

Institution: Bath Spa University		
Unit of Assessment: 14 - Geography and Environmental Studies		
Title of case study: Enhanced Visibility of Marginalised Perspectives and Non-pecuniary Values regarding Land, 'Nature' and 'Natural Capital'		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2014 - 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Prof Sian Sullivan	Professor of Environment and Culture	01/01/14 - present
Dr Mike Hannis	Senior Lecturer Ethics, Politics and Environment	01/01/14 - present
Dr Chris Low	Research Fellow	01/01/14 - 31/12/18
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014 - 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Cultural and historical variety in understandings of land and the natural world affect governance choices for land distribution and environmental policy. This body of work, underpinned by three major collaborative research grants, ensures visibility for otherwise marginalised perspectives and non-pecuniary values regarding land, 'nature' and so-called 'natural capital', primarily in Namibia and the UK.</p> <p>In Namibia, work in historical research, place-linked oral histories and cultural landscape mapping, conducted by Sullivan, Hannis and Low in collaboration with local participants and partner organisations, significantly informed high-level recommendations in the Namibian Parliament to enact 'ancestral land rights claim and restitution legislation'. By invitation expert testimony was provided which was subsequently cited and quoted multiple times in the final report of the government's Ancestral Land Commission, published by the Office of the Prime Minister.</p> <p>The research communication strategies, including research exhibitions in art galleries, public lectures and debates, and popular media articles, enhanced the reach of the research in Namibia, the UK, and internationally. Diverse individuals and organisations have used the research, including in a UK Parliament briefing, to evidence risks in over-emphasising financial methodologies and discourses in valuations of the natural world.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The research highlights how understandings of 'the natural environment' are shaped by socio-cultural and historical contexts. It draws attention to specific ways that historical and political dimensions underscore inclusions and exclusions in land distribution and environmental conservation policy.</p> <p>Oral history research and cultural landscapes mapping led by elderly Indigenous Damara / #Nūkhoe and !Ubu individuals and families in west Namibia – whose histories extend over administrative units totalling around 10,000km² – revealed a large range of past settlement localities and livelihood practices hitherto unrepresented and arguably un(der)valued in policy terms.</p> <p>Ethnographic research, applied ethical reasoning, and discourse analysis of environmental policy texts in Namibia and beyond, clarified assumptions underpinning new market-based environmental conservation policies. Case research ranged from the sale of permits for trophy-hunting of endangered species (specifically black rhino – <i>Diceros bicornis bicornis</i> in Namibia) to 'natural capital accounting' by the UK Treasury, and the increasing focus on environmental 'net gain' in UK planning. Comparison of financial valuation methodologies with non-monetary</p>		

valuation practices in specific local contexts demonstrate how the latter can be more likely to negotiate plural value criteria that enhance both biological and cultural diversity.

The body of work was supported by three research grants:

a) [Future Pasts in an Apocalyptic Moment](#) (2014-2018) is a cross-disciplinary Arts and Humanities research project documenting and juxtaposing diverse understandings and practices of sustainability in west Namibia in relation to national and international discourses and policies. It builds on collaborations with Namibian partners, especially the Namidaman Traditional Authority and Sesfontein Conservancy, the national NGOs Save the Rhino Trust Namibia and Gobabeb Desert Research Institute, and the state-run National Museum of Namibia. [Led from BSU](#), the project involved all three staff submitted in this ICS. Sullivan and Low contributed ethnographic analyses of varied cultural relationships with the natural environment. Hannis brought formal ethical reasoning to environmental policy innovations.

b) [Disrupted Histories, Recovered Pasts](#) (2016-2019) contributes a cross-disciplinary analysis and cross-case synthesis of experience and memory in post-conflict and postcolonial contexts, with Sullivan focusing on historical evictions, conceptions of land and landscapes, and land rights of Indigenous peoples in colonial and apartheid west Namibia.

c) [The Leverhulme Centre for the Study of Value](#) (2014-2017) involved Sullivan and Hannis in the application of discourse and policy analysis, as well as environmental ethics reasoning and participant observation, in research on new environmental conservation technologies of biodiversity offsetting in England and natural capital accounting by UK Treasury.

All projects hosted blogs and Working Paper Series to enhance public outreach. *Future Pasts* additionally hosts dedicated social media accounts, as well as dedicated [vimeo](#) and [soundcloud](#) accounts for sharing video and audio outputs from the research.

3. References to the research

R1: Sullivan, S (2019) [Maps and memory, rights and relationships: articulations of global modernity and local dwelling in delineating land for a communal-area conservancy in north-west Namibia](#). Future Pasts, Bath. Future Pasts Working Paper No.7.

R2: Sullivan, S (2017) ['What's ontology got to do with it? On nature and knowledge in a political ecology of the 'green economy'.](#) *Journal of Political Ecology*, 24. pp. 217-242.

R3: Sullivan S, Hannis M and Low C (2017 and 2019) ['Curation of multimedia exhibition entitled Future Pasts: Landscape Memory and Music in West Namibia', online portfolio](#). [Includes exhibition details for art galleries in Bath, UK (Gallery 44AD, July-August 2017) and Swakopmund, Namibia (COSDEF Community Arts Venue, June 2019) and an accompanying text: Sullivan S, Ganuses, WS, Hannis M, Impey A, Low C and Rohde R (2019) *Future Pasts: Landscape, Memory and Music in West Namibia* 2nd ed. Bath: Future Pasts]

R4: Sullivan, S and Hannis, M (2015) ['Nets and frames, losses and gains: value struggles in engagements with biodiversity offsetting policy in England.'](#) *Ecosystem Services*, 15. pp. 162-173.

R5: Carver, L and Sullivan, S (2017) ['How economic contexts shape calculations of "yield" in biodiversity offsetting.'](#) *Conservation Biology*, 31 (5). pp. 1053-1065.

R6: Sullivan, S and Hannis, M (2017) ["'Mathematics maybe, but not money": on balance sheets, numbers and nature in ecological accounting.'](#) *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 30 (7). pp. 1459-1480. [In special issue on *Ecological Accounts: Making Non-human Worlds (In)visible During Moments of Socio-ecological Transformation*]

Funding

- Sullivan (PI), *Future Pasts in an Apocalyptic moment* (2014-2018), AHRC, GBP766,260
- Sullivan (Co-I), *The Leverhulme Centre for the Study of Value* (2014-2017), Leverhulme Trust, GBP587,269
- Sullivan (PI), *Disrupted Histories, Recovered Pasts* (2016-2019), AHRC, GBP79,794

4. Details of the impact

Land, marginalisation and restitution in west Namibia

With local Namibian collaborator WS Ganuses, Sullivan was requested by (i) the Namibian NGO the Legal Assistance Centre (LAC), and (ii) the Namidaman Traditional Authority representing local concerns in north-west Namibia, to provide expert testimony to a national review of indigeneity and marginalisation for the Namibian government's Ancestral Land Commission, appointed in 2019 (E1). This request arose from local awareness of underpinning research contributed by the *Future Pasts* and *Disrupted Histories, Recovered Pasts* projects (R1, 2 and 3), specifically on-site oral histories and cultural mapping research co-produced with local participants and the local and national Namibian partners mentioned in section 2. This request for expert testimony in itself represents a breakthrough in understanding towards the inclusion of specifically Damara / ǀNūkhoe and !Ubu histories and concerns in national policy review, from which these Indigenous peoples have tended to be excluded or marginalised.

The final report submitted to the Office of the Prime Minister by the Ancestral Land Commission of the Namibian Government in July 2020, cites and quotes this expert testimony multiple times, meaning that the research informed high-level, and long-awaited, recommendations for Parliament to enact an 'ancestral land rights claim and restitution legislation' (E2).

As well as being incorporated in this formal process of the Namibian Government, the research influenced and enriched understanding, awareness and wellbeing, as confirmed by local and national cultural and political leaders, and the project's partner organisations in Namibia (see testimonies collated in E3). The recognised paramount leader of Damara / ǀNūkhoe, Gaob (King) Justus IlGaroëb, writes that the research "gives us hope that our history and customs will be written down and shared with future generations to come" (10 November 2020, specifically referencing the collaborative research informing the expert testimony provided in E1). A Senior Leader of the Namidaman Traditional Authority writes that the mapping of previously inhabited places and the facilitated return of a local cultural group to play musics associated with one of these key places (as documented in the *Future Pasts* research film [The Music Returns to Kai-as](#)) "contributed towards Nami-Daman culture revival and upliftment", "greatly contributed towards Conservancy formation", and "activated our youth" regarding "their rich culture" (25 October 2019). The Science Adviser to the NGO Save the Rhino Trust Namibia writes of how the research amplified awareness of the impacts of nature conservation policies on Indigenous cultural landscapes, while the Executive Director of Gobabeb Namib Research Institute, affirms that the research enriched broader understanding through "mak[ing] an important contribution to document[ing] cultural heritage with individuals who are amongst the last people living today having a direct memory of these sites and their local histories".

Creative outputs for public communication of research

An emphasis of research for *Future Pasts* and *Disrupted Histories, Recovered Pasts* is the collaborative deployment of creative methods to communicate research themes and findings, so as to reach both new understandings and new audiences.

The multi-media exhibition *Future Pasts: Landscape, Memory and Music in West Namibia* was devised to communicate diverse threads of *Future Pasts* research (R3) and included contributions from all three submitted staff. The exhibition uses audio recordings, film installations, and repeat photography to create a contemplative space where the themes of sustainability, identity and displacement weaving through the research are invoked. The [full exhibition is online](#) (R3) and was curated in physical spaces at [Gallery 44AD \(Bath 2017\)](#) and [COSDEF Community Arts Venue \(Swakopmund 2019\)](#), reaching diverse public audiences in both the UK and Namibia – several hundred people in both places. Experiences and views of a self-selected sample of visitors (n = 126 in Bath; n = 66 in Swakopmund) were recorded in comments books (E4 includes summaries of selected testimonies and the full comments books for both exhibitions).

In Bath, UK, visitor responses indicated that the exhibition touched people emotionally, and provoked reflection on the impacts of human (colonial) activities on both the natural world and cultures in colonised territories and at home. For example, "I shall go home inspired and touched

by other peoples' lives and the environment they call home. ... It begs a question for me as to whether I pay enough attention to my own environment, people, stories and culture" (E4.1 p4).

In Swakopmund, Namibia, the exhibition was organised with local research collaborators and a Community Arts Venue. The exhibition launch included a performance by a Damara / #Nūkhoe cultural group. A programme of co-operatively facilitated school visits ensured that several hundred local high-school children experienced the exhibition. The perceived local significance of the *Future Pasts* project is distilled in a statement responding to the exhibition that affirms the opportunities created for expressing perspectives that have been marginalised, and the consequential enrichment of understanding, awareness and well-being amongst participants: "the project brings to life and revives the culture, traditions and memories of our people's untold land. It is a documentation of our peoples' rich history. The residents of north west Namibia through this project have the opportunity to tell their stories/history and how they were affected by changes and how they face the future" (Swakopmund/Sesfontein resident - (E4.2 p4). The Community Arts Venue in Swakopmund, wrote additionally that "[f]or COSDEF's students the exhibition created an opportunity to gain more information and insight to a part of Namibia, West Namibia, where surprisingly a lot have not been. ... For our Visual Art students this was also an opportunity to see the logistics of how to set up a professional exhibition" (E4.2 p3).

Pricing/valuing nature in England, UK and beyond

Sullivan and Hannis's engagements with the conceptualisation and fabrication of monetary values for nature/'natural capital' more broadly (R4, 5 and 6) are visible in multiple public and policy contexts informing environmental governance.

In 2014 Sullivan was invited as a 'specialist contributor' to present on 'Ecosystem services and the role of the market: a concerned view' for a Public Dialogue commissioned by the UK government on the National Ecosystem Assessment – at the time the largest ever public dialogue project commissioned by government on environmental issues. The project lead confirmed that Sullivan's contribution influenced, informed and changed public understanding and awareness in this event, writing that he could "discern from the empirical record of the dialogue process that this intervention played an important contributing role in returning a highly nuanced public view on this topic, including the need to temper economic valuation instruments with participatory decision making processes" (see E5.1 for final report and E5.2 for testimony by project lead).

Research by Sullivan and Hannis (R4 and 5) is visible in a 2019 UK Parliament Briefing on new UK government policy on environmental 'Net Gain': *POSTnote* 34 (E6). Their research is cited to evidence: a) the calculative crudeness of net gain metrics when applied to dynamic ecosystems; and b) cases of the downwards negotiation of biodiversity value calculations in specific biodiversity offset contracts.

Both Hannis and Sullivan contributed to diverse public and policy events aimed at developing best practice with regard to valuing 'nature' as an asset framed as 'natural capital'. In 2015 Hannis was an invited speaker at the 2nd World Forum on Natural Capital (in Edinburgh), and the sole academic on a high-level practitioner panel bringing ethical dilemmas arising from natural capital approaches into public debate. This intervention led to a further invitation to contribute to two videos for a module on 'Valuation of Ecosystem Services' in an online MOOC run by the University of Geneva, including a video debate with the current President of WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) International. The MOOC has had 25k enrolments and scores 4.7 out of 5 in 422 ratings, with multiple positive reviews - there are no disaggregated reviews for different sessions (E7).

In 2016 Sullivan and Hannis were separately invited as expert speakers by the Earthwatch Institute to publicly debate the question 'Does nature come with a price-tag?' with the current head of Natural England and a member of the Natural Capital Committee, at the Royal Geographical Society (London) in front of an invited audience of around 600 participants. The debate prompted lively discussion on social media and has been viewed over 1,000 times online. Sullivan's contribution was later used to position the content of a 2017 policy report on *Valuing Nature* for Ireland's National Economic and Social Council, leading to a questioning of pricing mechanisms in nature valuation in this policy report (E8). Also in 2016, Sullivan was an

invited participant to a 'deep dive' discussion on 're-imagining value' organised by the Heinrich Böll Foundation ('The Green Political Foundation'). The event's report is shaped throughout by her cited interventions (E9).

Media reach of the research

Elements of the research have been communicated and syndicated in popular media, thereby enhancing reach of the research (E10). For example, Sullivan's 2016 article in *The Conversation* on human-wildlife conflict in Namibia was read by over 60,000 readers, and was syndicated and drawn on in media outlets ranging from *Science Alert* to the *Daily Mail* (UK) to *The Wire* (India). Her 2016 article in *The Conversation*, 'Nature is being renamed 'natural capital' – but is it really the planet that will profit?' was shared multiple times on social media, provoking lively and wide-ranging ongoing discussion. In late 2019 this article led an editor of the members' Newsletter of the United Kingdom Environmental Law Association (UKELA) to invite Sullivan to inform professional understanding by writing a specialist article on 'natural capital' for the UKELA online Members Newsletter *e-law*, publicly available and distributed to 1,546 members.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

E1: Commissioned expert testimony:

1.1 - Sullivan S & Ganuses WS 2020 [Understanding Damara / #Nūkhoen and !Uubun indigeneity and marginalisation in Namibia](#), pp. 283-324 in Odendaal W & Werner W (eds.) *'Neither Here Nor There': Indigeneity, Marginalisation and Land Rights in Post-independence Namibia*. Windhoek: LAC.

1.2 LAC [Policy Brief](#) (2020), pp. 7-8.

1.3 LAC [Policy Brief](#) (2020), pp. 7-8.

1.3 Sullivan S, Ganuses WS, |Nuab F & senior members of Sesfontein and Anabeb Conservancies 2019 [Damara / #Nūkhoen and !Uubun Cultural Landscapes Mapping, West Namibia](#). Report to Namidaman Traditional Authority, Sesfontein.

E2: Government of Namibia, [Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Claims of Ancestral Land Rights and Restitution](#), 24 July 2020, pp. 43, 278, 337-8, 340, 374, 378, 430, 460.

E3: [Testimonials](#) confirming local and national significance of the research in Namibia.

E4: Testimonials diverse public visitors to research exhibition (R3)

E4.1: in [Bath, UK \(2017\)](#)

E4.2: [Swakopmund, Namibia \(2019\)](#).

E5.1: Final Report "[Naturally Speaking: A Public Dialogue on the UK National Ecosystem Assessment](#)", Sullivan's specialist contribution confirmed, p.2,

E5.2: [letter from dialogue lead](#) confirming change of participant perceptions due to Sullivan's intervention.

E6: [UK Parliament POSTbrief 34 on Net Gain policy](#) (pp. 13, 21, 29, 57, 59).

E7: Evidence of [Hannis's speaking role](#) at the 2nd World Forum on Natural Capital, and subsequent invited contribution to a [MOOC on Ecosystem Services](#) with [video debate](#).

E8: Online [Earthwatch Debate](#) and subsequent use of Sullivan's contribution to position a policy report on [Valuing Nature—Perspectives and Issues](#), for Ireland's National Economic & Social Council (pp. 1-2, plus additional citations throughout the report).

E9: [Re-imagining Value: Insights from the Care Economy, Commons, Cyberspace and Nature](#) report (pp. 17, 19, 20, 23-24, 26-27, 32, 49).

E10: Collated evidence of [media reach of the research](#)