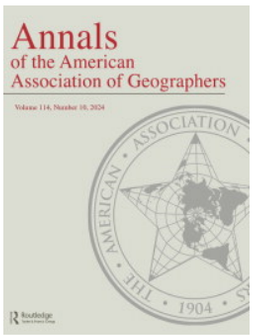

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The Geopolitics of Problematic Information: Epistemic Territorialization and Wildlife Conservation Volunteering in Namibia

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This article describes how power—socioeconomic, epistemic, and political—is harnessed and maintained through information exchanged under the aegis of private property. What was "real" in conservation was created by two Namibia-based international nongovernmental organization (NGOs) online and through wildlife conservation volunteer experiences at their private facilities in Namibia. Through private property, the NGOs control the means of knowledge production, constructing wildlife conservation according to their own agenda and goals. Embedded in every aspect of the volunteer experience was the practice, the theory, and the approach of the NGOs to control the conservation narrative, agenda, authority, and space. This process is conceptualized in this article as epistemic territorialization. The concept of epistemic territorialization describes how knowledge claims organize and consolidate geographic, epistemic, and virtual communities into territories within a controlled space and bounded system. This process underscores the volunteer experience and extends through broader conservation communication over media platforms, expanding into epistemic territory. By controlling geographic, spatial, and epistemic territories, the NGOs create the conditions for "what can be known" in conservation based on problematic information. The volunteer programs are illustrative of how problematic information is circulated in ways that disrupt politics and power in conservation and mask the economic and political interests of the NGOs studied. The production of problematic information results in information asymmetries, drawing into question the local, national, and global implications of conservation knowledge claims by these NGOs. *Key Words: epistemic territorialization, political epistemology, politics of knowledge, private property, wildlife conservation.*

This case illustrates an epistemological challenge concerning how wildlife conservation knowledge is produced, circulated, justified, and geographically bounded through two Namibia-based conservation nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The conservation NGOs in this research manifested as private, insulated "bubbles" across the Namibian landscape, geographically, conceptually, and ideologically isolated from the socioeconomic and political contexts of conservation in Namibia writ large. Knowledge that is produced by these NGOs about wildlife conservation in Namibia is constructed under the aegis of private property. The NGOs studied are private commercial entities on privately owned land in Namibia that work independently from both state, community, and Namibian NGO-led conservation.[1] The institutional context of the NGOs required that this research consider the role of non-state private actors in the spatial production of conservation knowledge claims. Importantly, this article suggests widening the political ecology lens to include political epistemology and account for the role of private property, private property ownership,[2] and (absolute[3]) private property rights in local and global conservation approaches. In the case of the NGOs studied, private property rights through land ownership affect how conservation knowledge is produced. Private property rights include the right of access and of exclusion and, in this case study, these rights affect what information about wildlife conservation is communicated and circulated globally by these NGOs as well as on the ground at their volunteer programs in Namibia. By controlling geographic, spatial, and epistemic

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territories, the conservation NGOs determine what knowledge, history, and experiences are made visible and which ones are not.

How information is communicated matters, especially in how meaning is conveyed, as "it gives the impression of 'the truth'" (Smith 1999, 35). The volunteer programs were volunteers' primary source of conservation knowledge, and media platforms allowed the NGOs to communicate their conservation mission globally. Empirical evidence is gathered during the volunteer experience as well as online. Knowledge on conservation that is gathered is based on volunteers' experiences working at the NGOs' private facilities in Namibia and the visual representations of conservation online that are produced and circulated by the NGOs over global media networks. Empirical evidence gathered justifies these visual representations and on-the-ground experiences in conservation at these NGOs as wildlife conservation in Namibia broadly construed. The NGOs control the means of knowledge production at their private facilities and can construct what is "real" in wildlife conservation according to their own agenda and goals (Brandon 2024). In epistemology, how knowledge is produced through these NGOs presents a conundrum. Because the NGOs create the conditions for "what can be known in conservation," volunteers and global audiences online are seeing conservation as it really is. The conundrum is that they are only seeing conservation as it really is through the perspective of the NGOs. As a consequence, these volunteer programs and global conservation campaigns representing conservation at these NGOs cannot and do not serve as verification of authenticity of their conservation practices in Namibia writ large.

Edmund Gettier developed thought experiments to understand the necessary and sufficient conditions for (true) knowledge (Hetherington 2016; Borges, De Almeida, and Klein 2017). Gettier's thought experiments to look at challenges in knowledge production are useful here. Using the example of John, Frank, and the cows, one thought experiment goes as follows:

> Imagine that John arrives at Frank's farm, secure in his knowledge that there are indeed cows in Frank's field. When he arrives, however, Frank informs John that while there are cows in the field, they are hidden in a shaded grove far from the view of the road. What John actually saw and mistook for cows were scarecrows shaped like cows. John did have justified true belief, but his justification turned out to be based on a falsehood. (Epistemology: Definition & Examples 2015)

In this case study, volunteers arrive at the NGOs secure in the knowledge that they are volunteering in wildlife conservation, assured of their purpose and goals. The NGOs legitimize this belief by constructing the nature and social character of the volunteer programs through daily routines, team-building activities, and hands-on wildlife interactions that are described as contributing to the conservation work of the NGOs. The social character or camp-like atmosphere of the volunteer programs worked to build long-lasting friendships, encourage repeat volunteering, and grow an international volunteer community. The social makeup of the international volunteers, the daily routine, the isolated private facilities, activities that centered around team building, and a common interest in conservation contributed to a hegemonic "sphere of influence" (see Jackson 2020). Shared beliefs created in these volunteer programs and that extend over social media platforms foster a sense of group identity and moral positioning, specify targets of hostility or rather an "us" versus "them" mentality, and enable coordinated (in)action on global conservation issues.

In other words, embedded in every aspect of the wildlife conservation volunteering experience was the practice, the theory, and the approach of the NGOs to control the conservation narrative, agenda, authority, and space. This process is what I conceptualized as epistemic territorialization. This concept draws from territorialization in political ecology (Vandergeest and Peluso 1995; Nel 2021; Gutiérrez-Zamora and Estrada 2020) and Vázquez's (2011) use of epistemic territory as described in the article "Translation as Erasure: Thoughts on Modernity's Epistemic Violence." I use epistemic territorialization to describe how knowledge claims organize and consolidate geographic, epistemic, and virtual communities into territories within a controlled space and bounded system. Epistemic territorialization is constructed through a politics of border keeping around what can be known about conservation and who can know it. Private property plays a crucial role in epistemic territorialization because it polices access to and control of resources by organizing social relations through both access and exclusion (Blomley 2019). In this case, information is a resource and the

NGOs' source of social, cultural, and political capital. Epistemic territorialization is an act of boundary making wherein power relations lie in constructing and controlling the conservation narrative. As this article shows, epistemic territorialization is the power that forecloses critique of the premises of conservation knowledge and the power that masks the self-interests of the NGOs. Given the analysis that follows, it could be argued that epistemic territorialization is a process to leverage political power and unilateral control over the broader conservation narrative.

How conservation is communicated can lead to assumptions about what conservation is, how conservation should proceed, how it should appear, and who has authority and expertise to implement conservation interventions. These assumptions can shape what kinds of conservation interventions and solutions are desirable, appropriate, or even possible and who should have power in conservation decisions. The philosophical substructure of the NGOs studied entails assumptions about conservation and about how conservation is proceeding. The philosophical substructure of the NGOs is based on problematic information, which typically falls into the categories of misinformation or disinformation. The challenge of describing problematic information is that the familiar terms—disinformation and misinformation—do not have mutually exclusive definitions (Jack 2017). Rather, their meanings can overlap. What separates disinformation from misinformation is intent, which is hard to discern. Information is problematic when it is "inaccurate, misleading, inappropriately attributed, or altogether fabricated" (Jack 2017, 2). Problematic information can include hoaxes, conspiracy theories, propaganda, and true specialist information rendered in a distorted way to support one's viewpoint (Di Domenico and Visentin 2020). It is the latter that is important in this article. Problematic information is most often seen in how information is presented over media platforms and the recent phenomena of "fake news" is a well-documented example (Di Domenico and Visentin 2020). Jack (2017) described how "recent controversies over 'fake news,' and concerns over entering a 'post-fact' era, reflect a burgeoning crisis: problematically inaccurate information, it seems, is circulating in ways that disrupt politics, business, and culture" (2).

How information is created, communicated, and circulated by the NGOs is disruptive. The NGOs supply and circulate information, crafting global knowledge claims and on-the-ground experiences according to their own conservation agenda and goals. Rather than altruistic endeavors, the volunteer programs and their global conservation campaigns were transactional arrangements with the NGOs. Volunteers pay substantial fees to volunteer and "make a difference" while global conservation campaigns bring in upwards of US$3 million annually (Brandon 2021). Online engagement with the NGOs' media platforms and volunteering at their private facilities in Namibia are economic transactions for the benefit of the NGOs' conservation efforts, not for the benefit of conservation in Namibia writ large. Epistemic territorialization serves to determine whose conservation agenda matters by controlling the narrative, establishing epistemic authority, and building sovereignty in conservation for the NGOs' own financial and political gain.

Underscoring the politics of epistemic territorialization is a larger issue: What are the consequences when conservation is decontextualized and problematic information is assumed to be natural, taken for granted as the reality, and accepted as the complete picture of conservation knowledge? Epistemic territorialization, in this case, is bounded through the production of problematic information under the aegis of private property, which affects how knowledge about conservation in Namibia is verified. Because the NGOs create the conditions for what can be known in conservation, epistemic territorialization is a political maneuver that the NGOs use to leverage political power and unilateral control over the global conservation narrative. As this article argues, the geopolitics underlying the production of problematic information in conservation results in informational, economic, epistemic, and power asymmetries, drawing into question the local, national, and global implications of conservation knowledge claims by these NGOs.

The Geopolitics of Problematic Information

Social relations, particularly those of power, do not neatly overlap with national or state boundaries and territories, thus societies cannot be separated into distinct unconnected units (Go 2017; Hustinx et al. 2022). International volunteer programs are geopolitical practices that encompass a "myriad of ways that people classify, order, and spatialize the world to produce geopolitical imaginaries of places

and the people who inhabit them" (Henry and Mostafanezhad 2019, 295). In a recent study on Tanzania, Mabele et al. (2023) examined how the production and dissemination of knowledge on conservation is entrenched in unequal epistemic structures. Their findings revealed "major inequalities, attributed to researchers, institutions and countries from Europe and North America, dominating in the production, dissemination, and communication of biodiversity conservation knowledge on Tanzania" (Mabele et al. 2023, 279). Following Hustinx et al. (2022), geopolitical practices through knowledge production in the volunteer programs in this study universalize the viewpoints, experiences, and education of volunteers from the Global North (Butcher and Einolf 2017; Baillie Smith, Thomas, and Hazeldine 2021; Lough 2021; Baillie Smith et al. 2022; Ademolu 2023). In looking at how knowledge is produced through volunteer programs, Hustinx et al. (2022) noted the need to "consider interactionist dynamics, cultural processes, discursive governmentalities, and epistemological hierarchies" (3). Vázquez (2011) argued that epistemic hegemony "rests in a politics of border keeping" (27). In this article, border keeping through epistemic territorialization follows Vázquez's (2011) argument, as it is fortified and sustained through the construction, manufacturing, and control of the production of conservation knowledge and its reach and centered on the aims and experiences of a visiting or distant Western audience.

The social, political, and corporate structure of the conservation NGOs worked to silo international volunteers and wider audiences into a particular territorialized and bounded way of knowing what conservation is or, rather, what it should be in Namibia. Jacobson (2007) argued that the transfer of knowledge is "a reciprocal process of knowledge generation and application" (117). Jacobson (2007) described this as an interactive process between the producers and the users of knowledge. In Jacobson's (2007) explanation, this process involves the "traditional producers (e.g., scientists) and traditional users of knowledge (e.g., practitioners and policy makers)" (117). Examining a similar process of knowledge generation and application, the NGOs studied are the producers of conservation knowledge claims and global audiences and the international volunteers, coordinators, and researchers are the intended users of the knowledge produced. Whereas Jacobson's (2007) model follows the traditional perception of how scientific knowledge should be applied in on-the-ground conservation politics, my case study marks an important contextual difference. This differentiation is highlighted because it denotes the politics of visibility and of erasure underlying conservation claims by the NGOs. International volunteers and global audiences were the intended users of conservation knowledge in this work while the traditional users of knowledge or, rather, the policymakers in official conservation policy and practice in Namibia were left out in the knowledge transfer. Epistemic territorial practices are a "process of selection, classification and appropriation that erases all that does not fit into the proper place of the already established epistemic territory" (Vázquez 2011, 27). Epistemic territory designates both the realm where discourses thrive and their horizon of intelligibility (Vázquez 2011). As Vázquez (2011) argued, epistemic territorial practices require a politics of visibility and of erasure.

The volunteer programs are an example of how epistemic territorialization forecloses critique of the nature of conservation knowledge and masks the inner workings of the NGOs. Writing on the economics of information, Stigler (1961) argued, "information is valuable: knowledge is power" (213). Empiricism, in and of itself, is political (Peet 1977; Forsyth 2008), as knowledge is "always situated, always implicated in formations and systems of power" (de Leeuw and Hunt 2018, 3). What is made visible and what is made invisible in scientific practice and in other forms of knowledge production is not by chance (Silva, Ornat, and Mason-Deese 2020; Ademolu 2023). What can be known and who can know is often "the privilege of those who hold the power to define, determine, and distribute the known and the not known" (Knudsen and Kishik 2022, 344–45; see also McGoey 2019). Visibility, as Silva, Ornat, and Mason-Deese (2020) stated, is produced by the power of the "tradition of the theoretical and methodological elements that delimit a certain world view and what questions can be formulated about a given spatial reality" (Silva, Ornat, and Mason-Deese 2020, 272). To construct and maintain the spatial reality of conservation, the NGOs must continuously verify, reinforce, and legitimize their work in conservation, at the same time, delimiting what questions can be formulated about their work on-site at their private facilities and in

conservation in Namibia more broadly. The NGOs' worldview of conservation, however, cannot and does not serve as the complete picture of conservation knowledge, nor does it align with the tradition of the theoretical and methodological approach in the field of conservation and, thus, its critique in political ecology.

The institutional context of the NGOs studied required that this research consider the role of non-state private actors, private property, private property ownership, and (absolute) private property rights in the spatial production of conservation knowledge claims. The NGOs are private commercial entities that hold or occupy private property, which means that they hold (absolute) rights to both land and wildlife (Amoo 2014). This right affords the NGOs and the land holder legal power over their property (and the wildlife within) that "may be exercised in any manner whatsoever within the parameters of the law" (Amoo 2014, 3). Detailed in the following section, this is at odds with how conservation is defined in the field of political ecology as relational and contested through the need to protect and manage natural resources in the commons.

Territorialization and *In Situ* Nature Conservation

From its inception, the field of political ecology has not only devoted analytical attention to the relations between humans and nature but defined conservation and conservation politics through contestations within the sphere of activity of the commons (Vaccaro, Beltran, and Paquet 2013). Conservation grew from the idea that natural resources need to be managed sustainably for future generations, natural resources being, for example, land, forests, water, and fisheries (Ostrom 1990; Harvey 2011). The underlying problem in resource management lies in how "to govern natural resources used by many individuals in common" (Ostrom 1990, 1). Natural resources, such as those just listed, are considered common-pool resources and are thought to be at risk of overuse due to competing interests and needs of different actors. By definition, a common-pool resource is a "resource made available to all by consumption and to which access can be limited only at high cost" (Basurto 2015). Common-pool resources typically fall under common property regimes indicating that "local communities devise formal and informal institutions in managing the local commons" (Adhikari 2021, 71). The commons are an integral part of the intellectual history of the political ecology approach, and questions of how to manage natural resources within the commons and between various actors is an ongoing debate and underlies processes of territorialization (Turner 2017).

In the field of political ecology, theoretical and conceptual contributions tend to focus on conservation that is *in situ* or territorially based (Vaccaro, Beltran, and Paquet 2013), whether through national parks, private reserves, or in collaboration with local communities. Ongoing debates in the field center on contestations around rights, access, management, and use of natural resources in the commons (Paulson, Gezon, and Watts 2003; Bollig 2016; Haller 2019). The environment is defined as "an arena where different social actors with asymmetrical political power are competing for access to and control of natural resources" (Vaccaro, Beltran, and Paquet 2013; see also Bryant and Bailey 1997, 255). Protected areas are the arena in which this competition usually takes place (Vaccaro, Beltran, and Paquet 2013). Territorialization describes "historical processes of enclosure and appropriation of land, labor, and resources" (Bluwstein 2021; see also Sack 1986) as a strategy that uses bounded spaces for particular outcomes (Rasmussen and Lund 2018). Importantly, territorialization is an act of boundary making wherein power relations are considered written on the land (Peluso and Lund 2011; Bluwstein and Lund 2018).

As a field, political ecology encompasses the "constantly shifting dialectic between society and land-based resources, and also within classes and groups within society itself" (Blaikie and Brookfield 2015, 17). Territorialization in conservation infers asserting control of land, people, labor, and resources within a conservation space and between NGOs, state, community, and private actors (Vaccaro, Beltran, and Paquet 2013). Conservation is relational by nature and requires "constant responses to and engagement with changing social, political, and economic boundaries" (Larsen and Brockington 2018, 4). The relational nature of conservation is informed by how property is defined by the field. Scholarship on the commons is "often informed by more general research on property rights and institutions" (Agrawal 2001, 1649). In political

ecology, however, Turner (2017) noted how the approach has "long embraced the relational underpinnings of property" (797). Different strands within political ecology have engaged with the commons and changing forms of property institutions (Turner 2017). Although engaging these topics from different perspectives, they "share common understandings of property rights as relational, contested, and shaped by broader political economies" (Turner 2017, 795). Within this view, property rights are considered as being "socially-mediated, over-lapping and contested, and necessarily embedded within people's livelihoods" (Turner 2017, 797; see also Leach, Mearns, and Scoones 1999; Ribot and Peluso 2003). In this research, however, land is privately owned, not common property.

Widening the Political Ecology Lens: Addressing Private Property Rights in Conservation

This study of the NGOs' conservation endeavors called into question taken-for-granted assumptions of conservation in the field of political ecology and required an alternative frame of analysis. Because of private land ownership, the NGOs are not relational by nature or responding and engaging with changing social, political, and economic boundaries. In other words, the NGOs are not protecting and managing natural resources as a public good within the commons. Rather, the NGOs are the sole arbiters of conservation and its benefits on their property(s) as well as in global fundraising campaigns and over social media networks. The NGOs' conservation endeavors are indicative of a shift from conservation as a public good to conservation as a private good. In this shift, conservation is divorced from natural resource management and development approaches that prioritize protecting whole ecosystems through neoliberal, market-based, community-based, and other participatory approaches to conservation (Brandon 2024). Rather than protecting and managing natural resources in the commons, conservation by the NGOs is on private property, which situates the NGOs outside of the political realm in conservation governance and independent of state-, community-, and Namibian NGO-led conservation policy interventions.

Private property, in the context of this case, is governed by different legal, regulatory, social, political, and economic structures than property in the commons and in political ecology more broadly. Consequently, different laws apply to private property than to common property or state-owned land in which Namibian conservation is based. For example, the NGOs hold the legal right to keep species in captivity as long as they abide by Namibian laws and regulations.[4] Individuals, communities, organizations, and NGOs on public or common property in Namibia do not have this right.[5] The right to keep captive species is an (absolute) right held through private property ownership. The NGOs hold or occupy private property, which means they hold legal power and (absolute) rights over their property and the wildlife within (Amoo 2014). Private land ownership codifies (absolute) rights to land and wildlife and also renders on-site conservation a private good. When conservation is a private good, it changes the avenues through which private entities, such as the NGOs in this study, access, engage, contribute, and participate in local, national, and global conservation politics. Property relations underlie epistemic territorialization in this study and influence power relations in the volunteer programs and in conservation more broadly, which has certain implications for how knowledge is produced by the NGOs.

On Private Property: Epistemic Territorialization Beyond the Commons

Territorialization is often used to analyze power relations underlying *in situ* territorially based nature conservation, but the concept is useful when extended to include epistemic territories. Processes of territorialization are "power exercises that can be harnessed by anyone who seeks to stake claims to land, people, labor and resources, and can legitimize these claims" (Bluwstein 2021). In this case, information is a resource and it is the NGOs' source of social, cultural, political, epistemic, and economic capital. The NGOs are private, freehold commercial farms with captive species, not protected areas with free-roaming wildlife that hold intrinsic conservation value in Namibia. To legitimize their work, role, and authority in conservation, the NGOs must define, determine, and distribute the known and the not known in conservation. Epistemic territorialization of conservation is a particular way of governing and controlling conservation resources through constructing a hegemonic sphere of influence, in this case, under the aegis of private property. In epistemic territorialization, claims to conservation knowledge,

expertise, and authority are the new territory in which the NGOs access and engage in conservation politics and power.

In both political ecology and geography literature, there is a tendency to link territory with the state and public land with little attention to the territorial dimensions of property leaving the territorial dimensions of property understudied (Blomley 2019). For the purposes of this article, property is defined as a "system of relationships between people, which derive from, enforce, and sustain a set of relationships of power" (Blomley 2019, 245). Property and territory are both "social institutions that organize a set of relations between people, institutions, and resources" (Blomley 2019, 234). Property and territory are not mutually exclusive. Importantly, property can be territorialized. There are, however, important conceptual differences. In territorialization, the focus is on regulating access and exclusion (Bassett and Gautier 2014). When property is territorialized, greater emphasis is placed on individual rights (Blomley 2019). The organization and distribution of property rights is the organization and distribution of social privileges and power. The presumption is that the "rights of the owner (to use, occupy, alienate and so on) applies uniformly across and exclusively within a defined space, and are operative at all times" (Blomley 2019, 235). When property is territorialized, the "owner" of a property is assumed to command all resources within their designated space as well as the right to govern access. As such, the property owner is "assumed to have a territorial 'gatekeeping function' that is not unduly constrained by the wishes and needs of others" (Blomley 2019, 235). In conceptualizing epistemic territorialization, private property is territorialized so that private land holders and private institutions therein command all resources and govern access through epistemic gatekeeping measures. This process underscores the volunteer experience at the NGOs' private facilities in Namibia and extends through broader conservation communication over global media platforms.

Methodological Approach: Empirical Inquiry into Volunteer Experiences

This article is part of a larger case study that examined the politics of cheetah conservation in Namibia and over social media. This article draws from research conducted online and at the volunteer programs of two conservation NGOs in Namibia. Although the larger project was focused on cheetahs specifically, these volunteer programs did include wildlife conservation more broadly. This case was organized and selected on the basis of known attributes and distinctive features and allowed for the collection of a variety of data and sources. As this study included multiple units of analysis from different organizations, an embedded case study design offered the best strategy for understanding how conservation knowledge is produced and bounded within exclusionary social and territorial epistemic structures that were pervasive in every aspect of the volunteer experience (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 2000). The primary concern of this study was an in-depth look into the production of knowledge by the NGOs through the volunteer programs, not the differences between the organizations themselves. Conservation in Namibia is a small community and volunteer programs even more so; therefore, all respondents, volunteers, Namibian officials, and NGOs are kept confidential. The volunteer programs do vary in size, focus, activities, and capacity, but what was relevant is that the NGOs' volunteer programs all have similar practices: Pose solutions to the same conservation threats, have varied volunteer programs, have education and research components, have captive wildlife on-site, and use social media to promote and advertise both their programs and their conservation mission. Significantly, the activities at the volunteer programs were the pedagogical approach of the NGOs to communicate and raise awareness for their conservation agendas beyond the context of Namibia.

Sites and Participants

Empirical data were collected in Namibia through ethnographic field work from September 2017 to October 2018. What was represented as conservation was conducted predominantly on site at the NGOs' private facilities. What was important in this research was to understand how conservation was being framed at these NGOs and how it was consumed by all actors involved. Information was collected from NGOs, international volunteers, and researchers in the field as well as through participant observation at the NGOs. Volunteers, coordinators, and most researchers at the NGOs had come from

the European Union, United Kingdom, United States, and Australia. Respondents were organized into different categories (researchers, coordinators, volunteers, and government officials) to protect the identity of the respondents. Data collection methods included participant observation, forty-three semi-structured and conversational interviews, volunteer journals, and questionnaires. Interviews were used when speaking with respondents and, with informed consent, were audio recorded and transcribed. Participant observation at the NGOs included conservation activities and research, mostly on site. During participant observation, a total of fifty-two volunteer journals and questionnaires were filled out by volunteers who agreed to participate. The journals documented the volunteers' experiences, why they volunteered, what they learned, and how and if their understanding of conservation changed over the course of their stay at the NGOs. Additional data were collected online documenting how both the volunteer experience and conservation were represented over social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube as well as over e-mail and various global volunteer websites.

Contextualizing the Volunteer Experience

As mentioned in the introduction, this case illustrates an epistemological challenge concerning how wildlife conservation knowledge is produced online and through volunteer programs by the NGOs. Because the NGOs create the conditions for what can be known in conservation, volunteers and global audiences online are seeing conservation as it really is. Therefore, the empirical section that follows describes wildlife conservation as it really is on the ground at the NGOs in Namibia. Conservation activities and online resources detailed in this section are pedagogical tools used by these NGOs to identify, define, determine, and distribute the known and the not known in conservation, geographically, conceptually, and ideologically isolated from conservation in Namibia writ large. Namibian conservation policy and practice are fundamentally different from what conservation is on the ground at the NGOs' private facilities. Conservation by the NGOs described in this article should not be confused with Namibian conservation. Importantly, the following description of the volunteer experience is not an account of Namibian conservation policy and practice. The volunteer experience, described here, can only provide insights into how the NGOs conceptualize and define conservation. What is made visible and what is put under erasure in these volunteer experiences shapes what questions volunteers can formulate about on-the-ground conservation in Namibia. As a consequence, the following empirical description of the volunteer experience details how conservation knowledge is produced through problematic information.

The following section contains an empirical description of one unit of the embedded case study undertaken in Namibia focusing on one volunteer experience specifically. One NGO, or unit, is highlighted, as it presents the most obvious case illustrating the pedagogical and political practices embedded in constructing these volunteer experiences. Although the volunteer programs vary in size and in activities, both NGOs use volunteer activities as pedagogical tools to raise awareness and communicate their construction of conservation needs and challenges in Namibia and beyond.

Volunteering: A Day in the Life[6]

A day in the life of a volunteer starts first thing in the morning. After an early breakfast, volunteers make their way to "food prep" the designated meeting place where volunteers, coordinators, researchers, and staff all gather to go over the schedule and make announcements. Volunteers are assigned a group on arrival that determines the rotation of activities for the duration of the program. The volunteers' weekly or monthly schedule is set according to their group. In this account, the group's first activity was the carnivore feed, where volunteers, with the help of a coordinator or researcher, feed all of the resident large carnivores. Surprisingly, there is little hesitancy among volunteers when grabbing the bloody pieces of fresh meat or when preparing the food by chopping up animal carcasses for the various carnivores in residence. A thawing zebra or horse head was hardly a surprise walking into the food prep area. This meat was broken down and systematically fed to the smaller resident carnivores at the center; however, feeding the large carnivores required a vehicle. The carnivore enclosures are spread out across the NGO's property. Feeding the carnivores meant throwing large pieces of fresh meat over the fence to the animals, which included leopards, lions, cheetahs, and wild dogs all in separate enclosures. For the carnivore feed, several volunteers stood in the bed of the truck and one or two on the ground poised and ready to

heave a big chunk of fresh meat over the enclosure fence. The first to be fed were two impatient, pacing cheetahs. Those who were not throwing the meat had their phones and cameras ready to record the feeding procedure. Feeding cheetahs is not the same as other large carnivores. To feed captive cheetahs you need to catch their attention. If the cheetahs do not see the meat, where it lands, or the meat flying through the air, then they will not necessarily know lunch was served. Cheetahs are not scavengers and the meat will be left uneaten, decomposing, and needing to be removed later. Leopards and lions, however, do not need such formalities. Seasoned volunteers know this already but it is explained to the new arrivals by a coordinator or researcher so they are ready when it is their turn. Throughout the activity the volunteers took turns throwing the meat and filming each other as they did. These films are shared quite often on YouTube.

The carnivore feed takes up most of the morning driving between enclosures, and volunteers usually get back just in time to queue for lunch. Meals at the organizations are a communal affair. New volunteers stand out finding a space at the table. Experienced volunteers already have their group and their places. New arrivals adjust quickly and are welcomed by other volunteers with stories of wild adventures "in the bush." Over lunch, volunteer discussions tend to revolve around the conservation experience. Volunteers offer each other advice on the various volunteer packages, what to do, what to avoid, and which sites to go, while others talk excitedly about their morning and afternoon activities. Not everyone, however, is enthusiastic. Some activities can be monotonous like going through camera trap data for research or tedious when building a new enclosure. There are also the typical group dynamics at play, as not everyone gets along and there is often a bit of drama in the daily routine. Even after difficult tasks or dealing with group dynamics, the volunteers, however, noted their unique experiences getting to be part of the conservation efforts at the NGO. After all, as conservation volunteers, they have the "rare and exciting opportunity to actively participate in the conservation, rehabilitation, care and research of African wildlife," according to advertisements for the volunteer program online (International Volunteer HQ n.d.).

After lunch, the work begins again. After everyone arrives back at food prep, volunteers are told where to go and what they will be doing before scattering off to their different assignments. The afternoon activity is the baboon walk. In this activity, volunteers go with a staff member on a walk with rescued baboons that are "humanized" and cannot be released back into the wild. These baboons are babies or juveniles, as the full-grown baboons on site would be too dangerous for this activity. The juvenile baboons are still large enough to pose a risk; therefore, volunteers must remove all jewelry and are warned against any sudden movements or reactions when baboons interact on the walk. This does include staying calm and collected when baboons "relieve" themselves during such interactions. The purpose of this activity is to give the captive baboons the chance to be baboons and explore in areas beyond the confines of their enclosures. Volunteers walk with the baboons to a location decided on by staff then sit and relax watching the baboons play. The baboon walk is a favorite activity of the volunteers. The baboons will climb on volunteers' shoulders, groom volunteers' hair, and inspect all bodily crevices. These interactions with baboons are often filmed and many volunteers take these interactions as photo ops. These photos can be seen on both volunteers' and the NGO's posts on Instagram and Facebook as well as videos on YouTube.

The preferred volunteer activities were game counts, baboon and cheetah walks, and spending time in the "cuddle" section, but opinions did vary. Baboons, however, were almost unanimously the most beloved species. Volunteer activities included food prep and small animal feeding, veterinary care, game counts by car and on horseback, human–wildlife conflict (HWC) calls, and afternoon sports. The least preferred activities tended to be project work where volunteers help with various tasks. Project work generally involves manual labor and can mean building camps, constructing new facilities, tearing down old structures, and the maintenance of roads and fences. Research was also a volunteer activity. Volunteers monitor high-profile species on site, track spoor (animal tracks), participate in research projects, change camera traps, go through camera trap and Global Positioning System (GPS) data, and conduct research studies in collaboration with the researchers at the NGO. Volunteers also have the opportunity to focus on specialized programs outside of the daily routine. Volunteering at the NGO is not only about conservation. The NGOs also have

volunteer programs at their medical clinic and early childhood education center. The medical, conservation, and early childhood education volunteer programs did not require prior experience to join, offering volunteers the ability to gain experience in these areas during their stay. Conservation volunteer programs, however, offered more diversity of choices. For example, the options in conservation include the opportunity to learn more about wildlife medicine in the vet program, captive animal care, or becoming a rhino ranger. As a rhino ranger, volunteers can help protect endangered rhinos (on-site). In an intensive two-week course, volunteers, whose ages generally ranged from eighteen to twenty-two, can join members of the antipoaching unit on patrol. In the rhino ranger program, volunteers mostly from the European Union, United Kingdom, and the United States can learn the ins and outs of tracking and wildlife monitoring of rhinos as well as other species along the way.[7] According to the NGO's website, volunteers learn tracking skills, navigation, map reading, and weapons training. Rhino rangers trained and employed by the NGO teach the volunteers about the poaching crisis. In this conservation experience, volunteers sleep "in the bush" or, rather, inside the NGO's private reserve.

The volunteers' day does not end after the activities are done. Dinner is the culmination of an exciting adventure or long day of conservation work. During the evening and late into the night, volunteers discussed conservation and their daily activities, connecting through shared experiences. Dinner also had nonhuman guests. A young zebra would often stroll by as the volunteers ate dinner and a goat regularly slept on the BBQ (the irony was not lost on anyone). There was also a rather pesky porcupine that would run underneath the tables (and tents). Volunteers were also responsible for orphaned baboons overnight. As a consequence, dinner was often disrupted by a rogue baby baboon aiming for a snack. After dinner the volunteers gathered with their social groups and sat by the fire, debating conservation issues, telling stories, discussing their lives back home, playing games, competing at pool, and drinking well into the early morning hours. Weekends were more relaxed, with only the necessary activities needing to be done. Weekends were spent by the pool, at the lodge, or, for a few who signed up in time, in town (Windhoek). On special occasions, the NGO would arrange a group activity. One weekend it was a soccer game, another weekend coordinators took volunteers to the local (Namibian) staff lodgings, bringing the local staff donated items.[8] Along with special events, the coordinators also arranged fun activities during the week. If the volunteers were lucky, coordinators would organize sundowners in the evenings, wine tastings, sleepouts under the stars, sandboarding, movie nights, and a sunrise breakfast. All activities at the organization fostered group cohesion and team building; for most volunteers, they offered a balance between work and play.

Volunteering: The Social and Geographic Conditions of Conservation Knowledge Production

The volunteers' primary source for learning about conservation was the NGOs. At the NGOs, all day, every day, the focus was on conservation. Activities were explained on a regular basis because of the steady stream of volunteers arriving and departing every week. All volunteer activities had a purpose. Wildlife conservation threats, solutions, and barriers, as defined by the NGOs, were communicated throughout the daily routine. On activities like the carnivore feed, a coordinator or researcher would explain the activity, why the large carnivores are fed this way, why the carnivores are at the NGO, as well as their individual story, if there was one. Conservation discourses often centered on difficult positions particularly concerning issues such as poaching, trophy hunting, and HWC situations. Most activities included discussions of conservation threats and the solutions offered by the NGO. Often during these discussions, the problems and barriers to the NGO's work became a topic of conversations, particularly during conservation emergencies. The challenges of working within a regulatory framework instituted by the Namibian government were often discussed as a barrier. Namibian conservation policy was often placed in opposition to the NGO's mission. A common complaint by volunteers concerned conservation politics. Volunteers considered the government to be an obstacle to the NGO's goals, lamenting what could be done if it were not for their interference. International volunteers were explicit in their journals where political power should be located and whose agenda should be a priority in

conservation. One volunteer even went as far as to say wildlife conservation should not be a governmental decision.

At the NGO, non-conservation-related communication and experiences are fairly limited. Volunteers were not usually given access to wi-fi, and phone service was unreliable at best. Overall, the volunteer programs were carefully structured, leaving little room for individual activities, communication off-site, and free, unscheduled time. The NGO was geographically isolated and far from any cities or reliable public transportation. Unless you have a car, leaving the volunteer program must be arranged. For most volunteers, the NGO was their only stop. Volunteers stayed between two weeks and three months and most travel during that time was between projects. Conservation work itself rarely left the NGO's properties. If the volunteers did leave to join a conservation emergency, they were observers and their experiences were carefully organized by the coordinator or researcher in charge. One commercial farmer explained their experience of an HWC conflict call. The commercial farmer noted the lack of engagement with volunteers who were standing off to the side.

Volunteers' status was carefully maintained through hierarchal social interactions. The volunteers' role at the NGO was prioritized and often put before research projects. If an activity had to be moved or a project delayed, coordinators or researchers would arrange a "fun" activity in its place. The volunteers' role was reinforced in daily discussions, noting how the NGO's mission in conservation would not be possible without their help, work, and their contribution. The longer volunteers stayed, the more responsibilities they were given. Apart from activities, socializing was discouraged between volunteers and staff, although it was difficult to avoid owing to the isolated locations and full accommodations. Volunteer accommodations are shared between two or more volunteers per room or tent. This amounted to a totally immersive experience in the project.

Volunteering: Conservation Lessons Learned

Discussing their motivations, one volunteer noted their privileged position: "I like being able to give back to the community as I've had a very lucky upbringing being able to travel and live in a first world country." In volunteer journals, volunteers' reasons for volunteering were similar and focused on the role of the individual. Volunteers came to Namibia to "make a difference." For most volunteers it was a lifelong dream to travel to Africa, however, only a few to Namibia specifically. As one volunteer put it, "Since I have been small I have always been in love with African wildlife and I have always felt great respect for their well-being and their environment." It was for that reason this volunteer had "always planned on going to a reserve to help conserve such animals, because they live on the planet just like us and should be protected from poaching and loss of habitat." Many of the volunteers' primary source for learning about conservation was the NGOs. As one volunteer wrote, "Even though before I came here, I always knew that conservation was important … I learned a lot more about the process of conservation and what it takes to do it correctly." Another volunteer wrote how they had "always been in love with African wildlife" and the work the organization was doing was what they wanted to do for a living, "so it seemed like the natural first step to gain some practical experience in the field." In another journal, a volunteer discussed how they needed a break from work to figure out their direction in life and wanted to do something hands-on and meaningful. The volunteer mentioned they had always loved animals and nature and "volunteering seemed like a perfect way to combine these without prior experience in the field." Another volunteer wrote their experiences learning about conservation:

> Yes, I have learned a lot. Before I had only a little bit of knowledge about it. I knew that protection of carnivores is very important to the ecosystem but I didn't know any details. I have also discovered how to do the research and in the future I want to learn more about it. At least now I have the base.

Questions asked during field work on prior experience in conservation was specific to cheetahs, but questions on conservation research addressed conservation more generally. Both questions drew similar responses: Most of the volunteers did not have experience in cheetah conservation or conservation research prior to volunteering. What knowledge they attained about conservation and the NGOs was formed through what the volunteers saw, experienced, and learned while volunteering. In a journal,

a volunteer discussed how they had been to the NGO once before and that all of their "experience and knowledge of conservation comes from that two-month stay." Describing how much they learned at the organization, another volunteer mentioned that "before my trip here I didn't know anything about conservation." For the majority of the volunteers, this was their first experience. One volunteer noted that it was "hard to explain" that "everything I've learned a lot of it [is] a new perspective and a feeling for conservation that has deepened or learned how to stand on its own legs (be)cause I never knew so much about the effect of animals struggling to survive … and now I can really stand behind my opinions and spread the knowledge I have." Discussing their experiences in research, another volunteer wrote:

> It has changed my view on how to do research. Before coming here, I knew some of the basic techniques for carrying out research but experiencing them firsthand has made me realize how important it really is to carry out this work. Every sighting, paw print, and even "scat" is exciting to see! It makes you feel like you have a real impact on these animals. It's a really rewarding experience. It makes me want to help more and give each animal a chance of surviving extinction.

Volunteers were looking for a meaningful experience and to make an impact, for some that was to mitigate global environmental threats. A significant portion of volunteers commented in their journals that global threats such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and extinction had influenced their decision to volunteer. One volunteer's motivation was "being part of a positive conservation movement to raise awareness about climate change and extinction." Another volunteer mentioned it "was something I needed to do for myself and the world." Volunteering in wildlife conservation at the NGO was considered an opportunity for the volunteers to combat global environmental crises. One volunteer wrote that they wanted to "contribute to sustainability in the world, a healthy environment, and also preserving wildcare." Global environmental concerns were mentioned often as a reason for volunteering and a common concern among volunteers. One volunteer raised questions about the contradiction underlying their position, stating, "Volunteering in conservation and being a part of the problem yourself (just in being a Westerner) is complicated." Although this contradiction was noted, the volunteer emphasized the extreme importance to "safeguard what diversity we have left." The volunteer also remarked how "it makes you think of the root causes of the need for conservation and how those keep on going." The root cause referenced by the volunteer was global climate change, extinction, and biodiversity loss caused by overconsumption in the West. Many volunteers mentioned those crises and their cause rooted in Western countries and chose volunteering in Namibia as a means to compensate. Another volunteer wrote that they were "very aware of problems in the world" and would "like to be able to say that, when my time comes, I did something to help, that I wasn't just another life ruining the planet we call home." The role of the airline industry and international tourism in creating the environmental crises the volunteers traveled to Namibia to combat, however, was never mentioned.

What emerged from the analysis of volunteers' experiences was a gulf between what volunteers learned about and considered conservation and Namibian conservation policy and practice. The knowledge and experience gaps underlying the volunteer programs were echoed in the following rhetorical question(s) posed by a Namibian official in an interview. The Namibian official asked: "Whose agenda matters in conservation?" Is it the local community or those "in the West who have decimated their wildlife who are now asking to conserve the wildlife here?"

The Problem with Problematic Information

Going back to Gettier's thought experiments in the introduction and the example of John, Frank, and the cows, volunteers at the NGOs had justified true belief that what they were seeing and experiencing was conservation or, at least, contributing to the NGOs' conservation endeavors in Namibia. The justification for this belief, however, was based on problematic information. In this case, problematic information is when true specialist information is rendered in a distorted way to support one's viewpoint (Di Domenico and Visentin 2020). At the NGOs' private facilities, conservation was not, in and of itself, conservation in Namibia (Brandon 2021). Importantly, conservation at the NGOs was an economic activity and a private good inextricably linked to their business practices that included their volunteer programs, tourism, and other commercial activities. While the NGOs studied can contribute to conservation in Namibia, these

contributions, however, are service-based and "on offer" rather than *in situ* territorially-based nature conservation (Brandon 2024). Conservation on site at the NGOs' private facilities cannot, by definition, be considered conservation in the field of political ecology. As private, commercial entities, the NGOs are not protecting or managing natural resources in the commons. Instead, the NGOs shape what conservation is or, rather, what it should be in Namibia by controlling the means of knowledge production within their epistemic territory. Through private property ownership, the NGOs define wildlife conservation according to their own agenda and goals. To construct and maintain the spatial reality of conservation, the NGOs, however, must continuously verify, reinforce, and legitimize their work and role in conservation while delimiting what questions can be formulated about their work on site at their private facilities and in conservation in Namibia more broadly. The NGOs' worldview of conservation, however, cannot and does not serve as the complete picture of conservation knowledge in Namibia or conservation at the international scale.

The Politics of Epistemic Territorialization

To understand the politics of epistemic territorialization and the broader consequences of problematic information, an example of political organizing by one NGO stands out. The politics is made explicit in this NGO's correspondence with supporters regarding legal troubles following a criminal investigation(s). This NGO e-mailed several newsletters in an effort to raise money for legal fees through their "animal welfare legislation campaign" (e-mail, 5 September 2022). In one e-mail labeled "We'll Never Forget …" (5 September 2022), the NGO requested money for its legal battle. This action was in response to a criminal investigation alleging this NGO had violated Namibian laws "by buying, transporting, keeping, and breeding animals without the required permits" (Mongudhi and Haufiku 2020). The e-mails framed the NGO's legal troubles as solely a matter of animal welfare and contained images of dead and maimed animals, ostensibly, to show the consequences of a failed campaign. One e-mail described this legal fight as "one of the most important legal actions in Namibian history" (e-mail, 23 August 2022). The NGO called on their "loyal" supporters to raise US$200,000 to cover their legal fees (e-mail, 5 September 2022). Fundraising for legal fees should be a controversial foray into conservation politics or, at the very least, should raise reasonable questions around the validity of the claims. It is not known how much money had been raised from these campaigns, but this example of the political organizing of one NGO illustrates the socio-economic and political possibilities of epistemic territorialization. It is also an example of problematic information (misinformation and disinformation).

Epistemic territorialization is the power to foreclose critique of the premises of conservation knowledge and the power that obfuscates the self-interests of the NGOs. It is also the power to determine whose conservation agenda matters. Epistemic territorialization serves to control the narrative, establish epistemic authority, and build sovereignty in conservation for the NGOs' financial and political gain. Volunteer programs are a platform for the NGOs to put into action their own agenda in conservation, ensnaring international volunteers by making their participation a moral choice that will "make an impact." Absent in the volunteer experience were multiple perspectives and voices in Namibian conservation or conceptual linkages in the volunteers' work. Because the NGOs create the conditions for what is seen, experienced, and what can be known in conservation, volunteer programs are illustrative of the problem of problematic information and how information asymmetries are created and reinforced through epistemic territorialization. Epistemic territorialization is a political maneuver as it is a process used to leverage political power and unilateral control over the broader conservation agenda. Informational asymmetries are created by the production of problematic information embedded in the NGOs' knowledge claims and inextricable from the politics of epistemic territorialization. As a consequence, epistemic territorialization is bounded through the production of problematic information serving as a political mechanism of the NGOs.

Epistemic Territorialization in Wildlife Conservation Volunteer Programs

In this research, the volunteer programs are not benign, nor are volunteers uncontroversial figures in global conservation. It cannot be known through this research exactly how volunteers employed what

they had learned at these NGOs, but this research did show what volunteers did not learn. For example, volunteers did not learn that captive wildlife did not hold value in conservation in Namibia. Volunteers were also not taught that throwing meat over enclosure fences to feed the resident carnivores was not conservation as it is practiced in Namibia writ large. Importantly, the volunteers were not told that captive wildlife was considered an economic activity by the Namibian government and regulations were in place to prevent this from becoming an industry (Brandon 2024). What was not mentioned while volunteering were the reasons behind state policies regulating captive wildlife and how the NGOs operate in Namibia (Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Republic of Namibia [MET] 2016; Government Gazette Republic of Namibia 2022). It was clear in this research that the regulations and permitting system implemented by the Namibian government served as a tool in conservation. In Namibian conservation policy, regulations are in place to protect wildlife from being removed from nature unsustainably (MET 2016). These regulations also maintain standards of care for keeping and transporting wildlife (MET 2016; Government Gazette Republic of Namibia 2022). These regulations are the same governmental regulations that volunteers are told by the NGO are an impediment to their conservation work. Regulations and oversight of wildlife conservation volunteer programs are warranted. Without regulations in place, one misstep with an animal or activity could lead to broader repercussions in Namibia's tourism industry and in conservation more broadly.

Epistemic territorialization presented an epistemological challenge as what the volunteers perceived and experienced as conservation was only considered conservation within the NGOs' sphere of influence. Because the NGOs are private commercial entities, they are not compelled to supply an exact account of their role and authority in conservation in Namibia (Brandon 2024). As mentioned in the introduction, Jack (2017) described how "recent controversies over 'fake news,' and concerns over entering a 'post-fact' era, reflect a burgeoning crisis: problematically inaccurate information, it seems, is circulating in ways that disrupt politics, business, and culture" (2). The impact of problematic information and informational asymmetries are far-reaching. For example, volunteering at the NGOs might alter the volunteers' future actions and can set the foundation for future work or continuing education in conservation. This was evidenced in many volunteers' future career goals. The majority of volunteers were gap year students heading off to university following the volunteer programs. A significant number of volunteers were already students and had joined the programs to gain experience for a career in conservation or to conduct bachelor's, master's, or PhD field work. The consequences of epistemic territorialization of conservation knowledge claims are volunteers who think that they have "made a difference" through these NGOs and incorporate what they think they "know" about conservation going forward.

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Notes

1. The NGOs studied are self-contained (private) entities, on private property, and in Namibia's private sector making it important to state that their structure, composition, and management adheres to the legal frameworks of international NGOs. The NGOs are registered as international NGOs, businesses, and charitable trusts or foundations.
2. Property ownership "vests in the holder a multitude of entitlements, *ius fruendi*, which include the right to control, use, encumber, alienate and vindicate" (Amoo 2014, 63). The entitlement of control that is granted through ownership provides the holder the right of physical control over the thing that is owned (Amoo 2014), in perpetuity, and "without interference from another" (De Villiers et al. 2019, 22). In Namibia, the lawful ownership of both movable and immovable property is "constitutionally recognized and protected by article 16(1) of the Constitution" (Amoo 2014, 4). In freehold titles, "an owner of land has absolute control over a specific surveyed parcel of land" (De Villiers et al. 2019, 22).
3. In private land ownership, absolute rights grant legal power over a property "which may be exercised in any manner whatsoever within the parameters of the law" (Amoo 2014, 3).

4. Following Namibia's independence in 1990, private property remained private and the accepted constitutional provisions for private property allowed permits to remain in effect (Melber 2019), including permits required for keeping captive wildlife.
5. On Community Based Natural Resource Management/communal land, rights are granted over wildlife, although not over land itself (Sullivan 2006). Article 100 of the Namibian constitution confers the "allodial title of the land in the State by the provision that land, water and natural resources below and above the surface of the land and in the continental shelf and within the territorial waters and the exclusive economic zone of Namibia shall belong to the State, if not otherwise lawfully owned" (Amoo 2014, 4). Individual rights over communal land are in the form of "rights of use, with limited security of tenure" (Amoo 2014, 27).
6. This example does not represent a specific day, only what any day at the volunteer program could be like. Volunteer numbers vary weekly.
7. All volunteers must purchase a shirt to wear every day so they are not mistaken for poachers by the rhino rangers.
8. This activity drew criticism from one volunteer who brought it to my attention. I did not attend this activity myself but it was shared by the NGO online. I was told this was not a regular activity but held twice a year. The activity was for volunteers to distribute donated items to local (Namibian) staff. The coordinators drove volunteers to the (Namibian) staff quarters where donated items had been spread out on a tarp. Namibian staff were then given the go ahead to race each other to collect the items while volunteers and coordinators cheered them on, taking pictures and videos. Volunteers mentioned later that this activity was a meaningful experience. Although only part of the problem underlying this particular activity, staff positions are typically low pay.

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