

Value based nature conservation

Concerning nature conservation in African countries, it should be recorded that only the “Big Five” seem to be relevant because of their importance for tourism (vgl. Habel et al. 2016: 797). Meanwhile there are areas with a high potential of diversity with a rather low touristic attraction. These areas draw way less attention to themselves. Unfortunately, the consequence is that the knowledge about them and the interest in these areas also are on a quite low level. In the meantime, less knowledge and interest is combined with high demographic pressure and climate change, which is alarming out of the perspective of research concerning endangered unknown and rare species (vgl. Hupke 2015: 23; Naturschutzbund Deutschland e.V. (NABU) o.J.). Even more devastating is the situation of local populations in those regions. Nature conservation has to fight against the prejudice that it is a dream construction from industrialized countries, because they have the privilege to tackle those topics next to earning one’s livelihood. But we should look behind the fallacy that nature conservation is no topic out of those spheres. At first sight, a poor family just need to save its existence by their own subsistence agriculture. It seems completely misplaced to ask if the family is willing to participate in measures of nature conservation additional to their normal work. But thinking in the long term shows that the existence of this family is deeply connected to their environment. They are dependent from natural resources and activities from their surrounding. Under this condition, nature conservation should be acknowledged necessarily as a future investment to guarantee the continued existence of those human populations next to plants and animals.

This contribution discusses exemplary how human motivations and hierarchy of values could be a catalyst or an inhibitor for nature conservation at the Arabuko-Sokoke Forest as an East African costal forest. The study should reveal which ethical structures hide under the fact that the population grand plants or animals that they have a certain value for themselves, for humans or no value at all. Furthermore, it should enable to assess the situation of forest conservation concerning its applicability with the foundation of the local environmental ethics. Therefore, the aim of this study is first to identify the predominate environmental ethics based on human statements about values of their natural surrounding and second to compare the compatibility of forest conservation practices and the common attitude towards the natural surrounding out of the first part.

The study setup comprised interviews with 225 respondents in villages around the Arabuko-Sokoke Forest. The interviews were conducted with a face-to-face strategy in teams with one kenian student and one german student. This was indispensable because most of the rural population wasn’t able to speak English fluently and the german research team couldn’t speak Swahili. The questionnaire was presented with a tablet an as a paper version. Results

from the questionnaire were analyzed with IBM SPSS Statistics. The questionnaire was structured in four parts which consisted of sociodemographic data, questions about land tenure and land use, knowledge about the forest and personal willingness to participate in activities as well.

Literature differentiates under the term environmental ethics between Anthropocentrism, Pathocentrism, Biocentrism and Holism. These ethical lines of reasoning are structured after the problem of inclusion which makes the question of morally valuable beings the subject of discussion (vgl. Dierks et al. 2016: 9). Anthropocentrism states that only human beings have moral value (vgl. Eser und Potthast 1999: 46). Thus, in an anthropocentric view humans only have binding moral commitments for other human beings (vgl. Schlitt 1992: 29). Pathocentrism includes all beings as morally relevant as long as those beings are able to feel pain (vgl. Krebs 2016: 157). The biocentric view includes all living beings as morally relevant (vgl. Eser und Potthast 1999: 46). The holism sets the criteria of existence for a moral individuum (vgl. Dierks 2016a: 177f). There are also less popular ethical lines of reasoning for example Ecocentrism, which justifies the potential death of several beings with the consequence of a continued existence of the ecosystem (vgl. Dierks 2016b: 171).

This summary will present exemplary the results of one part of the questionnaire. The respondents were confronted with a fictional voting about the continuation of the protection status of the Arabuko-Sokoke Forest. 93,3% of the respondents would vote for the continuation and 6,7% would vote for the abolition of the protection. The respondents were asked to name a reason for their decision. Most of them gave several reasons without prioritizing. Nearly half of the respondents (41,8%) who would vote for a continuation are afraid that the loss of the protection status could lead to conflicts with the elephants and the baboons. 20,6% of the respondents who would vote positively said that they would miss the diversity of animal and plant species. 23,9% of the supporters also said, that they are afraid of human destruction of the forest und a drought as a result of a loss of the protection. Less than 10% of the supporter of the protection status see a high relevance as a touristic location (8,8%) and 1,6% would vote for it because they follow the current laws. The majority of those 6,7% opponents of the protection status said that they wish to use the forest land as further agricultural areas and they would like to use the natural resources without rules (93%).

The given reasons of this exemplary question show that there is a high willingness to preserve the forest and its protection, but the motivation for this seems to be mostly anthropocentric. The protection of the Arabuko-Sokoke Forest (nature conservation for the aim of protection of the nature itself) is equated in this situation with the fence between elephants and the villages around the forest (protection of the population from the animals). Anthropocentric argumentations always consider human needs as morally relevant. Protecting the forest because of touristic advantages, the believe in a causal connection

between plants and rain and the interest to get rid of the protection to manage the natural resources and areas as they like – these are all anthropocentric interests.

There are also a few answers which could fit into structures from Biocentrism, but we can't be sure that "for diversity" or "for future" means for diversity itself, diversity in the personal food chain or diversity for tourism or even something else. Therefore, it can't be said with absolute certainty that there are biocentric structures.

Out of these results it can be assumed that the population is mostly anthropocentric. The analysis of various parts of the questionnaire concerning the protection of animals and plants, the willingness to personal involvement and the comparison from willingness in activities with monetary benefits and activities without showed similar results with a wider spectrum of identified lines of reasoning, but always with a majority for Anthropocentrism. Hence it seems to be adequate to separate between nature conservation with the aim to protect the nature for itself and environment conservation with the aim to save the natural surrounding for human needs. The population at the Arabuko-Sokoke Forest seems to be forced to argue anthropocentric because of its low socioeconomic status without a wide spectrum of alternatives. Conservation strategies might only work when the population at the Arabuko-Sokoke Forest gets benefits from them in form of knowledge, money, resources or access to the forest.

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