1. Introduction

The following study concerns nature conservation as a way to benefit local communities. The theme of this research was first inspired by a reading of the book *Wildlife Heroes*, a compilation of forty leading conservation projects written by Julie Scardina and Jeff Flocken. The articles talk about the work being accomplished for the preservation of various endangered animal species, but also pointed strongly to the work done with the local communities at these sites, which are directly exposed to relations with the wild animals. Wild animals are repeatedly commonly treated like pests in areas where the wildlife meets human habitats, and are therefore exterminated as such and sometimes driven into extinction. Many educational programmes have been launched and countless local inhabitants have been encouraged to take part in the conservation projects giving them the opportunity to gain employment and education. Through education, and understanding, and enjoying the benefits of that they can benefit from a healthy wildlife, the people often change their hostile attitudes toward the local animals. Educated communities can then plan their development more sustainably, what means better being which leads to valuable results for both the people and the animals. Such a comprehensive approach to nature conservation and people’s welfare of populations in developing countries appeals greatly inspiring for someone who is concerned about both prosperous nature and prosperous people. The further research on the subject helped lead to the given topic of this thesis - peace parks.

1.1 Peace parks

The beginning of the peace park phenomenon and the origins of the term phrase 'peace park' began with the establishment of the Waterton Lake Glacier International Peace Park between Canada and the U.S.A. in 1932. The gesture had a largely symbolic meaning since the countries were not in a conflict and they remain in friendly relationship today. Despite that, many countries have followed this example and attempted to maintain or establish peace with the help of nature-protecting transboundary areas. The first international peace park involving armed conflict between neighbouring countries was in the Cordillera del Condor region between Ecuador and Peru (Ali 2007). Today, the Transboundary Protected Areas Network recognises 188 peace parks all over the world (IUCN references).
Peace Parks work effectively as buffer zones between countries in conflict. There are several examples of buffer zones between hostile territories. One of these lies between El Salvador and Honduras, which is said to reduce the possibility of war by about 90% (Lejano 2007). Pakistan and India are divided by an even narrower strip, which has also resulted in a significant decrease in violent incidents within the area. These two countries are considering the creation of a formal peace park on the Siachen glacier, just above the military control line. Jordan and Israel have jointly managed the Binational Sea Marine Peace Park since 1994, and the situation in Cyprus changed its direction from hostile to cooperative even on the local level. After decades of being divided by a buffer zone, nowadays, the Greek and Turkish Cypriots exchange social and cultural relations within the buffer zone.

The most widely accepted definition for Peace Parks is the one brought by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) (date references). The IUCN distinguishes certain Protected Areas, which have been established to generally protect biodiversity and cultural diversity. Transboundary Protected Areas (TBPAs) are a subcategory of Protected Areas and must straddle over the borders of two or more countries. Peace Parks or Transboundary Protection Areas for Peace and Co-operation (otherwise known as ‘peace parks’) are the narrowest subcategory of Protected Areas, which must demonstrate biodiversity, cooperation and most importantly, a peace objective between at least two countries. The mission of Peace Parks is to preserve their natural and cultural heritage while helping to establish peaceful and cooperative relations between countries in conflict, as well as developing their economies and improving peoples’ living conditions.

Transfrontier Conservation Area (TFCA) is a term used mostly to describe TBPAs in southern Africa. The distinction is made to give the phenomena exclusiveness for that part of the world (van Amerom and Büscher 2005). Southern African countries have adapted the idea of Transboundary Protection Areas for Peace and Co-operation as a regular cooperation and development tool, and with the help of the Peace Park Foundation (PPF), they have created peace parks in naturally and culturally valuable areas, where the local people are included in ambitious development plans. The situation of people living in the protection area is the interest of this thesis.

1.2 The past and present of peace parks in Southern Africa

Today, the densest area of the world’s basin in southern Africa. In May of 1990, there took place the inception of a conservation project, which later turned into The Peace Park Foundation. Anton Rupert “had a meeting in Maputo..."
with Mozambique's President Joaquim Chissano, to discuss the possibility of establishing a permanent link between some of the protected areas in southern Mozambique and their adjacent counterparts in South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe" (PPF 2013). After—In 1996, after additional more meetings and discussions, finally in 1996, Mozambique, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Swaziland agreed to a mutual declared cooperation in order to realise the economic benefits of the protection area. The PPF operates now in the region of Southern African region and runs 10 parks. The Foundation is an international organisation working in Southern Africa to facilitate the establishment of peace parks. It was established in 1997 by Dr Anton Rupert, together with HRH Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands and Dr Nelson Mandela. Originally the Foundation was called the transformed from WWF South Africa project, but it was renamed when Rupert introduced the concept of transfrontier conservation areas. During the same year, countries in the region recognised the economic value of nature—protection areas as tourist attractions, which spurred and interest in peace parks—grew in Southern Africa. The sub-continent needed a solution to the economic challenges they were facing, and TFCAs seemed appealing.

The PPF manages the entire whole multi—layered and time-consuming long lasting process of establishing each the peace parks. Its postulates are to protect the nature and with its fragile and specific ecosystems, tighten international cooperation and improve economic situations in the region. The When describing peace parks, the PPF (2013) states that, says itself that “Peace parks are about co-existence between humans and nature, about promoting regional peace and stability, conserving biodiversity and stimulating job creation by developing nature conservation as a land-use option”.

These parks and projects are vividly supported financially by many local and external organisations such as like for instance Dutch Postcode Lottery, KFW and Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development.

1.3 KAZA - the subject of this research

The particular peace park, which will become the main interest of this thesis, is known as Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA or KAZA TFCA). KAZA covers an area of about 520 000 km² (PPF 2014) in the Kavango and Zambezi river basin and it is the biggest TFCA in the world, spreading over five countries: Angola, Namibia, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The TFCA is also the youngest peace park in Southern Africa, as the treaty was signed as recently as in August of 2011. However, development took some time, however, as the beginning of the planning and negotiation process started in the early 2000s.
KAZA TFCA has many unusual and appealing qualities which make it perfect as a tourist destination. First, it is famous for hosting the biggest elephant population in Africa. The rich diversity of wildlife species diversity in the park is also considered of a big economic and ecological value. The park’s flora is also impressive worth attention with over a 100 different species that are all endemic to the region. In its final form, the park is planned to contain 36 proclaimed protected areas including “such as national parks, game reserves, forest reserves, community conservancies and game/wildlife management area” (ibid). In addition, “The KAZA TFCA also includes some of the world’s renowned natural features and tourist attractions, such as the Victoria Falls (one of the seven natural wonders and a World Heritage Site) and the Okavango Delta (the largest Ramsar Site in the world)" (KAZA 2013). With all these natural treasures, the goal of the KAZA TFCA is “to sustainably manage the Kavango Zambezi ecosystem, its heritage and cultural resources based on best conservation and tourism models for the socio-economic wellbeing of the communities [emphasis by the author I mean ME student researcher] and other stakeholders in and around the eco-region through harmonisation of policies, strategies and practices.” (ibid).

KAZA holds facilitates various community projects in the participating countries pertaining to local development, sustainable resource management and conservation resulting in eco-tourism. The development of the tourism is the main objective of KAZA, as this is how the welfare of the people will be most significantly improved. This is through tourism how the project should mostly improve people’s welfare. The objectives of the tourism development in KAZA consist of a The main goal is to make the park a single tourist destination associated with several various-attractions in it, where the visitors can get have a high quality experiences and the optimised returns the likelihood of return visits is increased. The private share in the facilities should grow as well as the public-private partnership ratio. Of course, all the tourism industry shall happen this should all be organized in a sustainable manner, which allows the environment thrive and maintain its purity stay as pure as possible.

KAZA also cares also about the cultural heritage of thise region, which in turn as well can be seen as a good also encourages tourism product. To encourage cultural tourism, the KAZA TFCA authorities have set a goal of made it a primary focus to celebrating and fostering the rich cultural diversity of this region area, helping to keep it alive in local communities. This allows the In addition to increasing tourism, this sharing of heritage will allow for the kindling of cooperative and friendly relations across borders on a grassroots as well as a governmental level, communities to share their

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1 “The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, called the Ramsar Convention, is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.” (ramsar.org 12.01.2014)
heritage across the borders, building the in addition to tourism based economy – cooperative and friendly relations on both the grassroots and on the governmental level.

The economist Paul Collier (2003) says has stated that the primary reason for conflict in emergent nations is the failure of economic development. “By boosting economies and lifting desperate communities out of poverty, [the peace] parks have the potential to be a critical development tool and as such a peace-building tool” (Darnell 2008: 16). If the initiative fully succeeds in its goals, it will be an undeniable benefit for the communities, however for now the project is still developing, taking different shapes and intensities in different parts of the protected territory. The focus group populations of focus in this research are the communities located in the Botswanian part of KAZA - exclusively in Kasane and Maun. Their opinions about their inhabitants on KAZA and life facts supposedly would in general is expected to shed some light on the actual help to clarify the situation of this particular region in terms of the beneficial influence of KAZA on grassroots communities.

1.4 The research question and its place in the peace studies

Despite the fact that nature conservation is the first on the list of objectives of conservation areas, the interest of this research, however, is not necessarily the protection of nature and wildlife itself. It is rather the situation of the people living in the protection area. This research focuses on the impact that the efforts of peace parks and the wildlife protection have on the local people. After all, promoting regional peace and stability is the main objective when peace parks are established. The central research question is to answer for this thesis has been formulated as follows:

1. To what extent has the KAZA Peace Park benefited the local population in northern Botswana, pertaining to security, welfare and relations with the neighbouring countries?

The concept of peace parks may appear interesting and intriguing for a peace researcher just by the nature of its name in the first place. The initiative refers boldly to its peace contribution, leaving at the first sight little space for little room for discussion at first glance. In fact, there are a lot to discuss taking many different approaches taken to the topic which can spur great discussion. Peace parks as international phenomena by definition, have maintain a genuine goal to protect the nature and the same time bring stabilisation to conflict areas by establishing cooperation between the states’ authorities. It does not leave the ordinary citizens behind either – Peace Parks opt they also encourage for development and economic growth within communities by which should contribute to the
improved living conditions of local inhabitants. All of these factors closely correlate with peace studies.

Big actors in fields of peace and stability like the Nobel Peace Prize Committee and the UN acknowledge the importance of nature protection-conversation in throughout the process of creating encouraging peaceful situations, wealthier and safer from criminal lives conditions. Controversial or not, Nobel Peace Prizes have been awarded for work for environmental work as well as conflict management. These are strong signs that environmental issues enter cross over into the field of peace studies. The case of this research is especially concerned with implementing vast changes for the local communities including empowering grassroots agendas, generating welfare for the local population by boosting the economical development, facilitating accessible education and promoting job creation.

The first thing that always comes to mind while talking about peace is the situation reality of violence in a given area. In order to run any peace-enhancing project to benefit communities, the violence should be eliminated in the first place first be put to rest. The people must feel free from violence and crime. Jan Eliasson, deputy secretary-general of the United Nations, addressed the participants of a UN high level meeting, convened under the title 'Poaching and Illicit Wildlife Trafficking' on the 26th of September in 2013, said: One very relevant quote taken from his speech follows: “Key species are being driven to extinction. The proceeds of illegal trade support transnational organised crime and terror organisations, murder and violence go hand in hand with this despicable business. The illegal trade in wildlife and endangered species is linked to drug smugglers, gun runners and human trafficking. It is a threat to all three pillars of our organization: human rights, peace and security, and development” (UN 2013). This statement clearly demonstrates that the preservation of endangered species left the exclusive borders of not only of interest to ecologists but also biologists, concerns and reached the but crosses into socio-political affairs as well.

While illegal hunting is a threat to human rights, peace, security and development, the peace parks, if fulfilling their postulates should be the ultimate cure if fulfilling the structure of their foundation. This thesis is about to investigate the actual role and results of the Kavango-Zambezi Peace Park, with a focus on the field data from its Botswanan territory exclusively. The evaluation of this study will be supplied by the data and cases from another parts of the KAZA territory. This is supposed to show the park as a whole project also opposed to cohesive whole, rather than different parks in Southern Africa operating under the Peace Park Foundation’s supervision. Such an approach to the problem should examine the case in a holistic way, considering its comprehensive capabilities and professional development comparing to results from the older protection areas.
1.5 Problem statement

The main focus of this study is put on the three objectives: security, welfare and relations with the neighbouring countries. Researching By researching anythe correlation between the three objectives and the level of appearances it is possible to determine which the peace parks are truly peace-building tools. In order to create and maintain For creation of a peaceful community, the local people must feel secure. This security consists of a few factors, that can be put together several factors.

The development gives the people the opportunity to pursue possibilities and the freedom to build their independent lives. This goes together with economic security, which will be discussed later in the thesis. This kind of security will be discussed in the thesis. Access to food and assurance of daily survival are the basic needs that must be secured for a healthy, prosperous community. By securing these basic daily needs the people are given to freedom and the pursuit of happiness, which allows them to develop, educate themselves and live their lives in the manners they see fit. To achieve this point, the local development must reach a sufficient level. People free from basic worries can work for further development and so prosperity grows. In short, development and the welfare, increase of personal welfare should lead to greater life satisfaction, and therefore to more peaceful attitudes.

Since the studied area is not in a violent conflict, the prosperity of the region is considered the main objective of this research, with a focus on benefiting local communities. Prosperity, with the focus of benefiting the local communities. The next objective are the quality of the relations with the neighbouring countries, more precisely—their grassroots level—especially from citizen to citizens. Spreading the friendly attitudes over the boundaries of the own individual community is the next stage of the peaceful process, even over national state borders, as is the case in this thesis. In the case of this study it is also over the national state borders. Friendly relationships should not be limited to thinking well about the neighbours, but also incepting facilitating cooperation with the objective of prosperity for of the both sides. The attitudes toward the neighbours can shade some light on their peaceful attitudes in general among the studied people.

In order to discover to what extent KAZA pertains to improving actually improves the living conditions of local communities through sustainable development, to the local communities the local people of the Botswanian part of the KAZA park were have been interviewed. They also were also questioned about their relationships and personal attitudes toward their neighbours in adjacent countries, who with whom they share the KAZA territory with them.
1.6 The structure of the thesis

From what was said the information gathered thus far regarding the peace park concept, it is shows apparent that the project the officials of KAZA are attempting to work for delivering all of the above objectives identified objectives of a peace park to the people. At this point, the idea of peace parks appears as theoretically the golden mean in modern peace-building, securing both nature and people (also, among others, by securing nature). Answering the given research question is worth the effort at least should prove to be of significant value due to the low level of interest in this topic, because of its relatively low-interest among peace scholars, while talking about peace and economics in Africa. The great majority of literature talking about peace parks does not cover the attitudes and actual positions of the ordinary people. The evaluation should also show if the reveal whether this great idea in theory correlates with a demanding reality.

The next chapter of this thesis will cover the issues of theory and methodology used during in this study. The theories used in this research derive from various study fields like such as economics, politics, peace studies and international relations. The concepts discussed there will create a sets of definitions on which the evaluation will be based. The next third chapter to follow presents the methodology used in this research. These are the approaches and actions taken to find uncover the answer to the research question. Having With a solid foundation built upon theory and methodology, the empirical and written data can finally be evaluated in the discussion portion of this research can continue to discussion, evaluating empirical and written data. This thesis. The final chapter part of the thesis is in fact the most informative in terms of the role of KAZA TFCA in Southern Africa.

Work on this research project required many hours of difficulties, including stress over reading, and writing, stressing about deadlines, content and grammar, just to name a few, but it also contained the best thing of all - the field research. Visiting Botswana was an extraordinary experience, enriching in terms of empirical knowledge, but it was also an beautiful episode in private life. Many people and animals were met on the way to gather information for this project. The first former were engaged in discussing, the second latter were just taken pictures of and learned about. Every moment spent in Botswana influenced the production of this thesis greatly. Both the hardships of the time spent in the library as well as the joys of discovering new things were all part of an wonderful adventure, that made contributed to what this thesis what it is today.

Commented [J7]: You just cover theory in the next chapter, not methodology, don't you?