
INVISIBLE PEOPLE

SELF-PERCEPTIONS OF INDIGENEITY
AND MARGINALISATION FROM THE
HAI//OM SAN OF TSINTSABIS



MSc Thesis – Eline Castelijns

Student code: 910605156110

Course code: SDC-80436

Supervisor: Stasja Koot

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Eline Castelijns - 910605156110

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Finally, here it is, my master thesis! I started preparing for this thesis almost three years ago, and in late 2016 I left for Namibia to do my fieldwork. After I came back, it was not always easy to write my thesis. It seemed like, in the past years, everything that could go wrong, went wrong. However, I do have fond memories of working on my thesis during those difficult years, even when sometimes I could only write for about a half day a week. My passion for the subject, combined with the importance of telling this story, made me continue writing even when it was very hard to do so. This thesis is the story of the current marginalised status of the Hai//om of Tsintsabis and their ideas around indigeneity, and I am proud to present it.

I would like to thank my thesis supervisor, Stasja Koot, for his guidance during this process, for all the interesting conversations we have had about the situation in Tsintsabis and for his patience every time I told him I could not make a deadline because of something that happened in my life.

I also want to thank my translator in Tsintsabis, Michael Ivangwa, for his efforts to help me find people who wanted to talk to me and for always checking up on me when the phone lines were down and I was alone in my treehouse.

And of course I want to thank my family for the moral support and patience when I was struggling to write my thesis. And my mother especially for our long phone calls all the times I was scared in the dark in my treehouse, during moth plagues and squirrel attacks.

It has been quite a journey and sometimes I thought it would never come to an end, but here we are.

"The Brothers Grimm. Lovely fellas. They're on my darts team. According to them, there's this Emperor who asks this shepherd's boy, 'How many seconds in eternity?' And the shepherd's boy says: 'There's this mountain of pure diamond, and it takes an hour to climb it and an hour to go around it. Every hundred years a little bird comes and sharpens its beak on the diamond mountain. And when the entire mountain is chiselled away, the first second of eternity will have passed.'

You might think that's a hell of a long time. Personally, I think that's a hell of a bird."

– From: Heaven Sent, Doctor Who series 9, 2015.

SUMMARY

Tsintsabis is a Namibian resettlement farm for the Hai//om, a San group who originally inhabited the Etosha National Park. They are internationally considered to be indigenous, but not recognised as such in Namibia because the government does not use this concept, and defines San groups as marginalised people. Many changes are currently happening in Tsintsabis and this thesis looks at how those changing dynamics influence the Hai//om of Tsintsabis' self-perceptions of both their indigenous status and their marginalisation in Namibia, based on 35 interviews with the people of Tsintsabis. The dynamics include in-migration of more powerful ethnic groups into Tsintsabis and small-scale land grabbing by those groups, which are symptoms of the uneven power relationship between the Hai//om and others. Infrastructural changes make the Hai//om more connected to the rest of Namibia but also amplify the problems caused by the power dynamics. The Hai//om of Tsintsabis face internal problems too, as a leadership conflict divides the community, making people feel ashamed of their ethnic group. The Hai//om of Tsintsabis consider themselves to be indigenous, but their definition of indigeneity is very different from the most common but also highly debated definitions as summarised by Saugestad (2001) based on four pillars (first-come, self-identification, cultural difference and non-dominance). The Hai//om of Tsintsabis' definition emphasises the problematic criterion of first-come and excludes non-dominance, seeing marginalisation as a violation of their indigeneity rather than as part of it. When combining this difference with the complexity of Namibian history and the position of groups such as the Hai//om in that history, the main problem with the most common definition is highlighted: it cannot apply to everyone, will never be accepted by everyone, and therefore we should stop trying to make an all-encompassing definition. Rather, we need to focus on marginalisation faced by these people. The Hai//om of Tsintsabis are increasingly marginalised, stuck in their situation with no solution. They have become invisible in Namibian society because of the government's assumption that everyone has an equal starting position. The severe power differences have made changing their own living conditions impossible, and they have acquiesced in this situation. However, their need for outside help combined with a reluctance to trust outsiders has created a stalemate situation that is unlikely to be resolved in the near future.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In this master thesis, I explore the Hai//om of Tsintsabis' perceptions of their indigenous status in Namibia, and how those perceptions are influenced by current dynamics of land, leadership and in-migration. This first chapter introduces the setting, the problem statement and the aims and objectives of my research.

1.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND SETTING

Namibia is a scarcely populated country in the south of the African continent, known to most people only for its nature and wildlife parks. However, even though the population of Namibia is small, roughly 2.5 million (Namibian Population, 2016), it is very diverse. The largest number of Namibians can be categorised as Bantu peoples, who migrated to this country from the 15th century onwards (Namib.info, n.d.). A smaller group has a European background, mainly German, English and Afrikaner (migrated from South Africa, but of Dutch descent) (Namibian Population, 2016). There are also various groups who are considered as indigenous people, who make up about 8% of the population, although they are not recognised as such. Namibia, like many other African countries, has trouble defining indigeneity. It is a country with a complex history, especially concerning issues of ethnicity during the colonial and later apartheid era. Besides that, the concept of indigeneity itself, based on four pillars (first-come, cultural difference, non-dominance and self-ascription (Saugestad, 2001)), does not seem to take into account the complex situation in a country like Namibia and therefore is unusable in this country.

Internationally, however, some Namibian groups have been labelled indigenous. Probably the most well-known indigenous people are the San or Bushmen groups, who together make up between 1.3% and 1.6% (27,000 to 34,000 people) of the total Namibian population (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, n.d.). There are six officially recognised San groups in Namibia (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2015.). The Hai//om, consisting of between 9,000 and 15,000 people (Legal Assistance Centre, 2006; Hitchcock, 2015), is the largest of these groups. They are the original inhabitants of what is known today as the Etosha National Park.

HISTORY OF THE HAI//OM AND ETOSHA

Etosha, "Namibia's greatest wildlife sanctuary" (Etosha National Park, 2016) as the government calls it, is one of Namibia's most important tourist attractions. However, for the Hai//om, considered by many authors (Suzman, 2004; Legal Assistance Centre, 2006; Dieckmann, 2007; Hitchcock, 2015) to be original inhabitants of the Etosha region, this tourist site has great historical significance.

The Hai//om used to live in and around the area that is now the Etosha park, and continued living there even when the park was established in 1907 by the colonial government, although this changed their lives drastically. While on the one hand, the colonial government saw the Hai//om as problematic, as they would hunt the game in the park, they were also "used" for tourism, as workers or attractions (Koot, 2013). While some Hai//om remained in the park, and a few of them maintained a "traditional" lifestyle, many moved away once the park was created, and became integrated into the economy of the colonial administration under South African rule (Dieckmann, 2007). In 1952 reserves were established for San groups in the region, as part of the "homelands" policy (Hitchcock, 2015). Namibia at that time was under South African colonial administration, which meant the regime was based on Apartheid. The Hai//om were not assigned a homeland because they were not seen as "true San" (Koot, 2013; Suzman, 2004). Under Apartheid, those types of classifications, based on so-called "race", were the norm, and the Hai//om's involvement in the national economy and lack of coherence within the group made them "impure" in the eyes of the Apartheid regime (Dieckmann, 2007). As a result, they lost the right to their "homeland" Etosha, when those rights were established for other ethnic groups.

Then, in 1954, most of the Hai//om in Etosha were ordered by the government to leave the park (Hitchcock, 2015). They could either resettle to an area north of Etosha or live and work on farms owned by white farmers in the surrounding area (Suzman, 2004). Only twelve families, who were employed in Etosha, were allowed stay (Hitchcock, 2015). This made the Hai//om a mostly landless people (Hitchcock, 2015), having lost every connection with, ownership of and access to their ancestral land, and not given any compensation for this.

Those who were evicted from Etosha in 1954 were not allowed back into the park, unless they had a permit or worked in the park's expanding tourist sector. Despite these restrictions, many Hai//om travelled to Etosha and even resided there illegally, often with help from white park employees or farmers. However, most of the Hai//om lived and worked on farms owned by white farmers during this period between their eviction from

Etosha and Namibia's independence (Dieckmann, 2007). Under apartheid rule, and with the white farmer being the most powerful actor in these remote locations, a very particular patriarchist relationship between the farmers and the landless Hai//om arose, making them dependent on the farmer for their livelihoods (Koot, 2013; Dieckmann, 2007).

AFTER INDEPENDENCE

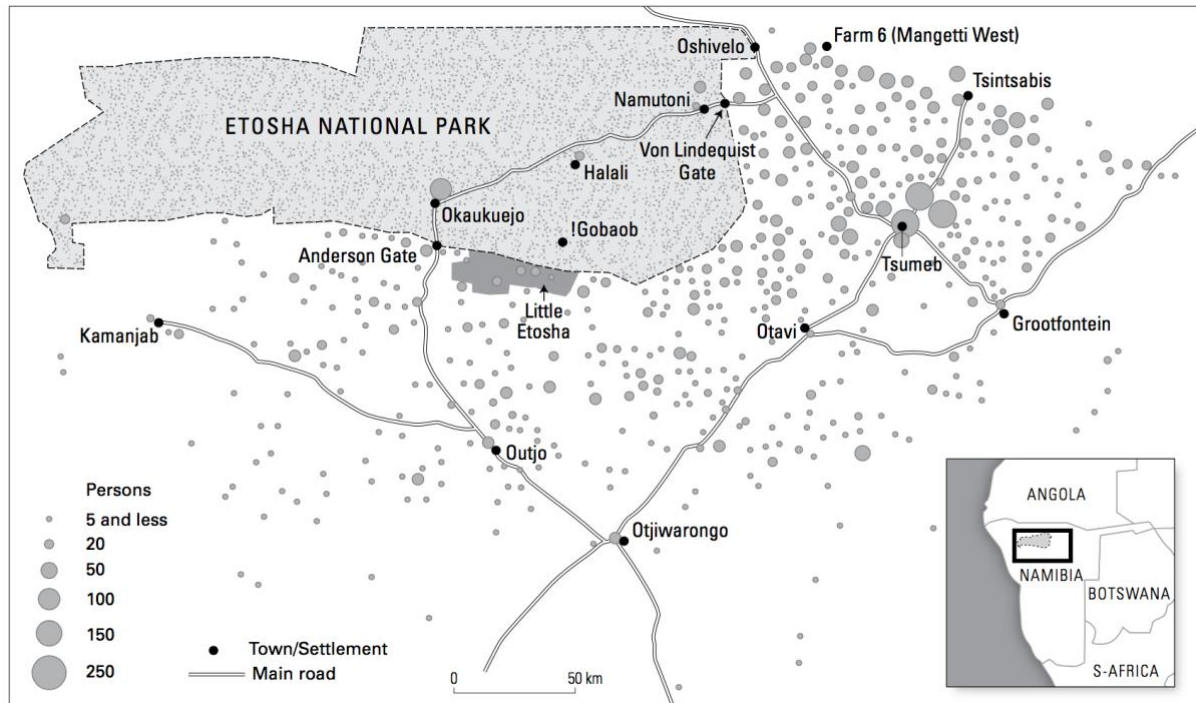
The situation of the Hai//om as a landless people remained problematic even after Namibia's independence from South Africa in 1990. Development projects hardly ever reached them (Koot, 2013). In 1995, the Namibian government passed a law that allowed San groups and others who were considered "traditional" to elect a Traditional Authority (TA), a representative towards the government. Many people believed these were created as a control mechanism and to homogenise groups that are naturally heterogeneous and geographically dispersed. A TA was also chosen to represent the Hai//om, but many people did not feel represented by him (Hitchcock, 2015), as he was chosen by only a small number of Hai//om people. This created a leadership crisis that led to the Hai//om being even less able to advocate their rights in Namibian society (Legal Assistance Centre, 2006).

Besides conflict and division in this very heterogeneous group, landlessness remains one of the Hai//om's most defining struggles. Many attempts to acquire land in the last few decades have failed, as often other groups were favoured over them and the Hai//om remain excluded by the government (Koot, 2013; Widlok, 2001). And, while efforts are still being made to acquire land, power struggles and historical recognition based on their complex indigenous status are often obstructing these processes (Legal Assistance Centre, 2006; Koot, 2013). Furthermore, "successful" land restitution projects, such as in an area called Little Etosha (Koot, 2013), have dealt with issues of limited government support and of locations providing little opportunities for successful livelihood strategies (Legal Assistance Centre, 2006).

Currently, a new land claim is being initiated by Hai//om, demanding recognition of their indigeneity to the Etosha region, as well as ownership of the region (Koot and Hitchcock, in press).

In the post-colonial years, the focus of the Namibian government in issues of landlessness has been on land reform and especially resettlement, rather than restoring ownership. Within their program, resettlement farms have been created for certain

landless ethnic groups. These are large plots of farm land, owned by the government, where landless groups are allowed to live. One of those resettlement farms is Tsintsabis, an area historically dominated by the Hai//om and the focus of this thesis.



Source: Koot and Hitchcock, in press

TSINTSABIS RESETTLEMENT FARM

Tsintsabis resettlement farm is located in the north of Namibia, about 90 kilometres east of Etosha National Park and on the border between commercial farmland in the south and communal land in the north of the country. After it had been a police station and later a military base during colonial times, post-independence it became a resettlement farm for mainly the Hai//om (Koot, 2013).

When Tsintsabis resettlement farm had just been established, most inhabitants were Hai//om, and some were from another San group named the !Xun, but these days many different ethnic groups live in Tsintsabis. This in-migration of people from other ethnic groups has caused a very high population growth, as well as a diversification of Tsintsabis' population. The relationship between the Hai//om and the Owambo, the largest and most powerful group in Namibia of which many have moved to Tsintsabis in recent years, seems especially difficult. The Hai//om feel that the Owambo are taking away their land by fencing and claiming it for themselves, and the Owambo own most of the shops in Tsintsabis. The Owambo on the other hand see the Hai//om as "less

capable” than themselves, especially regarding finance and education (Hüncke, 2010; Bijsterbosch, 2016).

Another recent development is the tarring of the road to Tsintsabis in 2010/2011. People in Tsintsabis expected many job opportunities to come from this, but were also afraid of the changes the tarred road might bring (Hüncke, 2010). At least part of their fears were justified, with a newspaper article in 2010 reporting that road workers are negatively influencing the community by paying for sex with under aged girls (Insight Namibia, 2010). These feelings were confirmed by many of my interviewees. And besides that, the expected job opportunities never occurred. However, many people I talked to do seem happy to be more connected to the rest of Namibia, by the road as well as other infrastructural developments, such as connection to phone and internet services. While there are issues between the San and other groups living in Tsintsabis, the Hai//om of Tsintsabis face internal problems within their group as well. In the recent years, there have been authority disputes within the community, surrounding the position of headman of the Hai//om in Tsintsabis. These struggles influence the sense of community amongst the Hai//om and !Xun. Whether or not the above dynamics affect feelings of indigeneity amongst the Hai//om will be discussed in a dedicated chapter later in this thesis.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The previous section shows the history of the Hai//om, who are the largest group living in Tsintsabis, as well as recent developments on this resettlement farm that are changing the community. This also affects how people see themselves and others. As the Hai//om are a San group, internationally considered to be indigenous, I am interested to see how these changes affect in particular their perceptions of their own indigenous status. That is the focus of my research.

Indigeneity is, as we will see further in this thesis, a heavily disputed concept. But in the case of the Hai//om we will see that reality makes this even more complex. Their ambiguous indigeneity has had and continues to have an enormous impact on them, and if you add the changing dynamics within the community of Tsintsabis, a very complicated situation arises. This thesis will explore those complex changes in the lives of the Hai//om in Tsintsabis in light of their status as indigenous peoples.

1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This thesis focuses on the knowledge gap of the relationship between contemporary dynamics around land, leadership and in-migration in Tsintsabis and perceptions from the Hai//om in this community of their own indigenous status. The aim is to discover the connections between the ideas and feelings of indigeneity and these developments. While people from other backgrounds living in Tsintsabis are included in my research, as the current dynamics include them too, the main focus is on discovering how these dynamics influence Hai//om's own perceptions of their indigenous status. The reason why research about this topic is important for the Hai//om in Tsintsabis, is that it shows how a group like them, whose status as an indigenous group is highly disputed in Namibia, deals with the concept of indigeneity itself. Besides giving these people a voice, it also contributes to the debate on the concept of indigeneity, which I will discuss in the next chapter. Furthermore, Tsintsabis is changing in many ways, the most important of which I will discuss in chapter 4. But it is currently unknown how these changes are affecting the Hai//om, particularly in relation to their disputed indigenous status. Showing the effects of these changes, will give important insights into the Hai//om's relationship to the concept of indigeneity.

In the remainder of this chapter, I present my research question and sub-questions that this thesis is based upon.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How do contemporary land, in-migration and leadership disputes in Tsintsabis influence Hai//om perceptions of their status as indigenous people?

SUB-QUESTIONS

This general research question is divided into the following sub-questions:

- 1. How do the Hai//om in Tsintsabis perceive leadership disputes in Tsintsabis in relation to their status as indigenous people?*
- 2. How do the Hai//om in Tsintsabis perceive issues around in-migration and land acquisition in Tsintsabis, as well as the current Hai//om land claim, in relation to their status as indigenous people?*
- 3. What are the Hai//om of Tsintsabis' perceptions on indigeneity, marginalisation and their own ethnic group?*

The rest of my thesis will start with a theoretical framework in which I explore the main concepts and theories this research deals with or is based on in chapter 2. After that, in chapter 3, I will explain my research design and methods used. Then I present my findings in chapters 4 and 5. In chapter 6 I will discuss what these results mean for the broader discussion about the concept of indigeneity. Finally, in chapter 7, I give my conclusion.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter I explain the origins of the most common definition of the concept of indigeneity, and look at the debate surrounding it. I then discuss what indigeneity means in Namibia and how it relates to the topic of my research.

2.1 DEFINING INDIGENEITY

Indigeneity as a concept is difficult to define, and it has been evolving ever since the colonial times. During the colonial era, indigenous people were defined as all of those who were found in the colonised territories. This also included people of non-western descent who had previously migrated into those areas, such as for example the Bantu groups in Southern Africa. In the post-colonial years, the United Nations made efforts to specify the definition of indigeneity, and through the years developed criteria such as a certain tribal way of life, being descendants of those who lived in a country before colonisation, and the existence of social, cultural and economic institutions that predated colonisation. However, in its attempts to define indigeneity, the United Nations ran into resistance against different definitions from various member states. It became clear that any definition would only apply to a certain group of people, that it was almost impossible to find an all-encompassing definition (Daes, 1996).

In the 1980s, an emphasis on self-identification started to arise, which was then combined with a number of characteristics that could apply to indigenous people. Or, as it is written in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, a list of human rights violations that many indigenous groups tend to experience.

Self-identification, however, is leading according to these definitions. The other criteria are not always applicable to every indigenous group, nor are they necessarily the only characteristics that show that a specific group is indigenous (Barume, 2010; United Nations, 2008). However, the criterion of self-identification can be problematic, because anyone can use it, whereas the other criteria deal with the specific characteristics of certain groups.

These days there is an ongoing debate about what definition should be used in the academic and policy domains. The most commonly used definition by the United Nations, summarised by Saugestad using four criteria (first-come, non-dominance, cultural difference and self-ascription (Saugestad, 2001, p. 35)), has been criticised for linking indigeneity mainly to ancestry and for its criteria not being applicable to every situation,

as we have also seen in the attempts of the United Nations to create a working definition of the concept.

2.2 THE DEBATE

In 2003, Adam Kuper argued that indigeneity is much more flexible, relational and complex than what we see in common definitions. According to him, it is a problematic concept, mainly because its motivation is based upon ideas similar to the exclusion of migrants by extreme right wing parties in Europe (Kuper, 2003). He also calls it a romantic view, that sees a group of people as homogeneous carriers of an ancient culture, who are distinctively different from other people in the same country. In practice, histories are usually much more complex, as is also the case in Tsintsabis. They include many flows of migration through the centuries, and people adapting to each other and various outside changes. The question is then: can we come up with an alternative definition for indigeneity or should we stop using this concept altogether? Kuper, with his article, hits a sensitive spot for those advocating the rights of indigenous people and trying to find a solution for problems faced by those people. Kenrick and Lewis (2004a, 2004b), for example, say that Kuper has portrayed the indigenous rights movement as aggressive, and they emphasise the complexity of the situations indigenous people are in, which calls for a decent solution. Their view is supported by others too (Asch and Samson, 2006), emphasising the current underprivileged position of certain indigenous peoples. However, in the end they too come to the conclusion that a new approach needs to be taken to the concept of indigeneity (Kenrick and Lewis, 2004a). Kenrick and Lewis (2004a) propose what they call a relational approach to indigeneity, which they define as a relationship containing issues of power and dispossession. In this relationship, indigeneity represents the dispossessed, powerless side. From their point of view, we should see indigeneity as a concept in relation to more powerful actors or systems, rather than as only based upon ancestry.

Others, such as Suzman (2003), explain that, even though the situation of indigenous people is very different from those of for example migrant exclusion that Kuper compares it to, it does show that the views of the movement are radical. He therefore suggests that critically looking at motivations behind the indigenous rights movement can be useful for finding new approaches.

Alan Barnard (2004) argues that, while the different sides of the indigeneity debate present their arguments clearly, it seems like no compromise can be made between them. While he agrees with Kuper that the term indigeneity is problematic, he also agrees with Kenrick and Lewis that it can be a useful concept in practical situations. He

elaborates on this point of view by arguing that indigeneity is a concept that might be rejected in the scientific realm, but can be useful in law and politics (Barnard, 2006). This view is criticised by Kenrick (2006), who says that making a distinction between the political and scientific use of the concept is problematic, and distorts the connection and reflexivity between the two realms. Kuper (2006) also criticises Barnard's view, for being too simplistic on how this concept can be used practically. All in all, most scholars agree that the current definition of indigeneity has problematic aspects, although they disagree on the extent and focus of these aspects. Most of them, then, argue for a different definition, but again disagree on what that definition should be or whether we should stop using the concept completely.

2.3 INDIGENEITY IN NAMIBIA

In Namibia, as in many other African countries, indigeneity is a problematic concept because the line between indigenous and non-indigenous people is not as clear as in other parts of the world. And mainly in Southern Africa, the common saying that in African countries "everyone is indigenous", proves controversial in light of the recent apartheid history. Because "everyone" includes all groups except those who are of European descent.

Because this is such a difficult and controversial topic, there is no reference to indigeneity in the Namibian constitution. However, Namibia does recognise the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, and the country's 2000 Traditional Authorities Act briefly mentions indigeneity, but only as an aspect of a traditional community. This seems to mean that Namibia officially sees every traditional community as indigenous (Van der Wulp and Koot, in press), which is not in line with the official definition of indigeneity (Saugestad, 2001) as it does not take into account the pillar of first-come.

And besides there being no legal basis for the use of the concept of indigeneity in Namibia, most development programs are directed towards "marginalised" people, with no specific focus on indigeneity (Sapignoli and Hitchcock, 2013). There are a few governmental and non-governmental bodies that deal with "San support" or "San development". However, most of these do not solely help San or indigenous people, but "marginalised communities" in general, with no specific focus on indigeneity. And the main objective of the government, through the Division of San Development, is to promote socio-economic development through improvement of livelihoods and integration into mainstream economy and society (Sapignoli and Hitchcock, 2013). The way in which the government aims to solve the poverty and marginalisation problems, by

assimilation, is just a new way of oppressing already marginalised people, as they are not allowed to keep their own identity if they want to be less marginalised (Sapignoli and Hitchcock, 2013).

In Namibia, indigenous groups are often addressed not as indigenous, but as marginalised communities. They are of course not the only marginalised communities, but research has shown that they are some of the most marginalised groups in the country. They face a lack of land security, only 30% of San people have finished primary school. They are discriminated against. Political representation and participation of San groups is the lowest in the country (Sapignoli and Hitchcock, 2013; Dieckmann, Dirks and Hays, 2014). These are only some of the problems faced by all the different San groups, group-specific issues are not included. Specific issues faced by the Hai//om of Tsintsabis are a focus of my thesis.

2.4 MY RESEARCH

The concept of indigeneity is highly debated, and it might be problematic in certain domains, even though according to some it could be useful in others. Besides that, the criteria used in the most common definitions seem to never be a completely good fit for every situation. In my thesis I focus on the views of the Hai//om themselves, to see how they identify their indigeneity. This will give an insight into their meaning of indigeneity, and how that is influenced by current dynamics. This does not mean, however, that I only focus on the criterion of self-identification, because that only encompasses whether or not someone identifies as indigenous, and not their definition of the concept, and other issues related to their indigeneity. As much as I look at how the Hai//om identify themselves as indigenous people, I do this through also looking at their history, current way of living through the recent changes, and the dynamics between them and other groups, and how they identify in light of those things. I thus look at all the criteria, but I take self-identification as the starting point: how do the Hai//om see this themselves? I do this because, as I said in the first chapter of this thesis, it is important to know the views of Hai//om themselves on the concept, rather than the perceptions of scholars, government officials or others. The Hai//om's voices need to be heard, because in order to form an opinion on the concept of indigeneity, we need to know how those who the concept is about perceive it.

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the methodology that I used during the different stages of my research. I address these stages separately, showing how I tackled them using different methods, and reflecting on each stage.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

For my research I used a case study approach (De Vaus, 2001), with the current situation of the Hai//om in Tsintsabis as my case. I mainly gathered my data through interviews, which were mostly of a semi-structured nature. I used a topic list to guide the interviews, but was flexible to let the interviewees talk about certain topics that seemed important to them, while at the same time making sure that all of my topics were covered (Green and Thorogood, 2014; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

This approach allowed me to gain an overview of feelings about current dynamics within the community, rather than gathering specific information from different stakeholders around one specific issue. It provided structure and boundaries for the interviews, while leaving enough room for improvisation and flexibility.

Besides these interviews, I gathered information through informal conversations I had with my translator and sometimes with people in Tsintsabis, and through observations while walking around the resettlement farm. While I was among the people in Tsintsabis for about three months, I lived on a campsite that was located just outside of the resettlement farm. This physical distance between me and Tsintsabis resulted in the fact that, while I was in contact with the people of Tsintsabis on a daily basis, I never actually lived among them as a researcher would with an ethnographic approach (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). I would therefore position my approach as "semi-ethnographic", as I lived near these people and interacted with them on a daily basis, but never really got the feeling of living "with" them because of the physical difference between where I lived and the resettlement farm itself.

3.2 DATA COLLECTION

In this section I will explain where I did my research, who my research population is, what data have been collected and what methods I used in order to collect that data.

STUDY AREA

I collected my data in Tsintsabis, a resettlement farm in the Oshikoto region in northern Namibia, where I stayed for approximately three months between October of 2016 and January of 2017.

RESEARCH POPULATION

My research population consisted of inhabitants of Tsintsabis at the time of the research. Because I conducted my research during the summer holiday, the population might be different from what it normally is. I know that this could be a potential limitation to the research. However, I tried to collect as much data as possible before the start of the summer holidays.

The population of Tsintsabis consists of people from varied ethnic backgrounds, but my main focus is on the Hai//om, who are also the largest ethnic group in Tsintsabis. However, I have also interviewed some people from other ethnic groups in the community.

METHODS AND DATA

At first, when I started my research, I was unsure what method would be best. I had done some desk research in order to understand the theoretical framework and context of the situation. However, reading about it and actually being there are two very different things. So, as I got to Tsintsabis, I decided to discuss with my translator which methods would best fit this context, and then find out for myself whether or not that was actually the case.

I ended up doing 35 semi-structured interviews, that provided me with answers to quite specific questions in my research. Most of these interviews were one-on-one conversations, with only my translator as a third person. However, sometimes when for example I interviewed a woman, her husband would also join. Or if I would interview an

elderly person who lived with their family, the family would participate in the conversation as well. And one time, when me and my translator had scheduled an interview with one woman, there was a whole group of women waiting when we arrived, and we interviewed all of them together.

I added to these diverse interviews by doing participant observations and having a number of informal conversations. These two methods, however, I used mostly for background information about the situation in Tsintsabis and to further refine my interviews.

The reason I focused on doing semi-structured interviews was that I had quite a number of specific topics I wanted answers to, and I did not want to lose sight of those, while at the same time wanting to leave enough room for people to go off into different directions during the interviews. It would, then, also depend on the interviewees themselves how structured or unstructured the interview was.

Many of my findings, however, did not just come from the interviews themselves, but from how people would interact with me, each other or my translator, before and after the interview, and from things that would happen during the interview. For example, sometimes the way someone would approach a certain topic was very telling. And when I did interviews with multiple people at the same time, a lot of information could be gathered from their interactions with each other. This all led me to be able to create quite a complete picture for every single one of my research questions (Green and Thorogood, 2014; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

3.3 LIMITATIONS AND INTERVIEWEE ATTITUDES

Both the design phase and data collection of my thesis have some limitations. Besides that, there are some important things to note about the attitudes of my interviewees. I will discuss both of these in this section.

LIMITATIONS

A downside and perhaps a limitation of the physical distance between me and my research population was that I was never able to fully be a part of the community. As a result, I was told by my translator that many people were afraid to talk to me as they did not know me or know what to expect from the interviews. It became very clear after a while that people were afraid I was going to report my findings to someone and they would be held accountable for what they said to me. This was especially the case for

issues that were quite politically sensitive already, such as the leadership struggles within the community, and the role of more powerful ethnic groups in land issues in Tsintsabis. Their hesitance to talk to me about these subjects might have influenced my findings, because many people would not talk to me at all, and others may not have told me everything because they were afraid someone else would hear about it from me and there would be consequences for them speaking out. I did try to explain my intentions, and that interviewees would remain anonymous. This, however, did not reassure many people, as they had been told many times before that they could trust someone, and found out later that those promises were not kept.

A limitation of my case study approach is that the results are not necessarily applicable to other situations, limiting the external validity of this research. However, this limitation does not affect the main aim of my research, since that is to understand the situation in Tsintsabis rather than generalising my findings beyond Tsintsabis itself. Where this limitation could become problematic, though, is when the case in Tsintsabis is used as an example of marginalised San groups living on commercial- or resettlement farms in Namibia. While there are many similar cases, some characteristics will be very specific to the case in Tsintsabis.

Another limitation, concerning mainly the internal validity and the reliability of my research, is the fact that I worked together with a translator/assistant during my research (De Vaus, 2001). This has probably affected interpretations during interviews as well as what people do and do not want to speak about. However, I had the feeling that most people were quite comfortable to talk to my translator, and did not see any difference in results between translated interviews and interviews with people who spoke English.

The fact that I recorded my interviews might also be a limitation. People were, as I said, very afraid to talk about certain subjects. This might have been affected by me recording the interviews, even though I asked permission to record and offered to stop the recording once someone seemed hesitant to answer a question. However, I personally think that interviewees were usually afraid to talk about these subjects to me anyway, more so because I was an outsider than because the interviews were being recorded. Me being a white European woman probably made me more of an outsider, especially considering the recent apartheid history many people in Tsintsabis still remembered. However, the feeling I got while I was there was that most outsiders in Tsintsabis, regardless of their background or skin colour, were treated with caution and suspicion.

INTERVIEWEE ATTITUDES

As mentioned above, the cautious attitude of interviewees, or potential interviewees, towards me was a limitation to my research. However, there were other interesting dimensions to their attitudes. One of those was how people would thank me for my time, for being able to tell their stories. Many people, after I interviewed them, were grateful for the opportunity: *"Here around we are all with the same burden in our hearts. So there's nowhere or no one you can talk to, besides someone who is a foreigner which can just speak out (...) that's when you talk out and you feel freely"* (interview 34).

This seems contradictory to my earlier point about people being afraid to talk, but it might be easier to tell your story to somebody who is not part of the situation in which that story takes place, while on the other hand you might be scared because you are unaware of their intentions. Some people were afraid I would tell government officials or people from other ethnic groups what they had said to me. I was told this happens a lot in Namibia, and it makes many people afraid to tell their truth to someone they do not know. Especially people like the Hai//om, who hold a fairly powerless position in society, can feel that fear.

Besides this, the fact you choose not to talk about a subject can have other reasons too, for example that it is a very emotional or private subject. Many interviewees experienced difficulty talking about leadership issues in the community, which was very emotional for many. They would either say they did not want to talk about the subject, were noticeably uncomfortable, or they said that they were unaware of the issue. In many situations where this happened, the interviewee would either be looking away, or nervously laughing.

A lot of interviewees asked me for help with their personal problems, thinking that I had the ability to contact the government or big companies and tell them to help the people in Tsintsabis. This, to me, felt like they saw me as someone who was more knowledgeable, and could tell them what to do or where to go, just because I was an outsider. It also felt like they were positioning themselves as being dependent on what I could do, which fits into the specific type of paternalistic patron-client relationship many San groups have developed with Europeans over the past centuries (Koot, 2013).

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

After the fieldwork in Namibia, I analysed my data in order to gain an organised and detailed overview of the results and draw conclusions from them. I transcribed and coded my interviews, in order to create a coherent story which can be seen in the result section of this thesis. I then discussed the data and drew conclusions from it (Green and Thorogood, 2014; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

Because my research headed in a slightly different direction after coming back from my fieldwork, I also read some additional literature.

4. DYNAMICS IN TSINTSABIS

In this chapter I present the results of my first two sub-questions about the current dynamics in Tsintsabis, caused both by inside and outside influences to the Hai//om of Tsintsabis. The outside influences, the subject of section 4.1, are in-migration, land grabbing and infrastructural improvements physically connecting Tsintsabis to the rest of Namibia. These dynamics are all based on the relationship between the Hai//om of Tsintsabis and others in Namibian society. Sections 4.2 and 4.3, on the other hand, deal with more internally focused dynamics. This, however, does not mean they are not influenced by outside forces. Feelings surrounding the current land claim are brought about by how that process is moving forward, both internally amongst the claimants and externally in relation to the institutions the claim is made against. And the leadership conflict, while being an internal conflict within the Hai//om community in Tsintsabis, is caused not only by dynamics within this community, but also for example by their relationship with the !Xun and the government regulations about Traditional Authority. The initiative for both these dynamics, however, is primarily within the Hai//om community in Tsintsabis, whereas in-migration, small-scale land grabbing and infrastructural change are imposed on them.

4.1 MIGRATION, LAND AND INFRASTRUCTURE

In the past years, Tsintsabis has been experiencing a high number of in-migration that has caused rapid population growth. Many in-migrants are from different, often more powerful, groups. Most of them are Ovambos, who are some of the largest and most powerful people in Namibia. These people have an immense effect on the Hai//om community, which I will explore in this section. One of the main ways in which they influence the community is through what I call small-scale land grabbing, which is a specific problem that I will talk about later in this section. First, I will explain the in-migration process itself and resulting shifts in power dynamics.

IN-MIGRANTS AND POWER DYNAMICS

My interviews showed that in-migrants are quickly changing the dynamics in Tsintsabis. One way in which this happens, is the establishment of so-called "shebeens": small shops or cafes which are mainly focused on selling alcohol. Previously, alcohol was hardly

present in Tsintsabis, but now many Hai//om and !Xun, the other San group in Tsintsabis, have become addicted to it. This Hai//om man who has lived in Tsintsabis since the resettlement farm was established explains the changes caused by shebeens:

Interview 3: *Once the other tribes moved in, they came here and then they put up their shebeens, lot of shebeens drinking places. Now these eh lot of San people Hai//om people which are already poor have now been addicted to drinking. So those who are now drinking alcohol early in the morning, stand up, go to the drinking place and then now they are fetching water for those people every day. Doesn't do anything at home. And then they make the alcohol and they drink the whole day there. So and this is quite changing the community and is also affecting the lifestyle of the community of Tsintsabis.*

Even children have become addicted to alcohol. This, according to different interviewees, happened because alcohol is being brought close to their homes, and their often addicted parents bring them along to the shebeens.

Addicts in Tsintsabis, as in other places, are often aggressive, causing domestic abuse and violent conflicts. Many interviewees remembered that one of those conflicts resulted in the death of two Hai//om brothers in one of the shebeens.

Studies show that different San groups all over Southern Africa have been dealing with alcoholism related problems, where alcohol is brought into the community by outside influences such as in-migration or tourism, and the Hai//om are no exception to this (Koot, 2013). San groups such as the Hai//om in Tsintsabis also seem more likely to fall into alcoholism because of their life circumstances such as unemployment, boredom and exclusion from society, often drinking to forget about their problems (AHCPR and IWGIA, 2008).

However, the shebeens and related alcoholism are the most prominent example of a much larger problem in Tsintsabis, namely the power difference between the in-migrants and the San groups, and the dependency of the San groups on the in-migrants created by this power difference. Interviewees stated that the in-migrants have much better resources, such as money and connections, than they do. They feel overpowered by the in-migrants, who they see as the dominant group in Tsintsabis. This man talks about the feelings of powerlessness amongst the Hai//om:

Interview 26: *I feel that they have more power than us, they're stronger than us. But one thing is what can we do? We can feel sad, we can feel hurt, but there's nothing you can do. Because eh we don't have that power. Because once*

they came in with the shebeen, they feel it and they're using their power that they are having. (...) So we try to control them but there's no way you can control them even. Even nowadays they are selling alcohol to the under aged children. According to the Namibian constitution it's like you have to be over 18 in order to have access to alcohol. But here even the small can come to a shebeen.

Some Hai//om feel like they are slaves to the in-migrants. Their alcohol addiction leads them to do odd jobs for the shebeen owners, such as fetching water, in return for alcohol or money that they end up spending on alcohol. Shebeen owners do not, however, employ Hai//om people for any real jobs. This shows that, indeed, the in-migrants do not see the Hai//om as their equals (Hüncke, 2010). Many Hai//om express that they feel the in-migrants are only coming to Tsintsabis for their own personal benefit, and that they only share the profit amongst their own group. As explained by this Hai//om man, they do not work together or share any of their benefits with the San groups:

Interview 14: *The only thing he sees is that those people (in-migrants) they came for their own benefits. Even when they came and then they built their structures here, which is the shops and shebeens, they did not go talk in Tsintsabis, to the people in the community. (...) They came, they built their shop and then their own people are the ones who are even selling the... So maybe if they could have just brought a bit of job opportunity then one could have said no they have changed a bit because some of our inhabitants are getting a bit of profit from there. But now the only thing they are doing is they just look after themselves.*

As the in-migrants come in large numbers and are quickly overpowering the people of Tsintsabis, the two San groups feel left out by the government. The slogan of Namibia is "One Nation One Namibia", and people are encouraged to live wherever they want. The people of Tsintsabis feel that this is harmful to them as a fairly powerless and landless group, as can be seen from this quote from an older Hai//om man:

Interview 15: *Mostly he's seeing the Oshivambo speaking (Ovambo, the largest in-migrant group) which are coming in, and which is now the dominant group in Tsintsabis (...) Once, maybe you enquire that how come that Oshivambo people are moving in so much, then they just say it is one nation: one Namibia one nation. So and it's causing like now that the people from this area are landless. (...) Yeah he's saying it's the biggest change, because when these people came in, they don't care about the indigeneity of these people, whether they are*

indigenous or not. They just see them as people which are marginalised. And then they come and take over the land. So if there is eh someone who wants to complain about that, then it is "it's one Namibia, one nation" and yet we don't want people to come and live here. So which would be a crime according to our constitution.

In many ways, people say they still feel colonised, or like slaves. It is a story that fits into the long history of many San groups in Namibia and Southern Africa of being some of the most marginalised people in the region (AHCPR and IWGIA, 2008).

LAND GRABBING

Land in Tsintsabis is getting increasingly scarce as a result of land fencing by the in-migrants. Many of the interviewees feel threatened by this, stating that they feel like they no longer belong to this place or are respected as the indigenous people. They also fear that there will be no land left for their children to live and start a family on. Therefore, many say that it would be better to leave and start over somewhere else. These are quotes from three different interviewees, explaining in their own words how the increasing land scarcity is affecting them:

Interview 24: *All the lands are taken over by the other tribes. And then we don't even get to go in these lands. So because of firewood, we need firewood, we need to cook, so we just go in illegally and collect firewood and come out. But once you are catch it's a crime. So because of that we live in fear, when normally we're living freely. Fear in our own eh in this community. And even because those who are the ownership and owners they are eh it's also their business, which generates profits. And then they can buy firewood whenever they want, wherever they want. (...) There's no land for us to go and collect such things. (...) We're not free. (...) Being or belonging here is something which is still very strong in our hearts, because this is our homeland. But now the current pressure which we are getting, sometimes to the extent of feeling that on your own land you feel it is not your land, you don't feel like you don't belong to it somehow, the pressure that are rising, but yet you don't even have a place if you go... (Does it feel like being a stranger on your own land?) Yeah.*

Interview 19: *We feel that we're no more an indigenous person of this place. (...) Sometimes there are feelings that you want to go out from here, just go somewhere but you don't know where to go.*

Interview 6: *Now even our own children will not have a chance of getting their own land, because of that. (...) Because there is no land (...) She's saying yes because, as a human being sometimes in a resettlement area one would like to buy a bit of cattle or a cow, but now the whole place is getting full. (...) And also if you want to go to the toilet, like there are no toilets here because people... So you need to go to bush, but there is no land there to help yourself.*

Many people told me that land was sold illegally to people from other ethnic groups by the previous headman of the Hai//om in Tsintsabis, Geelbooi Thaneb. The in-migrants, according to many interviewees, would take very large plots of land, leaving no room for the two San groups in Tsintsabis: *"Today all the lands from there has been sold. To the police officers, to the nurses, people who work in the government, officials, they are the ones who bought the lands from there"* (interview 23). The reason the in-migrants are able to do this, according to many interviewees, is because they are relatively rich and because of their ties to the government. Often they are even able to buy a piece of that that was already owned by a Hai//om person.

As a result, the land is quickly getting scarce. Interviewees said that they feel like Tsintsabis is getting too crowded. According to many, there is no more room for their next generations. Many are worried that their children will not be able to own land, and that families will be crammed together on increasingly smaller plots. They also told me that they are unable to live their lives in the ways they were used to doing, before the land fencing happened. As seen in the quotes above from interviews 6 and 24, Hai//om people need to enter the lands that are taken from them for many different reasons, but are stopped from doing so. And if they do go in, they risk getting shot or arrested.

Already having lost the connection to their former lifestyle (Hüncke, 2010), it now seems like the Hai//om are being pushed even further away from their lifestyle by recent small-scale land grabbing. It is coming to a point where not only their former lifestyle is lost, but their lives are threatened because of a lack of access to resources needed to survive, such as firewood.

In this situation, many interviewees expressed they felt powerless, unable to act in any way against land fencing. They feel like the in-migrants who fence the land are not

taking them seriously, not respecting them as the indigenous people of this region, and that there is nothing they themselves can do about it. This feeling of powerlessness is shown clearly by the way in which people talk about the situation:

Interview 28: *Yeah it's affecting the community because it's taking all the land away from the community. Those people are staying with big lands. But one thing you can't do is nothing. You can't do anything. Because those people are more powerful. (...) But now the place has been surrounded. Everywhere you see there are fences. (...) The biggest disappointment is that now even if it hurts my feelings, if it affects me, what can I do? Is the big question I'm having myself. There's nothing I can do. Even this small area I'm having, I'm also forced to make it a bit narrow, maybe small, because it's now big. But those people are having more land than this land. (So are you feeling powerless on the land that used to be used to belong to you then?) Yeah. Powerless.*

Interview 33: *Yes the leaders are allowing them to coming in, and it's causing the community to suffer, or the indigenous people who were already here to suffer (...) Those people they don't have respect for others, for our tribe. They see us just like dogs.*

Since the Hai//om do not see any help coming from the government, even though in many cases they were promised this help, they feel overlooked and tricked. Many people told me stories about how government officials came to Tsintsabis and promised to help, but then never kept their promises. Various interviewees have said that this situation is very painful for them, and that it hurts them emotionally. Some would even go as far as to say that they felt like they did not belong in Tsintsabis anymore.

The situation described above is an example of classic land grabbing minus the presence of an international powerful actor (Zoomers, 2010). This small-scale land grabbing, as I have called the situation in Tsintsabis, is characterised by the power difference between the Hai//om and the in-migrants, as well as the fact that the Hai//om are being dispossessed of their land. The power difference, which was already very prominent in the previous section on in-migration, becomes even more obvious when talking about these land issues. It shows both how marginalised the Hai//om of Tsintsabis are, and how they are becoming more marginalised through these developments.

INFRASTRUCTURAL CHANGE

Developments affecting the community in Tsintsabis from the outside also include infrastructural changes that are reducing the physical isolation of the Hai//om in Tsintsabis from the rest of Namibia. As can be expected, being increasingly connected to the rest of the country has its effects on Tsintsabis. The most recent of these developments, after a telephone line and internet service, is the tarring of the road to Tsintsabis in 2010/2011. People have mixed feelings about this. There were interviewees who said they saw no changes after the road had been completed, and did not understand why it had been done. Maybe, according to them, the road was constructed to benefit the government itself or the more dominant groups in Namibia. Many other interviewees mentioned positive effects, such as how they now feel more integrated into Namibian society, and that improved access to Tsumeb and the rest of the country makes them feel less isolated. This even seems to affect their feeling of self-worth, as many said they feel very proud to be more integrated into Namibian society. The increased access to bigger towns such as Tsumeb also means that people from Tsintsabis come into contact with other ways of living. As a result, some said they now have the desire to live their lives in ways similar to what they see in Tsumeb. An example of this is given by a young woman:

Interview 13: *Yes, like most of the people didn't also know where Tsumeb is or how Tsumeb looks like. But after the tarred road there are some of them who are now employed as you see, and they started getting paid, so it's always that these people go to Tsumeb for shopping. And that's how they came to know of this town of Tsumeb. (...) Like they go to Tsumeb, they go and socialise with others. They see that okay this is also the way that life is, in Tsumeb, so not only us here in the bush but oh people also live like this. (...) They will also change, (...) I would also like my kid to talk English and have kids not just talk Hai//om every time. So I will also take my child to school.*

After the road had been tarred, people in Tsintsabis hoped that the community would be developed, that large companies would settle there and tourists would visit. This would then have created job opportunities for them. However, no such thing has happened, and many do not understand why. This is, however, a common problem for the Hai//om in Namibia. People have great expectations, and often promises are made by the government, but then nothing happens. It highlights the degree of exclusion the Hai//om experience in Namibian society.

Besides that, these continuing disappointments constantly confirm the perceptions the Hai//om of Tsintsabis have of themselves as “marginalised people”. This seemed to be more and more how people defined themselves. Some even said the marginalisation happened because they are indigenous, while many others said the marginalisation is happening because others do not respect their indigenous status or are unaware of it.

As I mentioned, it is now easier for the Hai//om of Tsintsabis to travel to the rest of Namibia. But this also means they are more accessible to others, which is one of the main problems this tarred road has brought to Tsintsabis: it increases the already problematic in-migration of more powerful groups, who in turn set up shebeens and take away land from the Hai//om. Besides that, the traffic on the road, mainly large trucks, has brought drug trade, prostitution and other criminal activity to Tsintsabis, something which mainly affects the youth and creates a feeling of insecurity. This older man, who has been living in Tsintsabis since the beginning, explains:

Interview 3: *What he believed and hoped for is that after the road is constructed it will be a good thing, but now later it has just created a problem. He says now that the road has been tarred, tarred road, every people are now travelling freely. Even these guys who are now robbing people are travelling, coming here. People are now transporting the drugs, they brought drugs here even from Angola some of them. (...) He's saying this, like the drugs that is been brought in here, the smaller boys from the community are now selling, they are getting involved with that and they are smoking that drugs and using it, and also eh people who are driving, pass by like truck drivers eh are getting the small girls, ladies from here, and then is giving them the diseases (probably HIV) and then yeah, some of them have died from the diseases also.*

All in all, then, while the tarred road at first glance seems like a way for the Hai//om to become more integrated into Namibian society, it also amplifies the problems that I talked about previously, making the power difference between the Hai//om and others more and more problematic. And while people feel proud for being more connected to the rest of Namibia, and even say that this integration makes them feel more indigenous, they also say they feel more marginalised by both in-migration and road traffic.

4.2 THE LAND CLAIM

A more positive development for the Hai//om of Tsintsabis in terms of recognition and land rights seems to be the land claim of Etosha by the Hai//om. In 2015, this land claim was officially filed. The claim demands land ownership as well as a cash compensation, and is mainly concerned with the Etosha region (Koot and Hitchcock, in press).

However, many Hai//om in Tsintsabis did not seem to know much about this claim, with only two or three interviewees saying they followed it or were a part of it, while most were only aware of the claim in broad terms and others had never heard about it. This shows again the exclusion as well as lack of agency of this community, which I will come back to in chapter 5. Even within their ethnic group the Hai//om of Tsintsabis are excluded from this information, and do not know how to obtain it.

While most people said they think the land claim is a very good development for the Hai//om, some expressed that they worried that actually going back to Etosha would be impossible or at least problematic, and that another solution might be more fitting. As this young Hai//om man says, the situation is very complicated:

Interview 8: *He's like, there is a bit of like confusion. He's saying like now if it is a success then where will the animals go? If they came, if Hai//om people come in then they just see meat. (...) So what he's saying is maybe it's better that the Hai//om people fight for the partnership of the place. In terms of ownership. So that maybe it can be partnered with, partners with the park. So that maybe if the income comes in, Hai//om trust gets share (...) it would be very difficult even for Hai//om people alone, to have that land for themselves. Because during the time of the ... some Ovambo people were coming from Ovamboland and passing through Etosha. And lot of them died during that and were buried there. So now there are rumours running around of Ovambo people saying that our people have also died in that land, and our people is also there (...) So hai//om are saying it's their land and even other people are saying no even our people died in that land, when they were going for liberation fight, so it's also part of our land.*

Interviewees expect many benefits if the land claim turns out to be a success. They expressed the hope that this claim might solve some of their problems by providing them with land to live on, job opportunities, food and financial benefits among other things. Many also hoped for recognition of Etosha as their ancestral land, regaining ownership and being able to go back.

They also expected their self-perception to change, that the image they have of themselves will improve if the claim is successful. This success would make them feel proud again, empowered, less marginalised and like they are a full member of Namibian society.

Many interviewees also hoped other people's perceptions of them would change if the land claim was successful. They hoped others would have respect for them, and see them as full members of society instead of as a marginalised group. This quote from an elderly Hai//om lady, who had been living in Tsintsabis since independence, shows some of the feelings that people have towards the land claim:

Interview 10: *If it is by the praise of god, it becomes a success, it would be a very good thing. Hai//om people would also feel like proud people, having their own land, being recognised as Hai//om people. And that marginalised, that people would not always be seen as marginalised people, but even the way of seeing them might also change (...) (the young people) might benefit by like getting the job opportunities there, also maybe the way people are living like there people are now here, they are living like to close to each other. So maybe if that's a success, then maybe land wise they would also get opportunities for them. Have their own land whereby they can stay freely. (...) Because Hai//om people would be a very proud tribe. And then they might even, it might even unite them together. Because it's something that is a success, that will show that now, we can come together and work together. It might bring unity, because children at school are still left out and feel like marginalised, but even get that strength of going to school (...) She would feel like a human being. Not like marginalised always. Yeah she would be a very proud Hai//om lady.*

All of these sentiments surrounding the land claim show that it is not just about land for these people. Of course, there are benefits for them relating directly to the physical land, especially because of land scarcity in Tsintsabis, but it is much more than that. People say they would feel proud, they would be a more respected member of society, and that it could bring financial benefits. The concerns expressed by some interviewees are also based mainly upon the meaning of land or things related to the land rather than the actual land itself. This, up to this point imagined, piece of returned land, is seen by interviewees through a relational perspective (Horlings, 2014), a place to which they attach meaning and connect relationships.

Specific meanings they attach to the land in relation to this claim are that it would be a place where they could feel like they belong, while living freely instead of being marginalised, and even feeling more indigenous.

4.3 LEADERSHIP

Under the Traditional Authorities Act 25 (Republic of Namibia, 2000) every “traditional community”, including the Hai//om, appoints a Traditional Authority (TA). This TA in turn selects traditional councillors who are the headmen of the communities within that ethnic group, such as the Hai//om community in Tsintsabis. The current TA for the Hai//om is David //Khamuxab (Koot and Hitchcock, in press).

The Traditional Authorities Act has been criticised by many, both for how TAs are selected and for how the wording of the act homogenises the so-called “communities” it talks about (Koot and Hitchcock, in press; Van der Wulp and Koot, in press). Both of these issues seem to be present in Tsintsabis, as far from everyone feels represented by either the new or the old headman, causing conflicts both between the leaders and within the community.

Leadership in Tsintsabis consists of the Hai//om headman, together with his advisories and staff. Because it is a resettlement farm, there is no other governmental leadership structure, as there would be if Tsintsabis was a village or a town. Since 1994, there have been at least three Hai//om leaders in Tsintsabis. At the moment, officially, Paul Geigowab is the leader. Before him, this was Geelbooi Thaneb and before him Jan Seringboom. It was unclear to me when exactly Thaneb and Geigowab became headmen, as many people did not seem to be able to recall specific years for this.

Even though most people I talked to recognise Geigowab as the headman, there does seem to be a lot of confusion and conflict surrounding the leadership. For example, many other people told me that they are not sure who the leader is, that it is unclear or that they think there is no functional leader today in Tsintsabis. This quote from an elderly woman shows that confusion:

Interview 33: *No she said there was an old man, a leader, said that no the man is old even does not speak English, so it's a bit tough for him to be in leadership. So talked that there is elected a newly one, by the time she was not present, she was somewhere else, but currently she heard that a new one was elected, a young man, a new leader. But when she returned back, what she sees, she sees the old man still in power, doing things. So she doesn't know why, what's going on there.*

Furthermore, Thaneb is said to believe that he is still in power, and that Geigowab's leadership is illegitimate. He claims that young people, including Geigowab, have forced him to step down, while many others say that he resigned himself.

This situation of disagreement and confusion surrounding the leadership in Tsintsabis is problematic. People view the leadership as unstable and not functional, as well as unpredictable. Many interviewees said that the current status of leadership is hindering development for the community: *"Some people are from one leader's side; some are from one leader's side. We are not united. Even the government will not help the place where two leaders is. The answers are two. We must be united and one"* (interview 11). As a result, a conflict has arisen between Thaneb and Geigowab, and as many people in the community have chosen sides, this has led to a conflict and division in the community, as shown in the quote above. Many interviewees emphasised that unity within the group, which they seem to value as an important group quality and a vital ingredient for development, is currently missing in Tsintsabis. However, as I will discuss in the next chapter, the lack of unity seems to characterise the Hai//om as a group, so it is not surprising that this is also the case in Tsintsabis.

Many said that the current situation divides the Hai//om and the !Xun, with many Hai//om choosing Geigowab's side, and most of the !Xun siding with Thaneb, since he is partly of !Xun descent. A South African pastor who lives in Tsintsabis describes it as follows:

Interview 30: *Yeah it's like resentment between two tribes (...) take the example of brothers from same mother same father. Each one is having his own leader, then each one trusts his own leader. Then it's a big problem, because he doesn't want this one to talk bad and this one talk bad this one. So it means that now the feeling of being together, of being to the same group, is being divided. They won't be the same anymore.*

This division also creates what almost looks like a battle between the two ethnic groups of who is actually indigenous. And it seems that people think that only one ethnic group can truly be indigenous.

The conflict is fuelled by rumours, which many say are being spread by the supporters of Thaneb. Both leaders also compete for the attention of the community, as they tend to organise meetings at the same time, or disturb meetings of the other.

The intensity of the conflicts seems to rise and fall quite a bit, with many people saying it was relatively quiet while I was there. However, at times, the conflicts do become extremely violent, and even deadly.

This situation of people being divided and feeling misrepresented fits into what we know about the Hai//om group as a whole. As I will discuss later, many interviewees found that

they were not united as a group, and even went so far as to say they were ashamed of their ethnic group, or having the desire to belong to a different ethnic group.

Besides that, there have been similar issues surrounding the national representation of the Hai//om in the case of the Hai//om Traditional Authority in the 2000s (Koot, 2013). Back then, many people claimed they did not elect their new Traditional Authority, and they felt like this TA only represented a small group of Hai//om. Issues around leadership emphasise again how divided the Hai//om really are, and how much they do not fit into the image of a homogeneous indigenous group.

This division also creates a conflict around the indigeneity criterion defined by Saugestad (2001) as "first-come". Many Hai//om as well as !Xun in Tsintsabis are becoming more aware of their differences because of the division created by the leadership dispute. This has raised conflicts of who was the first group in the region and actually belongs there, seemingly reducing the concept of indigeneity to "first-come". People are defining this in such terms that there can only be one "real indigenous" group here. The division that is made is often Hai//om versus !Xun, but also amongst the Hai//om. And some interviewees even said that they themselves are not the indigenous ones, but "the other ones" are. Those "others" being the !Xun, or other Hai//om that originated from somewhere else than themselves. This highlights the divided and heterogeneous nature of the Hai//om ethnic group. Many people also expressed that they were unaware of who was "the first there" before this leadership conflict started. This could mean, among other things, that the conflict has made the Hai//om aware of the concept of indigeneity and that they were previously less focused on who is or is not indigenous.

5. SELF-PERCEPTIONS OF THE HAI//OM

In the previous chapter I presented results related to the current dynamics faced by the Hai//om of Tsintsabis. Now I step away from those dynamics and look at the perceptions from the Hai//om of their ethnic group, indigeneity and marginalisation. These topics still partly relate to the current dynamics, but I look at them in a broader way.

5.1 GROUP DYNAMICS

Many Hai//om in Tsintsabis have negative feelings towards their own ethnic group. There are even some that say they wish they had been born into a different group. These feelings have to do with the current atmosphere as well as with the outside influences on them. I have discussed those outside influences and how the Hai//om are excluded and neglected in the previous chapter. Here, I want to look at the internal dynamics. Not just in Tsintsabis, but for the Hai//om as a whole from the perspective of those who live in Tsintsabis.

Many interviewees mentioned their ethnic group becoming more individualised over time. Nowadays, people are not working together anymore. Rather than sharing and striving for collective goals, people are becoming more focused on their own personal benefits. This man explains it very well:

Interview 29: *Ah we like to hate each other, that's the biggest issue. (...) that's why our tribe does not get interest in development. If someone goes for something nice, then the other one just wants to look at what is now to do, now he's doing good (...) Yeah then they will come out with stories, make up issues, rumours.*

In addition, interviewees said that there are many conflicts within the Hai//om group, dividing rather than uniting them. Many went on to compare themselves to other groups who are, in their eyes, more united. Some people, as I said, even expressed the desire to have been born into another group. This quote from an interview with an older woman captures that feeling many people had:

Interview 23: *It could have been better if maybe I was born from another tribe. That for example look to !Xun speaking people from Tsumkwe, those people are well organised. They have their projects and ongoing projects which is going on very well. (...) They (other tribes) also have their projects that are ongoing and then their leaders are standing up for their people. Come back to us here, there will be a project, community based project, two of leaders they ...(unclear). If it's down then it's like that. There's no way they will fix it like come back again online. So it's very very painful. And I think that I was from other tribes. Because you want to work to something, but then our... I don't know whether it's a curse on the tribe or why it's there.*

The Hai//om comparing themselves to other ethnic groups and even expressing the desire to be a part of a different group makes you wonder what things are actually like for other ethnic groups who are in a similar position. A variety of San groups in the N#á Jaqna Conservancy (Van der Wulp and Koot, in press), for example, have united against illegal land fencers by strategically presenting themselves as a homogenous, indigenous group, even though they all come from different backgrounds and their indigeneity to that specific area is questionable. But they have used mainly their cultural difference from those who illegally fenced the land to demand that these land grabbers leave. This case has one major similarity to that of the Hai//om of Tsintsabis, namely the "small-scale land grabbing". The way these San groups deal with it, however, is very different from the Hai//om in Tsintsabis. While the Hai//om are all part of the same ethnic group, they are very heterogeneous and even seem to be growing apart more and more. The many different groups in the N#á Jaqna Conservancy strategically present themselves as one homogenous group that is culturally different from others. Besides presenting themselves this way, they also show that they can unite and take action against the injustices they face. The Hai//om in Tsintsabis, together with the !Xun, seem incapable or unwilling to do this.

Of course this example, or any example, of how other groups deal with similar situations is not without its problems, but from an outsider's perspective it is understandable that some Hai//om in Tsintsabis who miss the unity or are ashamed of the internal conflicts desire to be part of another group.

5.2 THE MEANING OF INDIGENEITY

The concept of indigeneity seems to be of great importance to the Hai//om of Tsintsabis, but what it means to them is very different from the most commonly accepted definitions of the concept. Most of them see ancestral connection to the land and ownership of that ancestral land as an essential part of indigeneity. They say that the indigenous people are those who were there first, or have been there for a long time. This lines up with one of the four criteria of indigeneity in the definitions identified by both Saugestad (2001) and Barume (2010) namely "first-come". The ownership that results from that connection is explained by them in a very straightforward way: "*Even our ancestors were born here. Which automatically means it's our land*" (interview 25).

The Hai//om in Tsintsabis also say that as indigenous people they used to have a different, in their own words more traditional, lifestyle. This changed over time as they came into contact with others. This links to both the "cultural difference" element of Saugestad's definition (2001), as well as to the ideas that indigenous people lead or used to lead a traditional lifestyle in the United Nations' multiple visions on indigeneity over the years (Barume, 2010; United Nations, 2008). They say that, in their previous lifestyle, they were free, and more united:

Interview 9: *They used to stay here, and in that time they were not like wearing clothes, but skins which would just cover the private parts and in the times when the foreigners would come in they would always make their stuff and all the different stuffs to show the tourists who come in. So that time she's saying people were understanding each other very well.*

Interview 14: *He's saying that before, during the times that the whites were coming in, there was still sharing. Like just maybe 5 children, give the one candy, then make sure that everyone get a small piece of that candy. They shared amongst themselves. But now that everything has changed even that small boy he get the candy he will not share with anyone.*

The ancestral rights to their land and the cultural difference were also linked to each other by many interviewees to express that they used to live freely on their own lands, while now it is being taken away from them and they are no longer free.

This is where the concept of marginalisation comes in. In Tsintsabis, when asked who the Hai//om are as indigenous people now, they say they are marginalised. However, this marginalisation is not generally seen as a part of indigeneity (Saugestad, 2001: non-

dominance), but as something that happens despite their indigeneity. As the indigenous people, they feel they should have rights and recognition that they currently do not have. As seen in the previous chapter, they are being overpowered by other ethnic groups and are dealing with a lot of poverty and inequality. An elderly Hai//om man who has lived in Tsintsabis since the early 1990s says the following:

Interview 3: *They are the indigenous people. But now because they're indigenous people and they said now, they were the ones who are supposed to having the freedom to do whatever they want to do. What is happening now is that, whilst they're struggling after they... Because they Hai//om were also given land by the government. (...) Others when they came, people came in, they came with more power because they had money. They faster developed themselves and now they are the ones above the Hai//om who are the indigenous, are now out. Aren't having that freedom.*

When others marginalise the Hai//om of Tsintsabis, for example in the ways mentioned in 4.1, the Hai//om assume this is done because those people do not respect their indigeneity or are unaware of it. Indigenous people, according to the Hai//om, are those who are the rightful owners of a piece of land from a historical as well as legal perspective. Their lifestyle is different from that of other people in the same country. But most importantly, they are respected and live in freedom, which enables them to be the owners of the land and practice their culture. The "first-come" criterion (Saugestad, 2001) is key in their view on the concept of indigeneity, success and respect are equally important. Marginalisation, as they see it, is a violation of their indigenous status.

5.3 MARGINALISED AND DISCONNECTED

Many Hai//om in Tsintsabis expressed to me that they feel stuck in their situation, with no way forward. They feel neglected or left out by the government, as though they have been forgotten or they are not a full member of Namibian society. Others said they feel like, even though Namibia has been a free country now for over twenty years, they are still colonised. They feel they are not given the same freedom as the rest of the Namibian population.

Many of these sentiments seem to have been brought about at least partly by the dynamics discussed in the previous chapter. However, while those dynamics focused mainly on the Hai//om internal struggles or their relationship with other ethnic groups, there are more structural forces that evoke these feelings in them too, which I only

touched on briefly in chapter 4. The Hai//om do not have the same amount of access to the government that other ethnic groups have, because they lack the right connections or knowledge of what government structures in Namibia look like beyond Tsintsabis. This shows their disconnectedness from the rest of society, and it strongly limits their agency. They are excluded from governmental processes, both because of a lack of knowledge on their part, and the fact that the government is not open to participation of groups like them.

Besides this, the Hai//om of Tsintsabis also expressed that no development is coming their way, and they are not allowed to develop anything themselves because Tsintsabis is still officially considered to be a farm and therefore does not have the same legal status as towns in terms of land ownership and government structures. They are not granted the same means and facilities, and the Hai//om of Tsintsabis feel that development is being held back by this status. The government seems unwilling to change this, and because of the above described disconnectedness and lack of access, the Hai//om are unable to demand change themselves.

A result of all this is that many people feel increasingly marginalised, both by the government and by other ethnic groups in Namibian society. Many feel that they are stuck in this situation, like there will never be a solution for any of their problems. Changes have been made over the last decades or even centuries that have marginalised them, and they feel as if they have no means to challenge the current situation. This affects their self-perception and feeling of self-worth, as many expressed they now feel like "useless" people, who are not very well educated and unable to accomplish what everybody else seems able to do. And if they try to do things their way, they are ignored or, in case they for example try to collect firewood in fenced off land, treated like criminals.

Some interviewees believed this is happening precisely because they are part of an indigenous group, and their indigeneity is not respected. To me, it shows how disconnected they are, and how excluded from the rest of Namibian society.

6. DISCUSSION

What has become clear in the previous two chapters, is that the Hai//om's definition of indigeneity differs a lot from how the concept is most commonly defined. The main difference surrounds the topic of marginalisation. In this discussion, I will look at that difference, and its implications for the broader debate on indigeneity. Besides this, I am going to look at indigeneity in Namibia in light of my results. My thesis shows the Hai//om of Tsintsabis as a people who have been pushed to the margins of Namibian society and who have been unsuccessful in their attempts to improve their own situation. We also know from chapter 2 that indigeneity is a problematic and largely absent concept in Namibian legislation and policy. I will look at how the two relate, and what could improve the living conditions of the Hai//om in Tsintsabis and perhaps others as well.

However, I start my discussion by looking at the attitude of the Hai//om of Tsintsabis towards their current situation of marginalisation. In the result section of my thesis I showed what is currently happening in Tsintsabis and how that has influenced the Hai//om's perceptions towards their ethnic group, their indigenous status and issues of marginalisation they face. But what does this mean for their attitude towards their situation?

6.1 AGENCY OR ACQUIESCENCE

The Hai//om were not always as disconnected and excluded as they are now. As described by multiple authors (Koot and Hitchcock, in press; Sullivan, 2001), the Hai//om in the past were relatively well-connected and independent, integrated into regional politics and trade and labour networks. The people in Tsintsabis now, however, seem to have given up all hope of ever being integrated into Namibian society again, as I described in the previous section.

Koot and van Beek (2017) describe another group of San people, the Ju/'hoansi in the Nyae Nyae Conservancy area of Namibia, who display this behaviour as well, while at the same time also showing a lot of agency. Both strategies are present in the group, but used in different situations and by different people. Acquiescence and agency in the context of their article are both coping mechanisms used by a group whose environment has been changed mainly by others. I believe the Hai//om in Tsintsabis show the same attitudes.

As I discussed in the previous chapter, the Hai//om in Tsintsabis feel threatened by people from other ethnic groups who have settled in Tsintsabis and have grabbed the land. The power difference between the Hai//om and the other groups today is substantial for various reasons, most of which also relate to the past. The result is a change in the social, economic and physical environment in Tsintsabis, that happened mostly without influence of the Hai//om themselves.

The settling of more powerful and well-connected groups in places where previously only San groups lived, is not unique to Tsintsabis. However, while some other groups responded actively and powerfully (Van der Wulp and Koot, in press), the Hai//om of Tsintsabis do not.

Because of the in-migration of other ethnic groups into Tsintsabis, many Hai//om said they feel marginalised, as if they do not belong there anymore and there is nothing they can do to stop what is happening. So, while they recall a time when they were independent, the environment in which they lived has now been altered so much by others that they feel powerless. And since they feel there is nothing they could do about it, they hardly ever show agency anymore by fighting back, and instead acquiesce in the situation. Many had shown agency in the past, when the issues they were dealing with just started occurring. However, as they saw they were not getting the responses they had hoped for from the government, the other ethnic groups other anyone else, they gave up on trying to change their living conditions.

Their attitude towards the land claim is intriguing too. It is a glimmer of hope for the Hai//om of Tsintsabis, as it could potentially give them the ownership and sense of belonging that they desire. Then, if that claim is successful, they say that they would feel like proud indigenous people again. Importantly, they also mention as a vital part of becoming proud indigenous people that they are recognised as such: in order for them to become proud they have to be recognised instead of marginalised. While the Hai//om of Tsintsabis recognise the power relationship that is seen both by the most common definitions (Saugestad, 2001) and some of the proposed alternatives (Kenrick and Lewis, 2004a) as a vital part of indigeneity, they see it as a violation of their indigeneity rather than a characteristic of their status.

The Hai//om of Tsintsabis are optimistic about the land claim, but only cautiously. Because all major recent changes in their living circumstances have felt to them as being outside of their control, they do not fully trust that they will be able to make those types of changes themselves.

Within the leadership conflict, interestingly, the Hai//om of Tsintsabis do show agency. The conflict in leadership has divided the community based on which leader they trust

and who they feel is truly indigenous. In this conflict, the concept of indigeneity is reduced to the criterion of first-come (Saugestad, 2001). People have taken sides depending on, among other things, who they feel was in Tsintsabis first. And not all Hai//om believe that they were the first there, but rather the !Xun. After taking sides, people started to spread rumours, interrupt meetings and take violent action. This shows a very different side of the Hai//om of Tsintsabis. A side of them that shows agency and strategy rather than acquiesces in the situation.

It seems that within their ethnic group or in relation to the !Xun, the Hai//om of Tsintsabis are actively advocating for their own rights, while they acquiesce when others, such as the government or more powerful groups are involved. Presumably, they perceive the power difference between themselves and these more influential groups and institutions as so enormous that there would be no point in challenging it. In situations where there is an equal or near-equal power relationship, however, they face the confrontation and thereby show a considerable amount of agency.

6.2 DIFFERENT DEFINITIONS

The most commonly used definition of indigeneity, is based on the four pillars first-come, self-identification, cultural difference and non-dominance as criteria for the concept (Saugestad, 2001). The Hai//om of Tsintsabis, however, put emphasis on mainly first-come and cultural difference, with the addition of recognised and respected ownership. Self-identification seems to be included, but never explicitly articulated. However, it is the last criterion that is completely contrary to their own definition. The non-dominance criterion is defined by the Hai//om of Tsintsabis as marginalisation, and it is seen as a violation of their status as indigenous people rather than as a characteristic of this status. In other words: they identify as indigenous, but their marginalisation by others makes them feel like those others do not see or respect their indigeneity. While they “tick all four boxes” of the standard definition, that last “box” (non-dominance) is not part of their own definition. It is seen as a separate issue they face, and it challenges something else they include into their own definition of indigeneity: respect.

The term indigenous people therefore, for them, seems to be very similar to that of the “rightful owner”. Respect is a key word in their definition, as well as ownership. And marginalisation challenges a sense of belonging that is directly linked to feelings of being the “rightful owners” of, in this case, Tsintsabis and by extension the Etosha region. Feelings of shame about the conflicts happening within the Hai//om group as a whole, and lack of collective action against such things as small-scale land grabbing and in-migration are very common. People seem ashamed of the group they are part of, and

fear what society will think of them as indigenous people as a result of their circumstances.

This highlights an emphasis on success within their definition of indigeneity as well. As indigenous people, they expect to be full members of society, having equal citizenship to everybody else in Namibia. And that is not just shown by their emphasis on success, but also by the emphasis on respect.

“RIGHTFUL OWNERS”

The ways in which the Hai//om definition of indigeneity differs from the most common ones are a strong emphasis on the first-come criterion, the inclusion of pride, land ownership, respect and success, and the exclusion or marginalisation, or non-dominance. As discussed in chapter two of this thesis, there is a lot of debate about the concept of indigeneity and its use. Based on what I have seen in Tsintsabis, I can add to this debate that the standard definition indeed does not work for every situation and that some aspects of it are problematic in the case of the Hai//om of Tsintsabis.

First, as Kuper (2003) says in the article that sparked the current debate, the concept of indigenous people as rightful owners is problematic. For the Hai//om of Tsintsabis, however, this is the main focus of their definition. And the way my interviewees explained it immediately gave me a feeling of unease. They said that the indigenous people, who were in a place first, are automatically the owners of that place. Especially the word “automatically” is problematic. Of course, this is said from the perspective of someone who is currently marginalised and therefore not the owner of their ancestral land. But when we place this sentence in a different context, such as during election time here in the Netherlands, said by a right-winged party, the problematic nature of this statement becomes much more prevalent.

The idea of being “rightful owners” based on ancestral connections to land in that context is a statement that is considered to be racist. And of course my example of Dutch politics is different from the situation of the Hai//om, as those saying it are privileged white Europeans. But that does not take away from the problematic nature of the idea itself. Labelling one group the “rightful owners” just because of their ancestry, ignores the complexity of histories. Even in Tsintsabis itself, this simplicity is contested, as shown by the conflict between Hai//om and !Xun over who is “truly” indigenous. Both groups claim this “ultimate indigeneity” based on priority in time, and both have a rightful claim based on their rich history in the region. But does just being there before the other make one group less indigenous, especially when that other group is equally marginalised? Indigeneity based on ancestral connections and priority in time does not take into

account the complexity of a situation and its history. Both groups in this case suffer from a similar marginalised position in Namibian society based on a complicated past and present. It might be more useful to look at the past not as “who was here first”, but by analysing all the different past events and relationships and how those have shaped the situation of these people today, providing a historical context. In Namibia, where the line between who is and is not indigenous is not as clear-cut as it is in other parts of the world, simple criteria such as “first-come” are not very useful.

ONE DEFINITION

A second problem with the most-commonly used definition is highlighted by the difference between the Hai//om’s definition of indigeneity and the most commonly used ones. While, when defining the concept of indigeneity, some indigenous groups may have been asked what indigeneity means to them, these people were clearly not. The most commonly used definition lacks in applicability to the Southern African context as shown by the complexity of the situation in Namibia that makes it unclear who is and is not indigenous, as well as how the Hai//om of Tsintsabis perceive indigeneity very differently from this most common definition. This last point relates especially to the emphasis on success and respect. And that brings forward an even bigger issue: if this one group defines indigeneity differently, there must be others who do too. There could be a whole variety of definitions. And who decides which ones are correct?

A difficulty, though, is that if we start building the definition upon what all groups we consider indigenous around the world define indigeneity as, and try to make it applicable to every single context, we will never reach a definition. Besides that, we should not ignore the power of the indigenous rights movement compared to that of indigenous people themselves, as Kuper (2003) argues. This raises a difficulty of how we will receive the actual views of indigenous people, as opposed to what they are told indigeneity is by more powerful actors. As the Tsintsabis context shows, indigenous people such as the Hai//om are rarely heard by the government or international institutions. A definition that takes every vision into account, then, seems unattainable. Adding to that the complexity in countries like Namibia, makes it even more unrealistic to ever find a fitting definition.

However, we might not need to create one all-encompassing definition of indigeneity. The current definition is generally considered to be problematic (Kuper, 2003; Kenrick and Lewis, 2004a; Daes, 1996), and Daes (1996) even argues that no definition could ever include every indigenous group, and therefore that it is not desirable to try to create

one definition. I therefore suggest that, as we will never reach global consensus on the definition, we stop trying.

As an alternative solution to a definition, Kenrick and Lewis (2004a) propose a more relational approach to indigeneity, which focuses on contemporary power imbalances. I wonder, however, why we would then still call it indigeneity. The contemporary problems faced by indigenous groups relating to power dynamics are issues of marginalisation. Since the concept of indigeneity is considered by so many to be problematic, and the issues faced today by indigenous people are issues of marginalisation, I argue that we acknowledge that indigeneity as a concept is too problematic, and that we start focussing on the marginalisation of groups such as the Hai//om of Tsintsabis. In the next section I will explain why this is the better option.

6.3 “ONE NATION, ONE NAMIBIA”

We now understand the Hai//om of Tsintsabis’ perceptions of the concept of indigeneity, but indigeneity is only part of how they identify themselves. They also identify as being marginalised, at this point maybe even more prominently than as being indigenous, and they see this marginalisation as a violation rather than a characteristic of their indigeneity. As we have seen in the previous section, indigeneity to them means, among other things, being respected. Their current situation, however, shaped by their histories, makes them invisible in Namibia. And they feel that when others do see them, they only see them as people who are incapable of participating in society.

The marginalisation is caused in part by a slogan of the Namibian government that I mentioned before: “One Nation, One Namibia”. The message is that every Namibian is equal, and has equal rights, including for example being allowed to live wherever they want. It is this lack of protection for those who do not have official ownership of their land, that has made it possible for the Ovambo and other powerful people to move into Tsintsabis, to buy and occupy parts of this Hai//om resettlement farm without much opposition. It is also a reason why many Hai//om do not feel represented by their leadership. Since every Namibian is “the same”, leadership structures should be too. In reality, no one single leadership structure works for every group. This legislation made it so that a significant part of the Hai//om in Namibia do not feel represented by their Traditional Authority.

I could name more examples, but my point is that the Namibian government is so focused on unity and equality, that it ignores or forgets the marginalised groups within its borders. And the consequences are that people such as the Hai//om of Tsintsabis

have become invisible. They have no voice, no means to connect to the government and no way of asking for help against marginalisation by other groups. Moreover, many government policies themselves marginalise groups like them. There is, for example, confusion and frustration in Tsintsabis about why they have never become an official village or town. This, according to the government, cannot happen as it is a resettlement farm, but it means that the people living there are missing out on many benefits. A man who lost his leg told me that people like him in towns received benefits such as wheelchairs, but he did not get anything because he lived in Tsintsabis.

Namibia created its slogan to construct a national identity after the apartheid years. However, there are still large amounts of people, among whom the Hai//om of Tsintsabis, that are left out not only despite this slogan, but because of it. And while there are policies in place to help marginalised people, for example through food aid, many government actions also cause marginalisation.

Namibia has tried to create unity while assuming that everyone had the same starting position, and in doing so they have created the inequality they were trying to prevent. The Hai//om were left landless after their eviction from Etosha and subsequent exclusion from allocation of homelands. They were already relatively powerless, and when after independence the government assumed everyone was equal, they only became more invisible. This is why many people say they still feel colonised: their coloniser never went away, they just changed into somebody else.

In order to make people like the Hai//om of Tsintsabis visible again, Namibia has to acknowledge that not everybody is equal in reality. The government could do this by incorporating indigeneity into their legislation. But if they would do so, one of the problems that remain is: who would be included and who would be excluded as indigenous groups? And, even before that, who are allowed to judge who are included? We should not assume that all indigenous groups in Namibia are the same. Some are larger than others, some are more powerful, and they all have slightly different histories. In the conflict surrounding leadership in Tsintsabis, the concept of indigeneity, and mainly the criterion "first-come", is already being used to exclude certain groups, as many people on both sides of the conflict claim that either the !Xun, the Hai//om, or only certain Hai//om are indigenous. These conflicts might also happen on a larger scale. And since the indigeneity of the Hai//om has been disputed ever since it first came up in Namibia, who is to say that they will be considered for inclusion this time around, even if we use a different approach? Will they again not be seen as "true San people", because of some characteristics they have or do not have? They clearly see themselves as indigenous people, but the question is whether or not that is enough.

Besides this, we have seen in the previous section of this discussion that indigeneity is a problematic concept, and that even defining it alone causes conflict. Many of the issues groups like the Hai//om of Tsintsabis are currently facing, are caused by their marginalisation and not by their indigenous status. Therefore, government policies that could help these people are policies directed at improving the living situation of marginalised people. Both the problematic nature of the concept of indigeneity and its inapplicability, combined with the fact that current issues faced by these people hardly have anything to do with indigeneity but rather with marginalisation, make it undesirable to base government policies on this concept.

7. CONCLUSION

My thesis started out looking at the current dynamics impacting the Hai//om of Tsintsabis, but ended up being more about their definition of indigeneity, the struggle of marginalisation and their position in Namibian society. It is a story of marginalisation of a San group, shaped not just by their history, but by current politics and power dynamics as well. It also shows how the Hai//om of Tsintsabis perceive themselves as an indigenous group, and how they see their current marginalised status in relation to indigeneity. And, as we have seen in the discussion, it highlights some of the problems of the most commonly used definition of indigeneity, as well as the flaws in Namibian legislation and policy towards people like them.

The Hai//om of Tsintsabis are people who are not only landless, but are also facing losing the land they were resettled to by the government. Their struggle against land dispossession continues, albeit in a different form. They are not just less powerful than other groups in the country, they are becoming more and more invisible. Because of their recent history of adversity, and disappointments when they tried to improve their living conditions, they now seem to have acquiesced in their situation. This, however, does not mean that they are unable to show agency at all, as we have seen within the internal conflicts, but they have given up trying to stand up to the much more powerful groups or seeking help from the government, as they have never been successful in any of those strategies. In other situations, however, such as their internal leadership struggles, they do show agency.

In the Hai//om of Tsintsabis' current state of invisibility within Namibian society, they feel it is impossible for them to change their situation without help from the outside. However, after the years of disappointments when trusting in others, they are not so eager to rely on outsiders' help anymore. It therefore hardly seems realistic that something will change. Their inability to change their own situation combined with reluctance to trust the outside help they are asking for creates a stalemate situation that is unlikely to be resolved in the near future.

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APPENDIX

List of interviewees

Interview number	Gender	Approximate age	Additional info
1	Male	30	My translator, in Tsintsabis since youth
2	Male	60+	In Tsintsabis since 2011
3	Male	60+	In Tsintsabis since the beginning
4	Male	50-60	The secretary of the old leader was present while I was interviewing this man, and I was unaware of it until about halfway into the interview, when he also started to get involved
5	Female	27	Single mother of 2 or 3 children. Got very emotional about the current situation in Tsintsabis and her personal situation as well.
6	Female	28	
7	Female	40-50	
8	Male	35	His wife was there too, but didn't talk a lot. They moved to Tsintsabis in 2016.
9	Female	60+	
10	Female	70+	Family was helping with the answers, because she didn't understand everything
11	Male	20-30	
12	Male	27	
13	Female	20-30	
14	Male	45	This man had only one leg and was very limited by his disability in a place like Tsintsabis
15	Male	50	
16	Male	30-40	
17	Male	40-50	
18	Female	30-40	This woman was drunk while we interviewed her (in the morning), and seemed very angry and uninterested
19	Female	40-50	
20	Female	40-50	
21	Female	30-40	Husband is also present and answering some questions
22	Female	70+	Owambo woman who came to Tsintsabis in the 1990s(?) and married a Hai//om man
23	Female	50-60	Older woman who is the carer (and probably grandmother) of a small handicapped child who is also present
24	Female	Different ages	This was a group of around 8 women sitting together and talking to us
25	Female	60+	
26	Male	40-50	
27	Female	30-40	
28	Male	60+	
29	Male	30-40	
30	Male	60	He was a pastor from one of the churches in Tsintsabis and originally came from South Africa
31	Male	50	This man was from the !Xun group
32	Female	40-50	
33	Female	50	
34	Male	30-40	
35	Couple (m+f)	50+	This couple was from the Damara group