, people who [made crafts], even if they can make, where can they sell it? Now they have the open market at Mashi where they can sell it. They can get money every month. If they are hardworking, they are making money every month compared to the past days.

While the previous responses show that some women believe crafts can offer women a significant source of money, the following set of responses offer a less optimistic view of craft-based income potential. They show that some women believe craft income to be minimal and declining. For example, the following respondent began selling her crafts at Mashi in 2000. When asked what it is like to sell her crafts at Mashi, she replied:

We still usually get money from there, but it's not so much because those tourists who used to buy things from there, they are no longer buying them as they used to buy at first. Now it takes so long for our things to be bought.

Her characterization of Mashi Craft income as "not so much" probably explains why she now sells her crafts in another area of the Caprivi as well. When asked why she thought tourists were buying fewer crafts than they used to buy, she replied that she did not know the reason.

The previous respondent is not alone in her belief that Mashi-based craft income is little and declining. One woman who claimed to have sold crafts for three years said that she still makes crafts, "…but it's only that they are not well bought every time", while a third respondent claimed that the crafts she takes to Mashi Craft Market "…can almost take a year without being bought". Finally, another woman claimed that she stopped selling at Mashi Craft Market because the buyers were so few. When asked why she was no longer selling bags at Mashi Craft, she replied:

Even when you take that bag to Mashi Crafts, it will remain even two years, three years, without getting the money. That's why I'm saying that we are facing this financial problems.

>*Interviewer: So is it because the tourists aren't buying the bags? Is that why?*

The tourists that are buying the bags, they are few. They are few in number.

Experiencing lengthy wait periods before earning craft income has limited its perceived profitability, so much so that the previous respondent termed it a "financial problem". Women's perceptions that craft income is low are supported by comparisons between Conservancy staff salaries and craft incomes. Women may believe it is not worth their time and effort to make crafts when they may have to wait over a year to see any profit, and when the profit is small compared to cash from government social grants and Conservancy salaries.

While some respondents viewed craft income as relatively "little" in quantity, most respondents viewed dividends as being so small they were "nothing". For example, when one woman was asked whether she had ever received anything from the Conservancy, money or meat, she replied:

> It's almost two years now. Almost two years back, the Conservancy people used to distribute money. Yes, we got that. It was almost around 50 dollars. Then again, it dropped up to 30 dollars. So with the thirty dollars, what can a person use it for? Nothing.

In her eyes, N$ 30 provides little purchasing power. She claimed that there was "nothing" she could buy with those amounts of money. A second respondent made a very similar assertion, saying, "They gave that 30 to me, then I shared it with my husband. There is

nothing which we bought from it – only Surf[17] and soap because it was not enough". Both

respondents believe that the dividend(s) amount(s) rendered it virtually useless.

9.1.1 Control over income

While most respondents indicated that their income went primarily to meeting

subsistence needs, earning income does not guarantee its control. Husbands or relatives may

divert income away from a female earner. For example, one female employee stated that her

husband decides how to use her Conservancy earnings, although it is unknown whether or not

his decisions aligned with her interests. However, most female employees indicated they do

control their cash income. For example, when one employee was asked whether it was she or

someone else who decides what to do with her pay, she claimed, "It's me, because it's mine".

Similarly, when asked what happens to the money women get from crafts, a key

informant explained that while most women get to keep their earnings, some of them lose the

money to their husband. The informant explained that women who keep the money usually use

it for household goods and school expenses, saying:

> Most of them, they… they were able to keep the money. But only the few, those
> ones who got stubborn husbands, they could grab the money away from them
> and they cannot buy before the husband sees the money. But most of the time,
> they could keep their money. They use money for household things and most of
> the thing it was school fund and school uniform for the children.

Interestingly, the perceived uselessness of the dividend amount may increase women's

control over it. The relatively low dividend amount may have propelled a male key informant to

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[17] Surf is a brand of clothes-washing powder.

pass his household's dividend to his wife. When asked who in his household decided how to use

the dividend, he replied:

> My wife.
> > *Interviewer: Your wife?*
> Yeah. Because it was... well, it was too small, so she could just say, "Yeah. Well, let's just go and buy relish". (He laughs.) So she decided to buy relish. (He laughs.)

The limited purchasing power enabled his wife to gain control over the dividend and use

it to purchase meat or fish ("relish") for the family's dinner. Experience in the region suggests

that N$ 30 would purchase enough relish for one or two meals.

In response to concerns about income control, the Conservancy has advocated that

Devil's Claw purchasers pay money directly to female harvesters, rather than to women's

husbands. The Conservancy has insisted that women use their own names when registering as

harvesters in order to ensure that the actual harvester receives the money. When a key

informant was asked why it is important that women work as Forest Rangers, he replied:

> .... If you talk about Devil's Claw, [women] are the people who are harvesting the Devil's Claw. And at least nowadays, we are also ensuring that they directly get the money instead of using their husbands' names for getting money. So we normally pay directly to them. We tell the buyers to pay the money directly to the women, not to the husbands.

Men's culturally-prescribed role as household head places men as household owner and

decision-maker, at times constraining women's decision-making power and control over

household resources. While the Conservancy has made inroads with directing control over

personal income to the actual earner, they cannot direct negotiations within households. Most

respondents indicated they controlled their own earnings, but one respondent claimed that her

earnings are controlled by her husband. Despite the potential for loss of income control,

numerous respondents indicated that they were able to use their increased levels of cash to support their material subsistence needs and to fulfill social obligations.

9.2 Impacts of income-generation activities on socially-constructed gender roles and responsibilities

By increasing women's access to basic material goods and services, cash outputs from Conservancy employment assist female employees to negotiate gender-based livelihood barriers. In 2010, over half of Kwandu Conservancy's female employees were unmarried. Given that rigid gender roles designate field clearing, plowing, and house-frame construction as male-only activities, unmarried women with limited cash have a reduced ability to meet these needs. Conservancy employment provides cash needed to hire male laborers to complete tasks socially prescribed to men. When one unmarried woman was asked what difference she has experienced since she gained Conservancy employment, she explained that she can now afford material goods and hire men to complete tasks normally expected of a husband. She said:

> Now I am being able to buy something like salt because lately when I was not employed I could not afford to buy that. Since I'm not married it's now easy. I can tell someone to build for me a house and pay that person. Now again I can still tell a person to prepare my farm and I pay that person. That is the difference from when I got that job.

Similarly, another Conservancy employee highlighted that she uses her income for basic material goods and to hire home builders. When asked how she uses her income, she replied:

> I use the money for people to work for me in the fields. I use the money for people to build for me my house. And also here in the household, I use that money for my kids to buy clothes and to get food.

In providing income-generation opportunities, the Conservancy provides participants not only with a increased access to cash, but with the ability to overcome some of the socio-cultural constraints imposed on them as women.

9.3   Impacts of income-generation activities on social support

Income-generation opportunities introduced or supported by the Conservancy influence women's abilities to gain social support. First, the act of gathering reeds and/or grasses in groups reinforces social ties between women. Second, Conservancy gatherings provide women with opportunities to give each other intellectual and emotional support. Third, Conservancy employment not only brings opportunities for informal conversations with supportive women, but it can enhance the belief that one is supported by the community. Fourth, and on the negative side, employment may increase social tensions in the community by triggering jealousy.

9.3.1   Collective natural resource harvesting

Women claimed to support each other by harvesting natural resources collectively. When asked how the Conservancy has influenced their ability to connect with women and gain help or support from other women, respondents mentioned collectively harvesting reeds and/or grasses. For example, one woman stated, "There is no way we help each other. But we only used to go out together and cut reeds, cut grass. Then we sell to survive. That's all I know". She equated natural resource collection with mutual support and subsistence.

Harvesting in groups fosters protection from wild animals and human assault and increases women's opportunities to attract buyers for their forest products. When asked how

women help each other in the region, a key informant cited cooperative harvesting, as shown in the following excerpt:

> … And most of all is that they also work as a group when they go out. You know, this is a very dangerous area in terms of dangerous snakes, lions, and things like that. So they regroup when they are, for example, going to Devil's Claw, to thatching grass, so they work in groups for protection and also for impact in terms of getting enough of that resource to attract a customer. So they work like in cooperatives, you know, although not registered. But they work like in the form of cooperatives. So they really support each other, and I think that's where their strength is. And this is where they make those decisions is women-to-women. You know, they don't consult men for that, they just say… I will phrase, my wife will not consult me if she wants to give money out to somebody, especially if it came from her own income. She will just say, "I gave out 200 dollars to _____ or to somebody else". So they really support each other. And that is really very… their strength is in supporting themselves.

The previous excerpts suggest that if permit requirements curtail women's harvesting practices, as some woman have claimed (see Chapter 8), the Conservancy would actually be removing some of women's autonomy from men. Not only would a significant cash source for women be blocked, but women would have to seek permission to do an activity that has traditionally been considered their own. Consequently, when women perceive their gathering efforts to be blocked by permit requirements, they believe the Conservancy to be limiting the amount of support they can glean from others. For example, when asked whether the Conservancy has in any way affected how women give each other support or help, one woman identified harvest restrictions, saying:

> There are many things which the Conservancy doesn't… or whereby it's affecting us. You'll find that most women are not allowed to go in the forest to cut reeds, to cut grass.

In short, women perceive natural resources gathering to be a key form of social support

in their lives. While in one sense social support is needed to harvest, the action of harvesting

with other women itself fosters a sense of being supported by one's fellow women. Thus, in

providing opportunities for natural resource gathering and sales, the Conservancy reinforces

support between women. However, when the Conservancy is perceived to limit harvests,

women view it as preventing them from supporting each other.

9.3.2 Conservancy meetings

Conservancy meetings provide women with opportunities to exchange information, gain

awareness, and build a support network among other working women. Formal Conservancy

gatherings for employees and Conservancy partners are periodically held at the Conservancy

office, Mashi Craft Market, and other locations. Respondents described informal conversations

between women that occurred at the sites of formal meetings but outside the hours of formal

presentations. Such side conversations provide a means for women to offer and obtain advice

about sensitive and important issues. For example, when asked to give an example of a time

when women shared experiences with each other, a key informant described a quarterly

planning meeting where women offered marital guidance to a troubled employee. The meeting

brought a group of women together from different backgrounds and levels of experience,

facilitating an informal exchange about women's human rights. The exchange gave the

employee options for coping with domestic violence, as shown in the following excerpt:

> Like during, you know, Quarterly Planning Meetings where all conservancy and
> IRDNC staff meet. You know, lot is being discussed. So you'll find a group of
> women. You know, they… they do discuss. There's one… There's one lady, she
> was being, you know, I would say harassed or... by her husband. And then it was
> that time we had that meeting with LAC [the Legal Assistance Centre], that
> workshop. And then we touched that… that issue. And then we spoke. We… just

general, but… And then next time when I met her, she said there's an improvement in her marriage. And yeah. And then I encouraged her, "Just come grab some books. We have some small booklets. And then give to, you know, other women. And then you can share. Then you will know your rights. You'll know when you are being mistreated, where to go, how to start, and, you know, all those things". Yeah.

> *Interviewer: Was this a woman from a conservancy?*

Yeah.

> *Interviewer: And did she go to LAC, or was it-*

No, just in the office. I mean, you know we attend a Quarterly Planning, and now she was not at… And when we were discussing, you know, she brought up, she just voiced out and said, "I'm, like you know, being mistreated by my husband and all those". And then I explained. I said, "You know we have been to… you know we had a workshop, you know, regarding women, you know, marriages and all those, mistreatment of… you know". And then I explained the, you know, the procedures. If somebody, you know, hurts you, where do you go and how do you handle this issue and all those. Yeah, it worked.

Informal sharing human rights information is one of many ways women offer support to each other while participating in Conservancy activities.

9.3.3 Conservancy employment

Conservancy employment not only brings opportunities for informal conversations with supportive women, but it can enhance the belief that one is supported by the community. The following excerpt is from a woman who describes the positive experience of recently being selected for a Conservancy position. When asked how it made her feel to be chosen for a position, she said:

> I felt good because this meant to me that I was also a special person to the community. That's why they chose me. Then I decided that this is going to be good so that I can take people's opinions and ideas.

Her response indicates a level of pride in being selected by the community, as she sees herself as a "special person to the community". She also implies that she feels a sense of

importance in her role as communicator, being both supporter and supported in her community.

9.3.4 Employment may increase social tensions in the community

As with many income-generating activities, there is no simple 'it is good' or 'it is bad' dichotomy for labeling the affects of employment on women's social support. While Conservancy employment can boost feelings of social support, it can degrade them as well. As described in Chapter 7, the Conservancy employs only a small fraction of the total residents in Kwandu. This limitation fuels jealousy from people who claim that the Conservancy only benefits a select few. Jealousy may in turn erode social support for Conservancy employees and their families.

Interviews with Conservancy employees show that they experience jealousy from other Conservancy residents, and that the jealousy is based on their employment status. When asked whether she experienced jealousy in her life, one employee replied, "You can see that other people are jealous, especially those who didn't want us to be [Conservancy employees]".

When asked if she worries about people being jealous of her having a job, another employee replied: "To my side, yes, when I was starting". Jealousy produces fear in the Kwandu area because it is believed to fuel witchcraft and detrimentally impact the material world. When asked what happens when people are jealous, a respondent said, "Oh, something can come". When asked what can come, she replied, "Witching". She then explained that witching can kill people, meaning that jealousy is perceived to cause death.

Conservancy employment may amplify tensions between people, leaving female employees feeling at odds with community or household members. The following excerpt shows that employment not only brings jealousy, but it exposes employees to hostility from Conservancy residents. Employees are the embodiment of Conservancy policies, so they are sometimes the target of people's anger at the Conservancy as a whole. The following respondent indicated that in the course of her duties, she must listen to complaints from angry residents about the Conservancy's policies and impacts. When asked what it is like to work with community members as an employee of the Conservancy, the respondent said:

> People complain much, especially this time of the year. You'll find that other people will complain that "You see! The elephant trampled my fields." Others will either insult you. Others may say, "I will give you all my children so that you can take care of them". So there are many things which people say on us.
>> *Interviewer: Sounds very difficult. When people say, "I'll give you all my children so you can take care of them", what does… what do they mean by that?*
> They say since their fields have been trampled, they say they will not manage to take care… to feed their families. So they are saying those people who are working there at the office should take those children so that they feed them because with them, they don't have enough to give them.

In conclusion, female Conservancy employees at times face expressions of anger and jealousy from Conservancy residents. Social support implies an absence, or at least a minimum level, of these types of interactions. Therefore Conservancy employment may make it a little more difficult for women to build or maintain supportive relationships with some community members. However, the potential for jealousy should be interpreted in light of the potential networks of support the Conservancy can build between female employees and some Conservancy residents.

9.4   Impacts on perceptions of control over one's own life

Participation in income-generating activities can increase women's confidence and heighten a sense of control over their own lives. Gaining skills and knowledge as a Conservancy employee can enhance women's feelings of control over their lives. On the other hand, Conservancy employment can increase stress and social tensions, and even expose some female employees to physical risk, making employment tasks "scary" at times.

Gaining skills and knowledge as a Conservancy employee can enhance women's feelings of control over their lives. This point was highlighted in an exchange between the interviewer and a Conservancy employee. The following respondent explained that while the Conservancy gave her a monthly paycheck, it most importantly provided her with the knowledge of how to make money so that she could earn a livelihood, with or without Conservancy employment. When asked how the way she saw herself changed as a result of becoming involved in the Conservancy, she replied:

> I just saw that from now when I left from working in the Conservancy, I just gained knowledge from there.
> *Interviewer: And what kind of knowledge did you gain?*
> When I was working in the Conservancy, I could only get money by when I [do Conservancy work]. But for this time, I have knowledge that I can also still make money before end of the months.
> *Interviewer: So you learned that from the Conservancy?*
> By that time I could only depend on the Conservancy salary. But when I came and then I'm in the village, I now know how to decide on my own how can I get money before the end of the months, how can I survive, all those.

The respondent highlighted that she gained knowledge from the Conservancy, so much so that she now has the ability to decide how she can next get money. She is no longer dependent on one source of income because she has control over her own livelihood.

Community-based sources of income give women the ability to remain in their home communities where they can exercise more control over their own lives. Staying in one's community can facilitate a broader range of livelihood options. The Kwandu area affords female employees with opportunities to farm, collect reeds and grass for home use and sale, to collect wild fruits and vegetables, and to catch fish, in addition to earning cash through KC employment. One woman conveyed that KC employment thereby indirectly frees her from depending on men for her livelihood. The multiple livelihood options keep her, she said, from "going in the wrong way". When asked how her views of herself have changed as a result of being part of the Conservancy, she replied:

> Now I am happy in working Conservancy and I'm always trying to encourage the women to… in order to support their children. And I'm always trying to say that "In this way which I'm always doing working in Conservancy is best for me". Because when I stay home, I'm always going in the wrong way.
>> *Interviewer: Can you tell me more about that – "going in the wrong way"?*
> When I'm going in the wrong way, to stay in village from morning to sunset without doing anything. I'm having some friends which is always drinking some beers and going outside the… outside the village to the town. And that life, me I don't like it. My life which I like, I like to stay home and plow field and doing some jobs like making some bundles of grass and this reeds and sell to get money. Not to going in town, sitting doing nothing there.
>> *Interviewer: What makes you different from the people who do like to sit and do nothing and go into town?*
> The difference between me which is I'm always living home and that is always living town is that that woman who is doing in town, there is not protecting themselves. Because they are always planning that "In which way could I get food? Unless to get a boyfriend in this town". But at home, you think about "Can I make some means to get food? Can I go to the river to get some grass? Other one, maybe he or she, he can buy it and give me a small amount. I could buy that… that something which I need to solve my problem".

While employment can enhance feelings of control over one's life, it also brings its own set of problems. Female employees may have to face physical risk and difficult social

circumstances in order to complete their work duties. For example, one female employee acknowledged that her employment duties can create fear. When asked if she is afraid of wildlife, she said, "It's scary, but even a man can also be scared of wild animals. But things have got their own time. Everything has got its time". When asked the question again in a follow-up interview, she said, "Yes. I was even scared because when we were in the forest, we were not even having a gun". Her responses suggest that while she faces frightening circumstances in the course of fulfilling her responsibilities, she does not let it deter her from employment. She believes that men must also face dangerous wild animals and that fear of animals is no reason to prevent women from working in the Conservancy, arguing that women's work opportunities "have got their own time". Her second response suggests that providing female employees with guns for personal protection would enhance their feelings of safety and personal control.

9.5   Impacts on access to land and natural resources

By providing income-generation opportunities, the Conservancy positively impacts women's access to natural resources. Accessing cash income in the Conservancy gives some women the ability to stay in a place where they can choose from a diverse set of livelihood options. In a communal area, women can access all the natural resources customarily designated to them, as opposed to living in a city where they would have greater reliance on cash. Residence in a communal area can translate into increased food security for cash-strapped individuals, as women reported harvesting numerous wild foods. Increased livelihood options and food security can in turn reduce physical and emotional dependence on men, as

indicated in the previous section. This point was illustrated in the previous section when the respondent claimed that multiple livelihood options keep her from "going in the wrong way".

9.6   Impacts on education

As indicated in the section on social support, women learn from each other in Conservancy settings, sharing and acquiring valuable knowledge about their rights and options in relationships. The informal transfer of human rights information is one of many ways women learn through Conservancy employment. Skill development, general knowledge, and positive experiences with new places, people, and animals also add to their repertoire and increase the power they can exert over future employment opportunities.

While the Conservancy offers some women skills training so that they can access income-related benefits, income-generating programs themselves can provide existing participants with educational opportunities. Employees can be trained with transferable skills to equip them to be Treasurers, Managers, Secretaries, Game Guards, and Enterprise Officers, among other positions. Not surprisingly then, respondents identified numerous types of skills-trainings offered to Conservancy employees, including financial management, bookkeeping, note-taking, contract negotiation skills, enterprise development, beekeeping, and fire management.

Respondents also identified the centrality of general knowledge, experience, and exposure to new ideas and situations as motivation for working for the Conservancy. For example, when one woman was asked what makes her different than other people, she replied:

> I got interested. It's because I realized there were many very important things to learn [as a Conservancy employee]. That's why I decided so.... Again, I decided

not to just stay in the village doing nothing while there were things that needs people to participate in. That's why I decided also no to just being seated in the village. So I joined the group.

> *Interviewer: You said that there are some very important things one can learn from the Conservancy. Can you give me some examples of that?*

The most important thing which I have just learned is there are many different animals which the Conservancy has to take care of which are very important. .... Again, I have learned that sometimes when there is a tour in the Conservancy, you can also visit other places which you haven't yet seen and seeing other different types of animals there. I think that's all.

Her comment suggests that she pursued Conservancy employment because she saw it provided a way to learn "very many important things". It has exposed her to new animals and places she had not seen previously. She also sees employment as a way to actively involve herself in work that needs to be completed, implying she feels pride in her ability to care for animals that she finds both interesting and valuable.

Another employee conveyed the importance of learning when she was asked what she most liked about being a Conservancy employee. She too claimed to have involved herself in Conservancy work in order to learn, saying, "I got interested in [being an employee] because I came to know the Conservancy. While I was just in the village here I could not know other things". Her comment suggests that she finds employment valuable because it exposes her to knowledge and new ideas.

Similarly, another female employee explained that she values Conservancy employment for its education about wildlife. She emphasized that the Conservancy links its employees with training from external institutions like the Ministry of Environment and Tourism and IRDNC who have educated employees on wildlife and money management, respectively. When asked what she liked most about her job in the Conservancy, she replied:

What I like most about [being a Conservancy employee] is they educate us how to take care of our wild animals and also how to use money.
> Interviewer: And who educates you on those things?

People from the Ministry.
> Interviewer: The Ministry of Environment and Tourism?

Yes. And also the IRDNC, concerning money.

A key informant equated Conservancy employment with university-level education, claiming that Kwandu Conservancy offers free education to people who otherwise cannot afford to attend university. When asked what attracted him to work for the Conservancy, he claimed that the desire to know more about tourism propelled him. Like the previous respondent, he also credited IRDNC with some of the learning experienced offered by the Conservancy, saying:

.... Again, what attracted me to work in the Conservancy is that I wanted to know more about tourism. It could be a difficult issue to my side to know about tourism unless I could qualify whether have to do 25 points to go and study tourism at Polytechnical University. But when the Conservancy came, really, everything was given free of charge to the community members. Now I know more about tourism, rather than someone who is a student at the University of Namibia without a working experience, because we have some facilitators, this IRDNC. ....

Finally, a female employee emphasized that travelling on behalf of the Conservancy has exposed her to new places and people. In response to a question about what new skills she has learned since working for the Conservancy, she cited social skills and public speaking, and then added:

I even learned… I've even gone and seen some different countries.
> Interviewer: What other countries?

Like exchange visits to Zimbabwe and Zambia, yes. It is better.
> Interviewer: What did you like about those visits?

I loved it very much because we were just only going to see what are they doing there, what difficulties, whatever, what good things are they making. Yeah.

Education through new experiences, places, people, wildlife, and skills-training are

valuable to Conservancy employees. The previous respondent used the word "love" to describe how she felt about some the work experiences that have brought her learning. It is clear that women who are able to gain Conservancy employment have the potential to expand their knowledge of the world and to gain valuable skills.

9.7   Impacts on health

There are three key ways that Conservancy involvement boosts women's abilities to negotiate health concerns. First, the Conservancy provides flexible work conditions to employees, allowing them time to recover from illness. Second, cash earned from Conservancy-related activities can be used to pay for medical expenses. Third, the Conservancy system supports HIV/AIDS prevention and care education, giving participants and general residents tools for living healthier lives.

The Conservancy accommodates employees suffering from illness so that the employee can retain his/her job. Conservancy records and personal observation indicate several instances in which a relative was allowed to work several months on behalf of a sick family member. For example, in 2010, a woman served as Game Guard for several months on behalf of her employed brother (Kwandu Conservancy financial records). Her brother then resumed work again after he regained health. Allowing family members to work on a sick employee's behalf can serve to direct cash income to the same household, ensuring a steady flow of money that can be used to pay medical expenses.

Other types of income-generating activities provide cash that can be used for medical expenses. As explored in section 6.2.2, illness can require significant expenditures, with cash

payments required for taxi services, accommodation, and food in Katima Mulilo. Cash earned

through the Conservancy's income-generating activities can therefore assist in meeting

healthcare expenses. One respondent commented that medical expenses are a way that craft

makers, for example, use their income. She said, "People like craft makers, they use their

money which they found from craft to pay school funds for their kids, to pay clinics or hospital,

or to buy relish and even buy soaps. Because as you know that some people, they are not

working. So they used to use that money for that". Opportunities like crafts sales allow women

to have funds for medical expenses, as well as for material resources.

In addition to accommodating ill employees and providing cash income, the

Conservancy assists women to prevent and negotiate HIV/AIDS-related illnesses. Since 2003,

IRDNC has trained Peer Educators to communicate prevention techniques and treatment

strategies to general residents in Kwandu. Additionally, from 2007, IRDNC has trained

Conservancy staff to deliver behavior change communication, for example by explaining the

dangers of having multiple and concurrent sexual partners and of abusing alcohol and drugs.

Staff and Peer Educators are also trained to encourage people to get tested for HIV and to use

condoms. Additionally, Conservancy employees, like Game Guards who travel throughout the

Conservancy, are asked to distribute informative reading materials and condoms as they go

about their regular duties.

In this way, IRDNC has promoted the mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS prevention education

into Conservancy programs. Conservancy staff are supposed to speak about HIV/AIDS

prevention and treatment whenever they have a meeting. An informant explained that "even

the staff, whenever they go out, also have to say something. You find that a manager, if he has

a meeting, he has to talk something about HIV and AIDS. He knows what to say". For example, a key informant explained that CRM's are required to speak about HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention at craft-making workshops.

Some people interpret the cumulative results of ongoing education to be positive. When asked if people were changing their behaviors, a key informant described a "big change", saying:

> I think… I think there is a big change. I think people are changing their behaviors. People are really changing their behaviors. Because when you look at things like… Before I came here, I started with these people, especially the conservancies, stigma and discrimination was a very big issue. …. So the stigma and discrimination totally reduced to some extent that at least now people are very open with their status. People go for tests without… without even thinking like, "If I get positive, maybe I'll die". But from the beginning, people said "If I get this, then I'm going to die! If they find that I'm positive, then I'm going to die."

The informant believes that education has helped reduce stigma associated with HIV/AIDS because more people are being open about their HIV-status. What's more, the informant argues, people now believe that discovering they are HIV-positive is not a death sentence. Instead, they have the courage to face an HIV-test and make life-affirming choices whether the result is positive or negative.

9.8   Conclusions

Women who participate in the Conservancy's income-generation activities benefit in a variety of ways. Their access to cash increases, allowing them to purchase basic material goods and services. With increased access to cash, women can navigate gender role constraints by hiring male laborers. They may experience tangible evidence of social support by being selected to represent their community. They may also glean support from fellow women in conversation

and in the process of harvesting natural resources. Participation can also increase women's self-confidence and access to natural resources. Employment in the Conservancy can instill new skills and provide exposure to new people, places, and ideas, increasing women's awareness of their options as well as their abilities to obtain what they want. Finally, participation can improve women's access to health information and healthcare.

While women stand to benefit through participation, not all Conservancy income-generation activities are created equal. Some activities, like employment and *malamatwa* harvesting, provide more income potential and opportunities than others. The passively received dividends, small in quantity and rarely distributed, offer little in comparison the income, social support, and training opportunities provided through craft-making.

Participation in Conservancy activities can also exacerbate women's constraints, particularly by attracting jealousy and exposing women to physical risk. However, respondents who indicated experiencing these problems also indicated that they would continue participating in their respective activities, suggesting that the benefits of participation outweigh the costs.

Chapter 10 Discussion and Conclusions

In this dissertation, I posed three major research questions which guide this final chapter. First, I wanted to know how women in Kwandu define empowerment. Second, I sought to understand how female Kwandu Conservancy residents' awareness of existing power relations and knowledge of alternatives changed as a result of CBNRM, enacted through the Conservancy. Third, I wanted to know how female Conservancy residents' opportunities to exercise choice have changed as a result of CBNRM. In discussing my results, I refer directly to the conservation, development, and empowerment literature that formed these questions. In particular, I address how we can better understand: 1) what women want, need, and value; 2) empowerment across cultures; 3) the concept of awareness; 4) the concepts of choice and power; 5) constraints to women's empowerment; 6) and how to respond to claims about CBNRM's income-generating programs. In addressing the six themes of my discussion, I shift from interpreting women's statements in an effort to describe their shared wants, needs, and values, as I did in the results chapters, to critically interpreting the "real woman" construct itself. In short, I employ theory to deconstruct the "real woman" norm and expose its relationships to women's awareness and power. In the final two sections, I reflect on what the Kwandu case suggests are the relationships between CBNRM and other ICDPs, women's empowerment, income-generation, market integration, and social resilience. I then conclude this chapter by discussing the implications of my study for policy and practice, and by offering suggestions for further research.

10.1 Understanding what women want, need, and value: the "real woman" construct

I used the "real woman" construct because I wanted to honor a particular context and women's voices and viewpoints from that context. I have not used the construct to categorize or label women as 'better' or 'worse', but as a method for understanding shared gender roles and their associated values in the Kwandu context. I wanted to know, directly from women, what they want, need, and value and then convey that to a broader audience. I then employed the "real woman" construct as a lens for understanding and evaluating pre-existing constraints and Conservancy impacts. However, I have not yet employed theory to critically evaluate the construct itself. In this section, I deconstruct the norm and discuss its possibilities and limitations for women. In short, I show that there are tradeoffs to becoming a "real woman".

10.1.1 "Real women" and subsistence

As presented in Chapter 5, "real women" are believed to have five main characteristics. First, they have the ability to meet their households' material needs through socially-condoned cash-generating activities. Second, "real women" are educated. Third, they are hard-working. Fourth, they have harmonious relationships with community members, providing advice, encouragement, and material assistance to people outside their household. Fifth, they are wives and mothers who avoid taboo activities and who are able to provide men with enjoyable sexual experiences.

A close look at the "real woman" construct reveals several emphases. First, it emphasizes women's role as household provider, a finding that supports the literature. Second,

the construct emphasizes that women are embedded in and obligated to family and community. For example, "real women" are believed to provide advice and offer encouragement to community members and to refrain from quarreling. The very definition of a "real woman" conveys that women are judged and judge themselves by the quality of their relationships with other people, providing motivation for women to subordinate their concerns, for example, to avoid a quarrel.

Third, and most fundamental as it incorporates the previous two emphases, is the construct's emphasis on individual and community subsistence. "Real women" provide for basic material needs at the household and community levels, an ability they variably obtain through hard work, education, and marriage. The emphasis on meeting physiological needs underscores that women in Kwandu live in an area prone to food scarcity. Indeed, as section 6.2.1.1 illustrated, some households have too little food to guarantee three meals each day, especially during the months of December and January. A reliance on rain-fed agriculture means they are subject to losses from drought, insects, and wildlife crop damage. Food storage is not guaranteed either, as storage areas can be raided by wild animals.

The "real woman" construct suggests that many women in Kwandu are willing to set aside personal gains in exchange for the right to subsist at the household level. Women may find that marriage to a physically abusive or unfaithful husband is preferable to being unmarried if the husband dependably increases her and her children's access to food, cash, or property. I have shown that men in Kwandu mediate women's access to property and arable land, giving women greater access to food and cash. The migrant labor system and colonial

policies have given men in southern Africa greater access to cash than women, a situation that

persists in post-colonial Africa (Chanock 1991). Consequently, a woman's concerns over her

personal rights and relative decision-making power in a household likely rank lower than her

need for a dependable supply of basic material goods, a supply mediated by men, provided she

lives in a setting with a volatile food supply.

Given men's greater control over property and cash, it is not surprising that the

"patriarchal bargain" (Kandiyoti 1988), a tradeoff between autonomy and a subsistence

guarantee, is evident in the Kwandu case. Patriarchal structures in Kwandu dictate that

husbands provide women with access to land and protection in the fields, enabling women to

grow and consume food, *provided* women accept a lower status, relinquish decision-making

power within the household, cook, clean, and care for their husbands and their children, and

meet their husbands' sexual expectations.

In a situation where survival can be tenuous, women also seem willing to subordinate

some of their individual interests to patrons outside the household. They likely assume

responsibilities to their community in an effort to decrease risks to their subsistence and their

children's subsistence. Scott (1976:3) suggests that "forced generosity" and reciprocity help

reduce risk from sudden food shortages. The "real woman" construct sets forth a form of

"forced generosity" by equating respect with a woman's willingness to assist neighbors in need.

A woman will sacrifice some of her own produce in a time when she has more than enough,

believing that she can rely on the social mandate that other 'respected' women come to her aid

when she faces a food shortage.

At the community scale, women must also subordinate some of their interests to live peacefully with others. "Real women" do not fight or quarrel. This implies that women who have been 'wronged' may feel the need to tolerate some mistreatment by community members in order to earn respect. Women pay a price for a moral economy that offers the "right to subsist". The price for women in Kwandu is their subordination.

10.1.2 The "real woman" construct and women's dependency

While the "real woman" construct may be perceived to offer women a path to security from starvation, it also reinforces women's dependency on men. The "real woman" norm redirects women's power to men by making women dependent upon men's behavior. "Real women" are expected to be married and to have children, a condition that directly depends on male participation. Interview data showed that women are blamed when their husbands are unfaithful and divorce them. Similarly, women are blamed when they leave an abusive husband to return to their natal families. Unmarried women are viewed as risks to the community, as promiscuous and a threat to married women. In short, women are portrayed as the causes of marital problems, whether it is their own marriages or others'. Women thus directly depend on men to earn social respect.

The price of dependency is high for women. Dependency can increase women's risk for physical injury and emotional pain as women feel forced to tolerate abuse. Expectations for women to sexually provide men with pleasure, on men's own terms, can increase women's risk for sexually-transmitted diseases (Jewkes *et al.* 2010; Edwards 2007; Thomas 2007). When women flout sexual taboos by engaging in sex work, whether out of necessity or choice, they

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are maligned by the community and not viewed as "real women". These expectations for women create a vicious cycle in which women are expected to tolerate abuse and subject themselves to risk of disease in order to gain and maintain social acceptance. In the process, they may contract HIV/AIDS or another illness that limits their ability to work hard and provide for their family, creating even more dependence on men, social esteem, and community, reinforcing a negative cycle.

10.1.3 Contesting dependency and redefining "real women"

While my data showed that there are five core aspects to a "real woman", ideas about what constitutes a "real woman" were not uniformly shared in Kwandu. Most notably, a few women contested the notion that "real women" must be married, supporting literature that contends "culture" is dynamic and changing (Sharp et al. 2003). The respondents asserted that single women could earn respect, as long as they earned a dependable livelihood for their households.

The contested importance of marriage in Kwandu lends support to Kandiyoti's (1988) finding that social and economic transformations lead to a questioning of implicit assumptions behind male and female arrangements. Social changes have likely offered new options and new ways of thinking, contributing to what may eventually be a reformulation of the "real woman" construct. Changes in power relations have emerged as the Kwandu area has steadily integrated into the market economy, enhancing women's access to employment. Girls' access to education has prepared more women to win jobs and gain more decision-making power in their relationships. Post-independence legislation has offered countercultural messages about

women's equality and marital rights, challenging ideas within the "real woman" paradigm. Increasing contact with people from outside the area, whether through migration or development interventions has spread awareness of alternative gender relationships.

Dependable income offers women a way to increase their bargaining position within the "patriarchal bargain". Employment gives women power to choose or leave a marriage, freeing them from a state of dependency on men for a subsistence guarantee. While single women may feel they must sacrifice some social standing, employment offers them a way to reduce the stigma of being single. Dependable income can thus turn the cycle of dependency on its head, creating a way for "real women" to provide for their households and fellow community members, to work hard, to choose a marriage in which they do not feel required to tolerate abuse, or to forgo marriage altogether.

10.2 Understanding empowerment across cultures

While the "real woman" notion and similar constructs can serve as tools for evaluating program impacts and listening to and amplifying women's voices, I do not equate progress to becoming a "real woman" with empowerment. As I described in the previous section, the construct itself can foster dependency, a disempowering process for women, by subordinating their individual rights and interests to men and community. While community norms entitle women to a subsistence trade-off, women in Kwandu may have to sacrifice their health and safety over the long-term to gain basic material goods. Nonetheless, women's wants, needs, and values should be given great consideration and can be understood to represent their positions within a particular socio-economic environment.

Empowerment theories that neglect the trade-offs required for subsistence may not adequately meet or predict women's needs in societies that face food shortages. There is a need to recognize that empowerment in food-insecure contexts may entail different processes of change and tradeoffs than empowerment in food-secure settings. This implies there is no single path to empowerment across settings. Conceptualizations of empowerment that rely on cross-cultural indicators, for instance the United Nations Development Programme's Gender-related Development Index and the Gender Empowerment Measure, may fail to adequately capture empowerment processes that occur in different contexts, particularly areas with varying levels of food security.

The Kwandu case suggests a need for definitional flexibility, for a conceptualization of empowerment that reflects that women have different areas in which they can exercise power, depending on local context. The case supports Cornish's (2006: 304-5) observation that empowerment should be understood "…in a way that allows for people to be empowered in one domain at the same time that they are disempowered in another". Women in Kwandu who lack enough education to access dependable employment can still gain power, for example, by cultivating trusting relationships with other women who will provide advice and assistance when needed.

The Kwandu case also indicates a need for a definition of empowerment that accommodates women's different priorities. Women in Kwandu emphasized the importance of building and maintaining rapport with their community, as indicated by the construct's emphasis on "real women" as being people who cultivate harmonious relationships with

community members, and who provide advice, encouragement, and material assistance to people in their community. This supports researchers (i.e. Agot 2008; Jewell 2007) who claim that in collectivist cultures women conceptualize empowerment as occurring in relationship with others, as opposed to something that produces change for an individual. A definition that incorporates women's to gains in power in one or more domains can incorporate women's different priorities.

Given the need for flexibly incorporating women's different priorities and local context, how does one define empowerment across cultures? My research supports the definition and conceptualization of empowerment that I developed from empowerment literature in Chapters 2 and 3. Empowerment can be viewed as having multiple pathways when it is defined as the movement from oppression to liberation, a process whereby a person's awareness of alternative gendered power relations and ability to exercise choice (power) are enhanced. Not only can one's empowerment grow through a combination of enhanced awareness and or power, but power can be enhanced in different ways.

As I discussed in Chapter 2, Mayoux (1998) and other theorists (to varying degrees) (Kabeer 2005 & 1999; Mosedale 2005; Charmes & Weiringa 2003; Mayoux 1998; Rowlands 1997; Nelson & Wright 1995) posit that there are four domains of power: *power to, power with, power over,* and *power within*. By conceptualizing power as multifaceted, women can prioritize areas of importance to them (i.e. community connectedness) and gain power in only one domain (i.e. *power with*), while having relatively little power in another, and still be viewed as experiencing empowerment.

My research produced evidence supporting the theory that there are four different types of power. For example, the Kwandu case showed that employment can transcend cash income and serve as an important empowerment pathway. Kwandu employees gained training and skills (*power to*), self-confidence (*power within)*, community rapport (*power with*), and exposure to new people, places, and ideas, all of which expanded their overall power *regardless* of the control they could exert over their earnings *(power over)*.

My definition of empowerment both accommodates and expands beyond the more specific notion of progress to becoming a "real woman". Several criteria for becoming a real woman can be viewed as an expansion of choices. For example, gaining an education can give women more employment options and provide her with an ability to choose a healthier lifestyle. Gaining dependable income and being able to provide for her household can increase her power over the quality of food she acquires and the level of education she can provide for her children.

While the "real woman" construct emphasizes expanding choices (or power) towards meeting subsistence needs, my definition of empowerment encompasses wants and needs that transcend subsistence, wants and needs like self-actualization. At the same time, my definition suggests that to be more empowered, women would gain awareness of limitations imposed by unexamined values like the ones embodied in the "real woman" construct. Consequently, empowerment in Kwandu might ultimately mean finding ways to reject disempowering gender norms like the belief that women should be judged by the quality of their marriages. My definition of empowerment does not require that women question the values embodied in the "real woman" construct, since women can expand power in other domains. However, it does

suggest that when women have more incentive to contest the unbalanced terms of agreement between men and women in their society, they will experience a growth in power. Plus, it suggests that recognizing alternative gender relations will amplify positive changes in power.

10.3 Conceptualizing awareness

Scholars like Freire, Foucault, Bourdieu have asserted that women have been blinded by dominant belief systems that favor the powerful, leaving women with low levels of awareness of oppressive systems. Bourdieu contends that social structures are seen "...as a self-evident and natural order which goes without saying and therefore goes unquestioned…" (Bourdieu 1994:161). My research offers qualified support for Bourdieu's assertion. The Kwandu case showed that some women did not question nor even perceive unfair discrimination in the imbalanced male-female employment ratio (see Chapter 8). They had not questioned men's right to dominate Conservancy employment. On the other hand, some women did express disdain for what they believed to be unjustifiable employment practices. The results suggest that there are limits to the power of dominant regimes, like men in highly patriarchal societies, to fully suppress awareness of alternative relations between genders. Especially in areas like Kwandu that receive information about contrasting social norms through television, radio, migrant labor, and tourist influx, alternative options to the 'natural order' will likely continue to grow. Empowerment should, however, work to undo the "negative social constructions" (Rowlands 1995), like the belief that women's supposed inferiority justifies male-biased employment practices, beliefs that persist among some women in Kwandu.

10.4 Conceptualizing choice/power

As discussed in the previous sections, the Kwandu case lends support to the theory that power is multi-dimensional, as illustrated by the four types of power. The case also lends support to theorists who contend that power is not equally shared within communities (eg. Gupta & Yesudian 2006). Men as a whole have more power than women in Kwandu. Men exercise more control over access to land (section 6.1.2) and have more access to employment opportunities (section 6.1.3.2). They also have more decision-making authority at both the household and regional levels, a reality underscored by violence against women who "talk too much" (section 6.6.1), and by the predominately male institution of traditional authority (section 2.5). The biased power arrangements have translated into women having a smaller share of the Conservancy's employment opportunities.

Similarly, women do not share an equal amount of power between themselves. Women who lack a Grade 10 education or even basic literacy, for example, have little opportunity to gain Conservancy employment (see Chapter 7). Women with education thus have more power than women who lack it. Women with access to land, a metal plow, and oxen have more power over production than women who can only use a hand-held hoe (see Chapter 6). Women with poor health simultaneously have increased costs and a decreased ability to gains employment and access to cash.

The Kwandu case also lends support to the theory that power should be understood as more than a zero-sum equation (eg. Cooper 1994), while also showing that zero-sum views of power are highly relevant to Kwandu. When power is zero-sum, one person's gain in power

comes at another's loss (Nelson & Wright 1995). Zero-sum power is evident in male-female competition for Conservancy employment. The employment of a woman implies the exclusion of a man (or another woman). Power to earn income directly from the Conservancy then seems to be zero-sum, a form of repressive power, accompanied by the feared repercussions of jealousy and witchcraft (see Chapter 9). On the surface, one person's opportunities for empowerment through employment come at the expense of another's. However, if one takes a multi-scale and long-term view, one can surmise that employment of any resident can improve cash flow within the Kwandu area, provide secondary education benefits (both through casual conversations among men and women and by directing money to children's secondary education), and even encourage women to try new social roles, all of which can stimulate both men and women's power, producing benefits for a broader group of people (see Chapter 9). This would support theorists who contend that power can produce and need not be viewed as merely repressive or zero-sum (eg. Foucault 1977b cited in Rabinow 1984).

10.5 Understanding constraints to women's empowerment

The data show that women experience both symbolic and material constraints to empowerment (see Chapter 8). From a symbolical standpoint, women are constrained by subtle and not-so-subtle messages that dictate their behavior. Beliefs about gender roles and responsibilities can prevent women from accessing goods and services, as can limited perceptions of control over their own lives. For example, the prevalent belief that only men build houses has limited single women's opportunities for housing. The Kwandu case also shows that material constraints like limited education, social support, individual and household

cash and physical assets, access to land and resources, health, and the supply of income opportunities impact their overall choices in life. Interestingly, the data also suggests that in Kwandu, symbolic and material constraints can merge. A belief that jealousy produces physical harm when enacted through witchcraft suggests that the material and symbolic realms are perceived to overlap in the Kwandu context (see Chapter 9).

The Kwandu case also shows that constraints are located at multiple scales, emanating from local, regional, state, and international practices and policies. Constraints also emanate from multiple actors, including conservancy residents (both men and women), traditional authorities, Conservancy staff, CBNRM partners, central government leaders, and international policy-makers, all of whom contribute to building and reinforcing structural constraints to women's empowerment. For example, the Conservancy has at times reinforced imbalanced gender relations by discriminating against women's employment and on-the-job training (see Chapter 8). It has also contributed to jealousy between residents and impacted women's harvesting practices (see Chapter 9).

10.6 Responding to claims about CBNRM's income-generation programs

In this section, I respond to specific claims made about CBNRM's income-generation programs (see section 2.1.1). I limit my responses to impacts on female residents of Kwandu Conservancy. Both the 2011 and 2010 Conservancy Constitutions state that Kwandu Conservancy shall "promote and advance the socio-economic development of its Members". My data shows that Kwandu Conservancy has expanded female (and male) members' economic opportunities through direct employment, natural resource harvesting and sales, craft sales,

and dividend distribution. At the same time, pre-existing constraints have minimized the Conservancy's ability to expand women's income opportunities.

10.6.1 Direct employment

Among the opportunities provided by the Conservancy, direct employment does indeed offer the "most significant benefit" to women (NACSO 2010:22). Not only does direct employment provide the most dependable income among the offerings, but it offers the largest cash benefits and the greatest number of secondary benefits like skills-training, community rapport, and exposure to new people, places, and ideas.

Nonetheless, only a minute fraction of women have Conservancy employment. The overall supply of employment opportunities are very low, and gender-based discrimination further limits women's ability to obtain the existing employment. Additionally, employment brings a mixture of both costs and benefits, as female employees must face hostility and jealousy from some community members, and occasionally risk dangerous work situations with insufficient training. While most women control their Conservancy earnings, not all female employees can determine how they spend their income.

10.6.2 Forest product harvesting and sales

Kwandu Conservancy's new Constitution states that a primary objective is "to enable the general Members to generate benefits from the sustainable management, consumptive and non-consumptive use of wildlife, forests, forest products and other natural resource products in the Conservancy". NACSO (2010:23) claims that the harvest and sale of forest products provides

"a significant source of cash income to individuals". The Kwandu case verified these claims for some forest products but not for others.

My study suggests that the Conservancy does indeed enable some women, particularly women with sufficient physical ability and time, to significantly profit by harvesting Devil's Claw. However, a different story emerged for reed and grass harvesting. The data suggests that women resent the Conservancy's permit regulations for harvesting grass and reeds, indicating that permits impose time and financial constraints on their customary rights. It is unclear the extent to which the permit system actually prevents women from harvesting and profiting from reeds and grass, and more investigation is needed. Nonetheless, this study calls into question the assertion the harvest and sale of forest products provides a "significant" source of cash to women with regards to reeds and grass. At the same time, the permitting system is designed to prevent overharvesting of resources, but it is unclear whether overharvesting of grass and reeds was ever a problem in Kwandu and whether the permitting system actually prevents overharvesting.

Finally, women are unable to directly benefit from timber and pole harvests and sales because gender norms relegate those activities to men. Unlike with reed and grass harvesting, restrictions on women's access to timber and poles are not imposed by the Conservancy structure, but by pre-existing constraints. Nonetheless, cultural norms currently prevent women from accessing a lucrative source of cash income.

10.6.3 Craft production and sales

Proponents have claimed that "craft production and sales represent another important sector through which individual community members can improve their financial situation" (NACSO 2010:23). While a handful of women view craft sales to be a meaningful income supply, other women perceive craft income opportunities to be minimal and declining. While more women than men have sold crafts at Mashi Craft Market, women earn less income on average from craft sales than men. Furthermore, the Conservancy has facilitated crafts at Mashi Craft Market in five of the six traditional authority areas, thus far neglecting crafters in Singalamwe. So while crafts sales are an "important" sector for a few women, its impacts are limited and subject to tourist numbers and their willingness to spend.

10.6.4 Dividends

Scholars contend that CBNRM has made cash available to conservancy members through dividend distribution (Bandyopadhyay 2009; Scanlon & Kull 2009; NACSO 2008; Shapi 2003; Long 2002; Murphy & Mulonga 2002b). Indeed, the results show that dividends have been made available to individual residents in Kwandu Conservancy. However, not all women have received dividends, as their distribution has been mediated by local sub-*khutas*. In some areas, dividends were never distributed to households, but remained at the level of the traditional authorities. When dividends were distributed to households, they were distributed to one member, with dividends received by men in some households and by women in others. Finally, women who did receive dividends described them as inconsequential. The small

quantity of the dividends meant that they bestowed little purchasing power to residents who received them.

Scholars have cautioned against narrowly focusing on empowerment through participation in economic activities. The Kwandu case has shown that women do not necessarily control their earnings. While I agree that empowerment efforts should broaden the focus beyond participation in income-generation, women's participation in economic activities deserves inclusion in empowerment efforts because income-generation can impact multiple domains of power, even when women do not control their earnings. Additionally, access to cash gives women the ability to acquire resources from outside the Kwandu area, potentially decreasing internal pressure on natural resources in Kwandu.

In conclusion, income-generation opportunities can enhance women's choices in a variety of domains through providing access to cash, skills-training, community recognition, and by connecting women to new people, places, and ideas. By expanding women's choices, employment offers the most potential to "challenge or change previously existing power structures" in a community, another claimed benefit of CBNRM (Jacobsohn & Owen-Smith 2003:94). Women employees in leadership positions are able to influence decisions over their home communities and serve as an example to other women. Additionally, CBNRM-based employment can provide flexible work hours in women's home communities, offering a positive alternative to jobs located outside the conservancy and jobs with strict work schedules. However, simple cash transfers like dividend payments create fewer opportunities for women and can even bypass women altogether if women lack the ability to exercise control over money in their households. Consequently, income-generation activities are not created equal,

and opportunities that target multiple domains of choice have more potential to empower women.

My study also suggests that while promoting economic participation can address some women's cash needs, a focus on providing income-generation opportunities is not sufficient for empowering the majority of women in Kwandu Conservancy. Most women in Kwandu did not receive meaningful, direct financial benefit from the income-generation opportunities provided by the Conservancy. The revenue stream to Kwandu Conservancy, and possibly its administration, does not provide enough money to offer significant benefit to the majority of women in Kwandu Conservancy.

10.7 Response to criticisms of the integrated conservation and development program (ICDP) model and other reflections

Conservation is no longer just about wildlife. It now spans into governance, justice issues, health, and women's empowerment. In this section, I use the Kwandu Conservancy case to reflect on the broad-based, conservation-as-development approach taken by CBNRM and ICDPs in general. I seek describe some of the implications for conservation organizations to be promoting not only development, but women's empowerment. I also seek to comment about whether or not conservation organizations should promote women's empowerment through a focus on economic participation. Finally, I discuss how the Kwandu case speaks to issues of market integration and social resilience.

In using Kwandu as a case, I would like emphasize that discussions should reflect that it is just that: a case study of a single conservancy. Kwandu Conservancy, as discussed in section 1.7, has a variety of attributes that distinguish it from other conservancies and from other ICDP

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initiatives. In discussing the Kwandu Case, I seek to add nuance to the discussion of possible

merits and pitfalls associated with CBNRM and other ICDPs and their involvement with

women's empowerment efforts, in essence, to highlight a fuller range of potentialities. I in no

way intend to suggest that patterns that emerge from Kwandu Conservancy will be found

everywhere. However, the patterns that have emerged from Kwandu will likely be found in

some places.

10.7.1 Should CBNRM and ICDPs promote women's empowerment by focusing on economic participation?

Culturally-rooted notions about women's (unequal) roles and responsibilities in relation

to men are a major underlying cause of women's disempowerment. To really target sources of

women's disempowerment, conservation organizations need to challenge gender norms that

disempower women. This can be problematic for conservation organizations because creating

opportunities for women will require change on the part of men, may create resistance from

within the community, and may in turn foster resentment against the conservation

organization. Tackling gender norms also raises ethical issues, as cultural change may be aided

by outsiders but should not be imposed on communities. The Kwandu case suggests that

economic participation can create space for challenging gender norms, but that it does not go

far enough. Furthermore, economic participation varies in quality, so its promotion requires

attention to the character of opportunity provided.

Discussions about the potential of CBNRM to empower women through a focus on

economic participation should include impacts on women's skills, training, networking, and

awareness, not only women's access to cash. Access to income is important, but it is

temporary. This study shows that jobs are not necessarily just about income, but may also contribute to longer-term structural change. Women's employment can challenge preconceived notions about women's abilities and give women the power to influence attitudes and decisions in the community. Economic participation, in the case of Kwandu, also responds to an expressed need for cash.

Impacts to empowerment can be judged, in part, by whether ICDP interventions act as *substitutes,* rather than *additions* to traditional livelihoods. Substituting new activities for traditional activities removes a choice and may even replace it with a less desirable, even harmful option (see Büscher & Dressler 2012 for an example of ICDP-linked attempts to substitute farming and other pursuits for swidden agriculture). Adding an option can be viewed as enhancing choice, increasing the potential for the intervention to empower people in the community.

I have shown that income-generation opportunities in Kwandu do not necessarily *replace* traditional livelihoods, but may rather *add* to traditional livelihoods. Prior to CBNRM, residents were not allowed to hunt or profit from wildlife. While their wildlife management still requires government oversight, the conservancy system now provides a mechanism for gaining revenue from wildlife utilization. On one hand, that revenue has created employment and other new opportunities for women in Kwandu, while allowing them to continue with traditional activities like farming and collecting natural resources. On the other hand, concerns about the reed and grass permitting system and high levels of human-wildlife conflict may

displace traditional livelihood activities, in essence, making CBNRM a substitute for some people rather than an addition. This issue will be explored in future work.

At the same time, ICDPs that seek to empower women will need to broaden their focus beyond economic participation. The Kwandu case suggests that providing income-generation activities may only provide empowerment opportunities to a small minority of women in a project area. Additionally, economic participation does not always target the major underlying causes of women's disempowerment. Conservation and development efforts might better address women's empowerment by directly addressing inequities in gender-based roles and responsibilities, particular in regards to property rights, participation in decision-making, and women's control over their own bodies.

As suggested in the literature, inequities in property rights and responsibilities and in access to CBNRM programs need particular attention. In Kwandu, women have traditionally had informal access to reeds and grass, yet the permitting system has now tried to formalize access to those resources. The anger women expressed about the permit system likely reflects their resentment at what can be seen as an attempt to remove some of their traditional rights. Additionally, CBNRM also does not directly address the gender gap in the control of property. CBNRM works in cooperation with the male-dominated traditional authority system, instead of challenging the patriarchal land allocation system which they govern. Men still exert control over farmland allocation and the clearing of arable land for farming, constraining women's livelihood options. Finally, the level of human-wildlife conflict in Kwandu Conservancy deserves attention as wildlife may be displacing women not only from farmland but from forested areas

where they have traditionally collected natural resources. Human-wildlife conflict and women's empowerment will be the subject of my future publications.

As suggested in the literature, women's ability to participate in decision-making processes also deserves close attention from conservation and development organizations who wish to empower women. My future work will focus on the extent to which women's ability to participate in Kwandu Conservancy has been addressed by CBNRM, but in this dissertation, I have shown that public speaking training, voting, and the hiring of female employees into key decision-making positions has enhanced women's opportunities to participate in and influence decisions in the area. However, resources will need to continue to be dedicated to hiring women in equal numbers, to providing more women with public speaking training, and to ensuring that unemployed women can influence Conservancy and area decisions. Empowering women will also entail engaging with traditional authorities to ensure that women are better represented in their councils and able to voice their needs and concerns.

A focus on empowering through economic participation does not create sufficient space for women to exert control over their own bodies. The high prevalence of physical and sexual assault in the area, and its roots in beliefs about women's inferiority, should be addressed directly. Without control over their own bodies, women are at high risk for fear, prolonged illness, and death. Increasing the control women have over their bodies is at the root of empowerment and should be prioritized in development efforts.

10.7.2 CBNRM and market integration

While ICDPs have been shown to compel market integration in some cases, the Kwandu case suggests that at least in some contexts, ICDPs may respond to rather than drive market integration. The Kwandu case does not fit Büscher & Dressler's (2012) idea of a "rural frontier" that is threatened by ICDP-driven, neoliberal logic. CBNRM was introduced *after* South African interventionist policies entrenched a market economy in the region. Central government policies and programs have since created a persistent need for cash, with money needed to pay for school fees, transportation, and hospital bills. I contend that instead of creating a need and desire for cash, CBNRM in Kwandu has instead addressed a pre-existing need by offering access to cash through new and 'respectable' means.

10.7.3 CBNRM and social resilience

In this section, I turn my attention to impacts of CBNRM on social resilience. In particular, I focus on how the Kwandu case suggests that CBNRM can have a mixed impact on social resilience by affecting social equity and women's empowerment.

Increased social inequity undermines social resilience by increasing differences between vulnerable society members and people with access to vital resources, so it is important to look at how CBNRM can impact social equity. While some have suggested that CBNRM's emphasis on market-based solutions are antithetical to social equity (eg. Dressler et al. 2010), data from this study suggests the reality is more complex. From a gendered perspective, CBNRM in Kwandu provides a mechanism for women from various levels of education and socio-economic status to access cash in an area when men have had disproportionate access for decades. While

women have not yet achieved equal employment numbers, CBNRM has engaged them in traditionally-male work and in so doing, offered community members a less circumscribed view of women's abilities. Most women control the cash they earn, which can increase their social standing. At the same time, the limited number of income-generation opportunities provided by Kwandu Conservancy means that only a small minority of people reap significant benefit. In this way, linking conservation to the market may be seen to exacerbate jealousy and witchcraft fears in Kwandu.

As I discussed previously, property rights and decision-making is unequal in Kwandu Conservancy and CBNRM has had a neutral to negative impact on property rights. CBNRM has potentially fuelled jealousy, perhaps decreasing the potential for cooperation between more and less vulnerable community members. In these ways, CBNRM may be having a negative effect on social resilience. At the same time, I suggest that CBNRM has a positive effect on social resilience by empowering some women. For example, female-headed households who gained a reliable supply of income were able to negotiate with men on more equal ground by being able to pay for services rather than bargain with marital and/or sexual relationships. Women's empowerment, unless centered primarily on 'power over' or win-lose changes, should enhance social resilience because it increases women's choices without subtracting choices from other people.

10.7.4 Should conservation organizations be promoting women's empowerment?

Incorporating women's empowerment into programming likely assists CBNRM partners with capturing funding from sources that prioritize "women's empowerment". Women's

empowerment is currently at the forefront of global development discourse, with women's

empowerment comprising one of the eight United Nations' Millennium Development Goals.

"Women's empowerment" therefore risks becoming a side-note on the path to conservation.

Management decisions are made in a complex world with time and financial constraints and

inevitably, trade-offs will be made in favor of efficiency. Conservation and development

decisions are typically made based on the values and priorities of major international donors.

Their values and goals may inherently contradict with the values and goals of communities and

women, and even with the central government. So donors will inevitably choose to make

choices in line with their own interests (see Jackson 1993). This may mean that conservation

may be given priority over development and women's empowerment.

Real empowerment requires that organizations relinquish control of the empowerment

process (Rowlands 1995). Yet some scholars contend that ICDP approaches constrain agency

and reinforce control by external actors (Büscher & Dressler 2012). This suggests that efforts to

empower women may be abandoned if they are seen to threaten conservation, or that efforts

will address symptoms of disempowerment rather than underlying causes.

Since structural adjustment policies created a need for international donors to address

development needs, some power may need to be relinquished to central governments so that

they, and presumably their citizen voters, will have more control over the nature of

development and women's empowerment in their own countries. To do this, the lingering

effects of structural adjustment policies will need to be assessed and rectified so that central

governments can better fund social services like women's empowerment programs,

infrastructure, wages, roads, and other programs. Provided a country has sound democratic institutions, and a high level of transparency, they might be in a better position than international donors to enact development and conservation programs that are in line with their citizens' interests.

Until women's empowerment efforts can be fully supported by the government and/or non-governmental sectors, I believe that conservation organizations should promote women's empowerment. In Kwandu Conservancy, there are as yet no direct and sustained women's empowerment efforts outside of CBNRM. While the partnership between conservation, development, and women's empowerment is fraught with problems, in a situation where a major gap exists, CBNRM has risen to the challenge.

10.8 Implications for policy and practice

In this section, I present five main suggestions for applying my findings to policy and practice in CBNRM and other relevant conservation and/or development initiatives. First, I recommend that policy-makers and practitioners seek to understand what women want, need, and value within a particular context and that they strive to make their programs responsive to women's visions and values. Second, I recommend that policy-makers and practitioners avoid making sweeping generalizations about women and communities. Third, since pre-existing, contextual constraints can limit program participation and benefits, I recommend that policy-makers and practitioners understand and acknowledge pre-existing limitations when judging and presenting program impacts. Fourth, I recommend that policy-makers and practitioners use specific language when making empowerment claims. Finally, I encourage policy-makers and

practitioners to recognize and respond to particular leverage points so as to enhance virtuous processes and counteract vicious cycles within particular contexts.

10.8.1 Seek to understand what women want, need, and value

Seeking to understand what women want, need, and value can challenge preconceived notions about what most benefits women and, in so doing, help make programs responsive to women's direct experiences. Soliciting viewpoints directly from women can help situate outside notions of empowerment within a set of cultural norms, facilitating better understanding and communication between program staff and targeted participants. Constructs similar to Kwandu's "real woman" can likely be found in other contexts, providing a window into what women most value in particular societies. In this way, contextually-embedded constructs can be explored, described, and used as a tool for evaluating program impacts in other places.

In understanding women's perspectives and experiences, it is important not to reify ideas like a "real woman", given the problem of culturally-imposed blinders. Instead, eliciting women's voices and experiences exposes the lens from which women operate and can assist program staff with re-evaluating their own assumptions and activities. For example, Kwandu women clearly voiced a desire and need for cash income. Directing Conservancy income into social programs instead of dividends, while preferable to some program staff, might fuel women's animosity towards the Conservancy. Understanding women's need for cash can assist with a re-evaluation of program objectives, or alternatively, a re-evaluation of how the Conservancy communicates its programmatic decisions with women.

10.8.2 Avoid making sweeping generalizations about women and communities

I encourage policy-makers and practitioners to avoid making sweeping generalizations about women and communities. CBNRM impacts differ within communities and among women, in part, because communities are not homogeneous and neither are women. It is important to openly acknowledge that CBNRM impacts are not gender-neutral and then address impediments to women's participation. At the same time, I recommend that project staff carefully avoid a false dichotomy in which women are characterized as victims and men as oppressors, as both women and men participate in women's oppression, and both men and women actively promote women's opportunities in CBNRM. Instead, it is crucial to ask one's self and one's organization, "Who in this community has more power?" and "Who in this community promotes opportunities for women?" Recognizing that levels of power differ between individuals can foster an appreciation of the role that community elites play in defining and enforcing "culture" and "tradition", as well as in usurping program benefits.

10.8.3 Understand and communicate pre-existing constraints to women's empowerment

I recommend that policy-makers and practitioners understand and clearly communicate pre-existing constraints to women's empowerment. Understanding and communicating constraints is important for several reasons. First, CBNRM organizations can better position themselves to persuasively articulate their limitations and needs. My study has shown that pre-existing structural constraints pose a significant impediment to women's empowerment. Poverty, culturally-defined gender roles, a predominantly-male traditional authority structure, and impediments to education are just a few of the structural constraints women must face.

CBNRM organizations can use their knowledge of pre-existing constraints to advocate for longer-term donor support, showing that expectations for change will require a lengthy commitment. Additionally, a thorough knowledge of constraints can assist CBNRM organizations to respond to misplaced criticism of their programs. CBNRM cannot realistically be expected to solve all of the myriad number of challenges in a particular place. Changing dominant narratives that subordinate women, for example, would require tremendous effort and financial investment.

Second, through a better understanding of constraints, policy-makers and practitioners can pinpoint areas they can control and influence. Different actors have various levels of influence over constraints, and both actors and constraints operate at multiple scales. CBNRM organizations can control some aspects and only influence others. By identifying the scale at which a constraint operates and the actors involved, CBNRM organizations can attempt to negotiate with actors who operate outside of CBNRM organizations' control. For example, by identifying forms of discrimination against women, CBNRM organizations will be in a better position to train their staff to offer equal employment and on-the-job training opportunities to women, an area of direct control. They can also use their influence to educate and encourage traditional leaders to help recruit equal numbers of female and male employees. Similarly, they can lobby central government to fund community-based initiatives that address gender-based discrimination.

Third, a thorough understanding of constraints will allow CBNRM organizations to explicitly acknowledge cultural narratives that subordinate women. With this knowledge,

CBNRM organizations will be better prepared to create an internal gender policy that not only acknowledges ways that culture relegates women to lower positions of power but that defines the organization's policy and approaches to navigating situations in which women's empowerment goals conflict with cultural norms.

10.8.4 Be specific about "empowerment" claims

Since neither communities nor the women in them are homogeneous, I urge policy-makers and practitioners to be specific when claiming that a program "empowers". When claiming to empower, an organization can avoid ambiguity by answering: "Who is empowered?"; and "What are they empowered to do?" For example, the Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organisations (NACSO) states that CBNRM has three core elements, one of which is to be "an empowerment and capacity building programme. It encourages and assists communities and their local institutions to develop the skills and experience to sustainably develop and proactively pilot their own futures" (NACSO 2012b). NACSO might add more information about *who* (women?; men?; young?; old?; all the previous?) in communities they aim to empower. NACSO (2012b) is clear what they aim to empower people to do, stating that communities should be empowered to "sustainably develop and proactively pilot their own futures".

10.8.5 Recognize and respond to leverage points within virtuous and vicious cycles to empower women

Constraints to women in Kwandu are numerous and difficult to address. Identifying leverage points can amplify the impacts of targeted interventions. According to Senge (2006), a

leverage point is an action that takes the least amount of effort to cause the greatest amount of

change in a system. In this dissertation, I have identified a virtuous and a vicious cycle based on

the "real woman" construct and local context. Acting on leverage points that will accelerate the

virtuous cycle decelerate the vicious cycle will improve women's ability to overcome structural

constraints to their empowerment.

10.8.6 Accelerating a virtuous cycle of informed choice

There are two main leverage points that CBNRM partners should consider targeting to

accelerate women's opportunities for empowerment. I recommend that CBNRM partners strive

to increase girls' and women's access to education, and I also recommend increasing women's

direct access to and control over income and physical assets. In this section, I offer specific

suggestions for expanding women's abilities to overcome these constraints.

10.8.6.1 Education

Increasing access to education can increase employment opportunities which can

increase a woman's ability to provide for her household and reduce her dependence on men.

Education is a widely acknowledge as a leverage point in development circles (i.e. Sen 1999).

Not surprisingly, women in Kwandu express a desire for the skills and education that will give

them the ability to dependably meet their family's basic needs. Not only would expanded

formal education opportunities ensure that girls complete Standard 10 (a minimum

requirement for many Conservancy positions), for example, but it would remove a major

barrier to their employment elsewhere. Both formal and informal education should be given a

high priority to accelerate opportunities for women's empowerment. This suggests, for

example, that more Conservancy resources should be directed to women's employment, education, and skills-training workshops than to the generation of cash dividends.

Removing barriers posed by school fees and supply expenses might assist more girls to attend school. However, access to formal education involves more than just paying school and uniform fees. Providing girls with access to education means that schools will be safe environments, free of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, as well as institutions that are committed to learning. Institutions that are committed to learning will limit teacher absenteeism and present information relevant to local, regional, national, and international issues. Including environmental education in the curriculum might cultivate greater appreciation for resources in the area, for example, highlighting ways that residents can use and appreciate natural endowments.

The Conservancy might improve girls' access to education in several ways. First, the Conservancy and its partners might use its institutional status to lobby the central government for improved access to education. The Conservancy should solicit acknowledgement and compensation from the government and international bodies for playing a pivotal role in wildlife conservation in the nation and in the region. The Conservancy is located at the center of the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area, borders two national parks, and is centered in a regional elephant corridor (Chase & Griffin 2009). While helping to preserve the crucial corridor, the Conservancy suffers from high levels of human-wildlife conflict in the country. Event Book Data from 2003 to 2010 shows that the number of crop damage incidents ranged from a low of 399 in 2010 to a high of 750 incidents in 2006 (based on Event Book Data

provided by WWF). At the same time, Kwandu Conservancy has not been able to reap the economic benefits of a tourist lodge, a primary income-earner among conservancies. In short, the Conservancy can argue that it bears a disproportionate share of the costs for promoting national income. In 2005, CBNRM netted the country of Namibia as a whole over N$140 million (MET 2007:5). Consequently, Kwandu Conservancy should be compensated for its disproportionate costs versus benefits, preferably through increased funding and attention to quality education.

Second, the Conservancy might direct existing income surpluses to education. I hesitate to promote this without caution, as funds might be misdirected at the school level, leaving girls without expanded educational access. Plus, women clearly expressed the need for direct cash dividends for needs in addition to school fees, needs like health care. Diverting money from dividends to schools would require significant oversight to ensure it was uniformly directed at reducing or eliminating children's school fees.

Third, the Conservancy might take advantage of the growing numbers of students, researchers (Namibian and expatriate), and tourists in the area who express an interest in sharing their skills and talents with people in the region. This body of people might be requested to present information in schools, to offer tutoring sessions, provide skills-training sessions, and/or to lead discussions about their home countries or regions and what they have learned from their time in the Caprivi. Alternatively, or preferably, in conjunction with the educational sessions, students might be encouraged to offer community outsiders mini-tours of their own village or a presentation on a specific topic in the region. In this way, students can

learn through doing and gain confidence and skills that would help prepare them for future work.

Informal education opportunities abound, with notable examples provided by women in this study. Women claimed to acquire both transferable skills and awareness of rights and alternatives through Conservancy programs. Maintaining and expanding women's informal education opportunities, through programs like public-speaking training as well as through facilitating intra- and inter-conservancy meetings, will enhance women's empowerment. Informal education opportunities should be provided to Conservancy employees and non-employees alike, with efforts targeted at women who will amplify educational impacts by sharing their acquired knowledge with multiple women. Linking conservancy residents to education opportunities from people within the region can accelerate on existing capacity. I suggest hiring female leaders within conservancies to speak with other women in the region. I also suggest utilizing expatriate and Namibian visitors as skills facilitators, trainers, and presenters, provided they are willing and able to work in a way that incorporates mutual learning and discovery rather than as agents of top-down information transfer.

10.8.6.2 Access to and control over income and physical assets

Increasing women's direct access to and control over cash can increase their ability to maneuver around gender-based roles and responsibilities and improve women's ability to provide for themselves and their families. Increasing a sustainable supply of direct employment opportunities for women should be a priority, as employment addresses more constraints than

other income-generation activities and offers the largest amount dependable of cash among the Conservancy's other programs.

Adding jobs to the Conservancy will only directly benefit women if hiring and training discrimination is reduced and ultimately eliminated. While I recognize that CBNRM partners must practice cultural sensitivity, their policies for promoting gender empowerment amidst male-biased cultural norms should be made explicit. I recommend that CBNRM partners draft a gender policy that specifically identifies the current problem of discrimination and expresses the need for and the plan for promoting employment equality, both in the hiring and training of women. The policy should explicitly state CBNRM partners' values in regards to the tradeoffs between gender promotion and cultural sensitivity. It should incorporate the National Gender Policy, the Namibian Constitution, and legislation that enshrines women's rights in Namibia. CBNRM partners should then engage Conservancy staff and residents in ongoing conversations about the tradeoffs between 'culture' and women's empowerment and encourage the Conservancy to draft its own gender policy.

Given the immense structural impediments to women's employment equality, CBNRM partners should continue to forge partnerships with Namibian governmental institutions (i.e. the Ministry of Gender and Child Welfare) and non-governmental organizations (i.e. the Legal Assistance Centre, the Women's Leadership Centre) that have expertise in gender issues. CBNRM partners might also liaise with regional and international organizations with gender expertise.

My research suggests several other specific actions that can help achieve women's employment equality in Kwandu. First, Conservancy hiring practices should be made more transparent. Job descriptions should clearly state the criteria needed for employment. Sub-*khutas* might also be asked to provide the Conservancy office with a written description of the vote tally, as well as the number of male and female residents present at meetings that determine the election of Committee Members. Second, invitations for employment applications should clearly state that both male and female applicants are encouraged to apply for all open positions. Third, CBNRM partners should be trained and held accountable to ensure that they consistently communicate that both male and female applicants are encouraged to apply for all positions and should be given equal consideration. Finally, the Conservancy might consider requesting that the sub-*khutas* make voting for Committee Members confidential. Since not all residents are literate, written ballots should be discouraged, but other methods for ensuring voter confidentiality can be employed.

While employment offers the largest financial return and overall empowerment impact, I recommend improving women's access to the Conservancy's other income activities as well. First, the Conservancy might consider expanding its craft collection and payment services to Singalamwe so residents there can access Mashi Market. Second, CBNRM partners might consider marketing and selling women's crafts online. Third, the Conservancy should make dividend distribution more equitable by ensuring that dividends go to each adult member rather than to a household head. While dividend amounts have so far been too low to warrant the extra effort of individual instead of household distribution, increased dividend amounts will require a new approach. Fourth, I encourage the Conservancy and CBNRM partners to

reevaluate reed and grass permit requirements. Women clearly indicated frustration with the permit system, expressing concerns over permits' monetary and time costs. A thorough investigation into the sources of harvesting (both inside and outside of the Conservancy) and their relative quantities would help determine the extent to which permits are required for ensuring a sustainable resource base. Finally, women's desire to establish small business could be assisted by encouraging micro-finance and similar organizations to visit and consider working with Conservancy residents.

The limited number of jobs currently pits men against women, women against women, and men against men, contributing to jealousy and witchcraft fears. Reducing employment scarcity can decrease jealousy. However, the Conservancy must prepare for and mitigate jealousy as current Conservancy income levels limit job opportunities. One way to do this might be to increase awareness of the shared benefits of community-based employment. More money in the community, for example, can create employment opportunities for store owners and farm laborers, among others.

10.8.7 Decelerating a vicious cycle of dependency

While the Conservancy and CBNRM partners strive to accelerate a virtuous cycle of informed choice among women, they should also continue working to decelerate a vicious cycle of women's dependency on men. Cultivating awareness among women about imbalanced gender relations and alternative arrangements would help make the sometimes invisible structural constraints visible to more people. Consultations with long-standing women's consciousness-raising organizations like India's Self Employed Women's Organization in India

could provide tools for increasing women's awareness. I recommend that the Conservancy and CBNRM partners assist women to create forums through which they can 1) discuss both restrictive and constructive social norms within the context of alternatives, 2) identify and build upon their individual and collective strengths, and 2) organize for collective action. A professional facilitator should be employed to link more women with governmental and non-governmental organizations that specialize in gender issues, host and fund speakers, link women with social services and safety nets, and facilitate safe spaces for dialogue. Women should also be provided with full information about their basic rights under Namibian law, as not all women in Kwandu have this most basic knowledge. Since "real women" in Kwandu share ideas with each other, the Conservancy can amplify awareness investments in an initially small group of women.

Fostering awareness and partnerships with men who support women's empowerment is also important. Data showed that men's encouragement of women assisted their entry into Conservancy employment, and more men can be encouraged to continue or begin similar efforts. Additionally, men can be engaged in dialogue about the benefits to themselves and their families when women are empowered to become active participants in the local economy and in decision-making processes.

10.9 Suggestions for further research

Understanding the Conservancy's overall impacts on empowerment requires an assessment of all of its activities. Providing income-generation opportunities is a major focus of Conservancy work, but increased wildlife and changes in community decision-making structures

also impact residents. Space limitations restricted the scope of my dissertation to impacts of income-generation activities, so these and other types of Conservancy impacts should be researched, analyzed, and discussed.

Since my study has focused on women in relation to gender, I strongly recommend conducting a similar study with men. It is difficult to understand the female gender without fully understanding the male gender. Changes women's roles and responsibilities necessitate changes in men's gendered norms. It would also be enlightening to explore how men view women's empowerment - how they define it as well as what they believe its impacts to be on men's opportunities. It is also important to document the costs of women's disempowerment to boys and men. Women's disempowerment can mean that men define their lives in terms of another's subjugation instead of experiencing the shared joys and sorrows of partnerships. Plus, women's disempowerment can mean poor maternal nutrition, meaning that boys can suffer from poor health, abuse from men and women, and other difficulties.

Finally, I suggest that future research focus not only on contextual constraints to empowerment, but also on contextual strengths – aspects of local culture, the biophysical environment, human capital, and systems that offer women and their communities a reservoir from which they build their lives.

10.10 Conclusion

In this dissertation, I have addressed two core issues related to Community-Based Natural Resource Management and women's empowerment. First, I have used a gender lens to highlight intra-community differences in a conservation area. I have emphasized that even

small communities can be heterogeneous and dynamic, and I have shown that community elites, in this case men and educated women, can capture a larger share of some conservation benefits than other community members. Second, I have empirically evaluated women's empowerment in a particular place, showing that claims of empowerment should specify who is empowered and what they are empowered to do.

Women's empowerment and CBNRM are noble and generally well-intentioned endeavors. However, they occur in a complex and rapidly changing world and between contexts that differ tremendously. Detailed attention to women's wants, needs, values, and constraints can help ensure that programs are designed to incorporate and adapt to local institutions and to sustainably promote human rights and conservation. It can also assist programs with recognizing and expressing their own limitations in such a way that they build realistic expectations and forge strategic partnerships with like-minded organizations. It can also help communities, organizations, and governments decide when and if integrated conservation and development programs are appropriate for a given context.

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Terminology

In this dissertation, I have employed a set of terms and assumptions that I seek to make explicit. The following terms, both English and Sifwe are listed below:

CBNRM partners

- CBNRM partners are a collection of people and their organizations who work directly with conservancies and/or CBNRM in Namibia. CBNRM partners include both governmental organizations, particularly the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, and non-governmental organizations. CBNRM partners also include both organizations and individuals who are members or associate members of the Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organizations (NACSO). Notable NACSO members and associate members include Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC), the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the Multi-Disciplinary Research Centre and Consultancy of the University of Namibia, the Namibia Nature Foundation, and the Legal Assistance Centre.

Conservancy

- While a conservancy has a designated boundary, staff, and members, influential actors and forces emanate both from within and without its geographical borders. Conservancy residents and members may temporarily live and/or work outside its boundaries. Government actors and policies influence conservancies, as do non-governmental organizations and traditional authorities based outside of conservancy borders. Wildlife migrate freely through unfenced conservancy borders. Consequently, I view a conservancy more as a network of actors and forces that impact a designated geographical space. A

conservancy, in turn, impacts actors and forces outside its boundaries. In short, I do not

view a conservancy as a self-contained island of residents, staff, and natural resources.

Culture(s)

- I adopt Laland & Hoppitt's (2003:151) definition of cultures as "those group-typical behavior

   patterns shared by members of a community that rely on socially learned and transmitted

   information". I assume that culture is rooted in a particular context and that it is socially-

   constructed, dynamic, and influenced by internal and external forces (see Sharp et al. 2003).

   I also assume that culture has differential impacts on individual power, giving some groups

   within a society more influence and control than others. It is therefore contested and

   contestable, and cannot legitimately be used to justify oppression.

Gender

- Gender is neither synonymous with a person's sex nor with the word "woman". Instead,

   gender is a term that denotes a collection of socially-constructed beliefs about individuals'

   roles and responsibilities in society, where beliefs about expected behaviors are generally

   assigned to a person based on the individual's biological sex. Since gender is socially-

   constructed, ideas about "proper" behavior for men and women differ across cultures.

   Some cultures have more rigid definitions of gender, with men and women having few

   overlapping roles and responsibilities, while other cultures have more flexible gender norms

   with more areas of overlap.

Gender-based responsibilities (or gendered responsibilities)

- Gender-based responsibilities are socially-constructed duties a person is expected to

   perform based on his/her sex. Expected duties vary across cultures. For example, women in

Kwandu Conservancy are expected to cook and clean for their families, while men are expected to provide a house and plow the family's fields.

Gender-based roles (or gender roles)

- Gender-based roles are socially-constructed beliefs about a person's innate qualities and characteristics based on his/her sex. For example, in Kwandu Conservancy, men are believed to be innately more able to make decisions in the household and community, as indicated by women's statements that the "men are our heads". Women, on the other hand, are believed to be less rational, more emotional, and therefore less able to make decisions.

Employment

- In this dissertation, "employment" denotes work in which a person is paid cash for performing work duties.

Income-generation

- For the purposes of this dissertation, I look at income-generation as any activity that provides access to cash income. I only consider activities that directly produce cash income or that produce goods, like Devil's Claw, with documented sales potential.

Livelihood

- A livelihood is the combination of activities, cash-and non-cash paid, that translate into basic material goods like food, shelter, and clothing. A livelihood may also produce surplus goods beyond those deemed necessary for subsistence.

Needs

- Needs are material goods and/or relationships that an individual deems to be necessary for his/her survival and/or for living a desired life.

Values

- Values are what an individual deems to be important in his/her life.

Wants

- Wants are an individual's short- and/or long-term desires for material goods, status, and relationships.

Tradition

- Tradition denotes aspects of custom or culture that have persisted, or have been claimed to have persisted, over time in a particular context. Tradition includes cultural practices or norms that have been documented to be part of a society's culture. Like culture, I assume that tradition can be reinterpreted and that what is presented as an unchanging part of society may in fact have been recently imposed or reinvented. Tradition, however, is often widely accepted as the natural state of order in a society, a set of social arrangements that is implied to be unquestionable.

Sifwe terms:

Induna

- An *induna* is a traditional leader (usually male, but sometimes female) who serves is part of a group of *indunas* and together comprise a traditional court.

Khuta & sub-khuta

- A *khuta* is a high-level traditional court comprised of male traditional leaders, or *indunas*, who either serve under the leadership of Chief Mamili or Chief Mayuni.

- A sub-*khuta* is a lower-level traditional court comprised of primarily male traditional leaders whose jurisdiction in one of six sections of the Kwandu area. In Kwandu, there are female traditional leaders, or *indunas,* in all six sub-*khutas*.

Makentu nenja

- *Makentu nenja* is the Sifwe term for a "real woman" or a "good woman". *Makentu* means "woman", while *nenja* means "good" or "real"

Malamatwa

- *Malamatwa* is the Sifwe term for Devil's Claw. Devil's Claw (*Harpagophytum procumbens*) is a plant that is native to southern Africa. Its root is dried and sold in Africa, Europe, and North America to treat osteoarthritis, back and neck pain, and other ailments.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Summary of Scoping, Proposal-Writing, and Research Phases

	Scoping Phase A	Scoping Phase B	Proposal Writing Phase	Research Phase I	Research Phase II	Research Phase III	Research Phase IV	Research Phase V	Research Phase VI
Location	Windhoek	Windhoek, Caprivi, Swakopmund	Missoula	Caprivi	Missoula	Caprivi	Missoula	Caprivi	Missoula & Caprivi
Dates	October 20 - 25, 2008	September 3 – 22, 2009	September 2009 – June 2010	June 28 – August 11, 2010	August – September, 2010	September 27, 2010 – January 18, 2011	January – May 2011	May 22 – June 21, 2011	June 2011 - present
Summary of Activities	Met with CBNRM practitioners for the first time.	Met with CBNRM practitioners and conservancy staff to ascertain their needs and interests, and to select a study site.	Proposal writing, compre-hensive exam, and research preparation.	Met with CBNRM practitioners, hired a translator, and began preliminary interviews and fieldwork in Kwandu, camping at the IRDNC office in Kongola.	Transcribed interviews and modified interview guide and technique in consultation with committee members. Prepared list of data collection priorities for next field session.	Continued with data collection, staying with four different families in Kwandu Conservancy and continuing to camp at the IRDNC office in Kongola as well.	Transcribed and analyzed interviews, preparing list of data collection priorities for next session of fieldwork. Consulted with dissertation committee.	Continued with data collection, staying with a host family and camping outside of Kwandu. Field observation dates include time spent in Livingstone presenting to Insaka.	Transcription and coding. June 2012 a week-long follow-up visit to the Caprivi where I met briefly with several Kwandu Conservancy residents and staff to ascertain major changes and verify factual information.
Female respondent interviews	-	-	-	5	-	40	-	4	-
Key informant interviews	-	-	-	-	-	11	-	7	2

Note: Analysis was ongoing throughout each research phase.

Appendix 2: Observations of Planned Events and Days Observing Individual Conservancy Residents

Research Phase	Observation Date	Event and Location
Phase I	July 14 & 16, 2010	Bi-annual Caprivi-area conservancy planning meeting at Bumunu Emerging Conservancy
	July 15, 2010	Constitution revision workshop in Mwanzi Sub-*khuta*, Kwandu Conservancy
	July 20, 2010	Observation day in Mwanzi area of female's routine activities
	July 21, 2010	Observation day in Singalamwe area of female's routine activities
	July 22, 2010	Funeral and burial service for prominent man in Sikaunga area
	July 23, 2010	Burial service for young man in Mwanzi area
	July 24, 2010	SDA Church service in Singalawe area
	July 25, 2010	New Apostolic Church service in Kayuwo area
	July 30, 2010	Observation day in Kongola area of female's routine activities
	August 2, 2010	Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) negotiation meeting between Kwandu Conservancy staff and James Chapman (professional hunter) and associates at Conservancy office
	August 5, 2010	MOU signing meeting between Kwandu Conservancy staff and James Chapman (professional hunter) and associates at Conservancy office
	August 8, 2010	Mayuni Festival at Chief Mayuni's palace in Choi
Phase III	September 27, 2010	Staff meeting at IRDNC office in Katima
	October 3, 2010	Mafwe Cultural Festival in Chinchimani/Linyanti
	October 9, 2010	SDA Church service in Kayuwo area
	October 13, 2010	Farewell party for Maggie Jacobsohn and Garth Owen-Smith at Sijwa
	November 5, 2010	Meeting with potential campsite developer and Kwandu Conservancy staff at Conservancy office
	November 6, 2010	SDA Church service in Sesheke area
	November 10, 2010	Funeral and burial of IRDNC staff member's wife in Katima
	December 8, 2010	Kwandu Conservancy Annual General Meeting at Mwanzi Sub-*khuta*

Note: No planned events were observed during Phase III.

Appendix 3

Female Respondent Characteristics in the Interview Sample

Age	Number of respondents
19 - 24	6
25 - 29	6
30 - 39	12
40 - 49	9
50 - 59	7
60 - 69	1
70 - 79	1
80 - 89	1
90 and over	1
Unknown	5
Range in ages	**19 – 95 years**

Notes: Age was determined by subtracting stated birth year from year of interview date. Four of the five "unknown" ages were due to respondents claiming not to know their age or year of birth. Based on their appearance and statements about their lives, the four respondents were estimated to be in the following age ranges: mid-twenties (1), sixties (1), seventies (1), and eighties (1). The fifth "unknown" respondent did not complete the interview, and her age was not estimated.

Ethnicity	Number of Respondents
Mafwe	32
Mbukushu	11
Other	5
Unknown	1
Total number of ethnic groups represented in sample	**6**

Number of cattle owned	Number of respondents
None	21
one to five	14
six to ten	4
eleven to twenty	3
over twenty	4
unknown	3

Marital Status	Number of Respondents
Married	23
Single	12
Divorced	7
Widowed	7

Chief affiliation	Number of respondents
Mamili	29
Mayuni	14
Neither or no affiliation	4
Unknown	2

Conservancy involvement	Number of Respondents
Passive	14
Somewhat involved	7
Involved	16
Highly involved	11
Unknown	1

Highest grade completed	Number of Respondents
No formal education	11
Standard 1-9	14
Standard 10 or 11	11
Matric (Standard 12)	6
Some higher education	5
Unknown	2

Household type	Number of respondents
Male-headed household	27
Female-headed household	21
Unknown	1

Household size (total individuals)	Number of respondents
one	3
two	2
three to four	9
five or six	11
seven to ten	14
eleven to fifteen	6
more than fifteen	2
unknown	2
Average household size	**7 people**
Range in household size	**1 – 25 people**

Number of Children	Number of Respondents
None	5
one to two	19
three to five	11
six to seven	7
more than seven	6
unknown	1
Average number of children per respondent	**3.7**
Range in children	**0 to 12 children per respondent**

Residence Location in Kwandu	Number of Respondents
Kayuwo	7
Kongola	11
Sesheke	6
Sikaunga	8
Mwanzi	5
Singalamwe	12

Formal employment status	Number of Respondents
Employed	11
Not employed	38

Religion	Number of respondents
Seventh Day Adventist	35
New Apostolic	4
Dutch Reformed	4
Apostolic	2
United Reformed	2
No religion	1
Unknown	1

Birthplace	Number of Respondents
Kwandu area	36
Elsewhere in Caprivi Region	8
Bordering country	4
Unknown	1

Holds leadership position in Kwandu area?	Number of respondents
Yes	18
No	30
Unknown	1

Claims to be a Conservancy member?	Number of respondents
Yes	33
No	16

Appendix 4
Recruitment Script

[Potential respondents will first be greeted in Sifwe by the researcher, which incorporates clapping, hand-shaking, and "Hello" and "How are you?"]
The following will be spoken in English by the PI to the potential respondent and then translated by an interpreter:

My name is Libby Khumalo. I am a student from The University of Montana in America. I am hoping to learn about what life is like in Kwandu, specifically about women's experiences here and about how the conservancy has affected women in Kwandu. While I will also be speaking with some men about their experiences, I am focusing on women's experiences because so far there has been very little written information about how women experience life in a conservancy. I am focusing specifically on Kwandu Conservancy because it is one of the oldest conservancies and because it has a good reputation for having provided a variety of opportunities for women. [*Note to IRB reviewers: There is no direct translation for the word "empowerment" in Mbukushu or Sifwe, so that is why I have chosen the above wording.*]

I hope that by learning more about women's experiences with the conservancy I might be able to write a report that will provide information to conservancy staff, traditional authorities, and conservation organizations like IRDNC, WWF, NACSO, and others. I hope that the information I provide might help organizations make better decisions about conservancies. However, I cannot guarantee that my research will contribute to better decisions, as I will not be involved in decision-making. It is possible that my research will not lead to any changes in Kwandu.

I would like to learn from you what life is like here in Kwandu. I would also like to know more about what your views are about the conservancy and how it has affected your life. If you are willing, I would like to interview/observe you participating in your routine activities. An interview would take between one to two hours. Alternatively, I would like to observe you for a full day, from about 8 am to 5 pm, as you participate in your routine activities. The information I gain from you would be compiled with information that I will be gathering from at least 39 other women. This will allow me to keep the information you provide separate from your identity, so that I can share a general body of information about women in Kwandu without identifying you or any of the other respondents.

Please understand that as I am a student, I am unable to provide any form of benefit to you for your participation in the study. Your participation would be entirely voluntary. There are no repercussions to you if you choose not to participate. Furthermore, if you do decide to participate, you may change your mind and withdraw from the study at any time.

Would you be interested in participating in this study?

> *If yes*: What time and place would work best for an interview? I suggest that we find a place that is private so that no one can overhear the interview. [*or, if observation:* Which day would work best for me to observe you?] Please

remember that you are free to change your mind. There will be no negative consequences to you if you decide not to participate.

If no: Thank you for your time speaking with me. It was a pleasure meeting you. If you have any more questions about my research, please feel free to contact me at 001-406-243-6610.

Appendix 5
Interview Guide

Interview Facesheet

Interview number	
Date of interview	
Place of interview	
Translator	
Language of interview	
Interview tape-recorded?	
Sex	
Age	
Highest grade completed	
Ethnicity	
Marital status (include whether one of multiple wives)	
Number of children	
Place of residence	
Place of birth	
Language of birth	
Occupation type and location	
Religion	
Currently own a radio/television? If not, have you ever?	
Loyalty to which Traditional Authority?	
Have you ever lived and/or worked outside of Kwandu?	
Do you have a leadership position in the community?	

Guide for the main body of the interview

What is your life like here?

EMPOWERMENT	
What do you hope for your life five years from now? {Note: this question also serves as "power within" as it can reveal fatalism.}	• What's going to make it harder to get there? • What's going to help you get there
As a woman in this area, what would make your life better?	• What changes might improve the lives of your daughters, nieces, or granddaughters?
AWARENESS OF GENDER ROLE SUBORDINATION	
Please describe what it means to be a 'real woman' in the Kwandu area. {Note: this question can also reveal hopes for oneself – i.e. empowerment}	• How does an ideal woman, a woman most respected by the general community, live her life? • What do you think you have to do to be respected?
Are there women you know that you really would like to be like? {Note: this question can also reveal hopes for oneself – i.e. empowerment}	• Why do you want to be like them?
What are women's responsibilities in a household?	• And men's? • Who do you think should make decisions in a household – men or women? • Why?
What are women's responsibilities in the community?	• And men's • Who do you think has more influence in your community, men or women? • Who do you think should make decisions about the conservancy – men or women? • Why?
How has the conservancy influenced the way you view women's responsibilities in the household?	• And in the community? • What do you think about women having leadership positions in the Kwandu area? • Have you always thought this? • How have your views changed over the last ten years?
What difficulties do women face in the Kwandu area that men don't face?	• And men?
POWER WITHIN	
(L) I haven't met many women like you. What makes you different from other women?	• Why can you do _____ and other women cannot?

What parts of your life have you changed in the last five years for the better?	• What were they?
What parts of your life do you plan to change in the next year?	• Why? • How? • Are there some things you wish you could change but you can't?
How have your views about your own abilities changed as a result of your involvement in the conservancy?	• How has the conservancy influenced how you see yourself? • Do you feel more confident? • Public speaking • Ability to earn income • Belief you can bring change
What have you done to address difficulties of living in a conservancy?	• And then what happened?
POWER TO	
How has the conservancy affected your life? *Or* What are you able to do now that you were not able to do before the conservancy? And not able to do now?	• Women's access to money? • Women's access to the bush, the veldt, and water? • Opportunities for learning new skills? • Amount of time women have to do the things they need to do every week? • Differences for men?
How do you think the conservancy has influenced women's difficulties?	• What are some concerns that women have that the conservancy has not addressed? • And men's difficulties?
What has the conservancy done to assist you to reach your dreams?	• In what ways have you benefitted from living in a conservancy? • What does your household do with the benefits received from the conservancy?
What has the conservancy done to prevent you from reaching your dreams?	• What are some of the difficulties you experience from living in a conservancy?
What has prevented you from participating in conservancy related employment? In conservancy-affiliated groups?	• What would enable you to participate in these activities?
What opportunities from the conservancy are provided to men but not to women?	• To women, but not to men?
(L) What led you to where you are now?	• What was it that allowed you to get to this point?
POWER WITH	
Tell me about how women help each other	• How has the conservancy effected how

here?	women help each other?
How has the conservancy influenced your ability to obtain support from other women?	• How has the conservancy influenced women's ability to connect with each other? • How has the conservancy influenced women's ability to share experiences with other women? • How has the conservancy influenced your ability to have conversations with other women?

POWER OVER	
Who do you think makes the most decisions in the community?	• How do you feel about that? • How has the conservancy effected women's ability to influence decision-making in the community?
How do you feel about the decisions that are made regarding the conservancy?	• What decisions would you like to see being made differently? • Why?
How do people react when you share your opinions and decisions at work/in the group?	
Please tell me about a time that you wanted to see a decision made in the conservancy that did not happen.	• What prevented it? • Would there have been a difference if the conservancy staff was all women? • All men? • Do you feel like you have influence in the community? • Why or why not?
(L) Please tell me about how you decide what should happen in the conservancy.	• Do you decide on your own or with other people? • Who or what most influences your thinking about what should happen in the conservancy?
Who made the decision to designate Kwandu as a conservancy?	• What sort of disagreements existed during the designation process?
Who in your household decides what to do with conservancy benefits?	• Who owns benefits from the conservancy? • Who decides how those benefits are used?
How has the conservancy effected relationships between people in your household?	• Who decides how money in your household is spent? • How has decision-making about money in your household changed since you became involved in the conservancy?

	• Who decides how resources in your household are used? • How has decision-making about use of resources in your household changed since your involvement in the conservancy?

Mode of involvement with the conservancy

How long have you been a conservancy member in Kwandu?
What conservancy activities have you participated in?
What attracted you to this job/group?
What other conservancy-related activities do you participate in?
Please tell me how your involvement in the conservancy has changed over time.
If you are now more involved, please tell me what motivated you to be more involved now than in the past?
If you are now less involved, please tell me why you decided to participate less in the conservancy.

Household data
How many people are in your household?
  o What are their ages and genders?
Who in your household lives with you?
  o Who lives in another village or town?
Who are the primary wage earners in your household?
What are your sources of income?
If holding conservancy-related employment: What was your level of income prior to becoming an employee?
What is your level of income now?
What does your household spend its money on?
How would you like to see the household spend its money?
Food sources in your household:
  o What does your household grow?
  o What does your household gather and/or hunt?
  o What livestock does your household own?
    ▪ How many cattle do you own?
    ▪ How many goats?
If you could change the way these resources are used in your household, what would you change?
Which resources do you decide how to use?
Which resources do other household members decide about?

Other

Is there anything else you would like to add?

May I interview you again if I have any more questions?
Can you recommend anyone else that I should speak with (based on _____)

General sense of trust/openness I perceive that the respondent has with me and with translator:
Description of respondent's house:
Other comments:

Appendix 6: Relevant Documents Reviewed

Document Name	Source of Document	Information Provided
Kwandu Conservancy Pay Records 2004-2010	Kwandu Conservancy Office	Employee names, position titles, salaries, pay dates, and field allowances
HACSIS Claims 2007	Kwandu Conservancy Office	Crop loss payments to individuals by name, amount, and month and year of payment
Kwandu Conservancy Constitution 2010	Kwandu Conservancy Office	Rules of governance
Kwandu Conservancy Constitution 2011	Kwandu Conservancy Office	Rules of governance
Permit System Reports	Kwandu Conservancy Office	January 2008 - May 2011 permits issued for harvesting
Mashi Crafts Market Records 2006-2010	Mashi Crafts Market	Crafter names, village, sex, items sold, year sold, and craft money earned

Appendix 7: Summary of Feedback Sessions

Date	Participants
May 19, 2011	Insaka partners in Livingstone, Zamiba
June 10, 2011	Kayuwo sub-*khuta*
June 12, 2011	Singalamwe sub-*khuta*
June 13, 2011	Kwandu Conservancy staff at Conservancy office
June 14, 2011	Sikaunga sub-*khuta*
June 14, 2011	Seseke sub-*khuta*
June 15, 2011	Mwanzi sub-*khuta*
June 17, 2011	IRDNC staff in Katima Mulilo
June 21, 2011	Institutional Development Working Group, Windhoek, Namibia
June 6, 2012	Insaka partners in Windhoek, Namibia