

**The 'Communalization' of Former  
Commercial Farmland:  
Perspectives from Damaraland  
and Implications for  
Land Reform**

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### Abbreviations

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| DRFN   | Desert Research Foundation of Namibia   |
| DTA    | Democratic Turnhalle Alliance   |
| FISA   | Farmers' Interleague Solidarity Action  |
| MLRR   | Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation  |
| MAWRD  | Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development  |
| NAU    | Namibia Agricultural Union  |
| NBC    | Namibian Broadcasting Corporation   |
| NCCA   | Namibian Community Cooperatives Alliance  |
| NISER  | Namibian Institute for Social and Economic Research   |
| SSD    | Social Sciences Division (of the Multi-disciplinary Research Centre.<br>University of Namibia |
| SWADUF | South West African Democratic United Front  |
| SWAPO  | South West African People's Organisation  |
| SYL    | SWAPO Youth League  |
| TCCF   | Technical Committee on Commercial Farmland  |
| UDF    | United Democratic Front   |
| WWF    | World Wide Fund for Nature  |

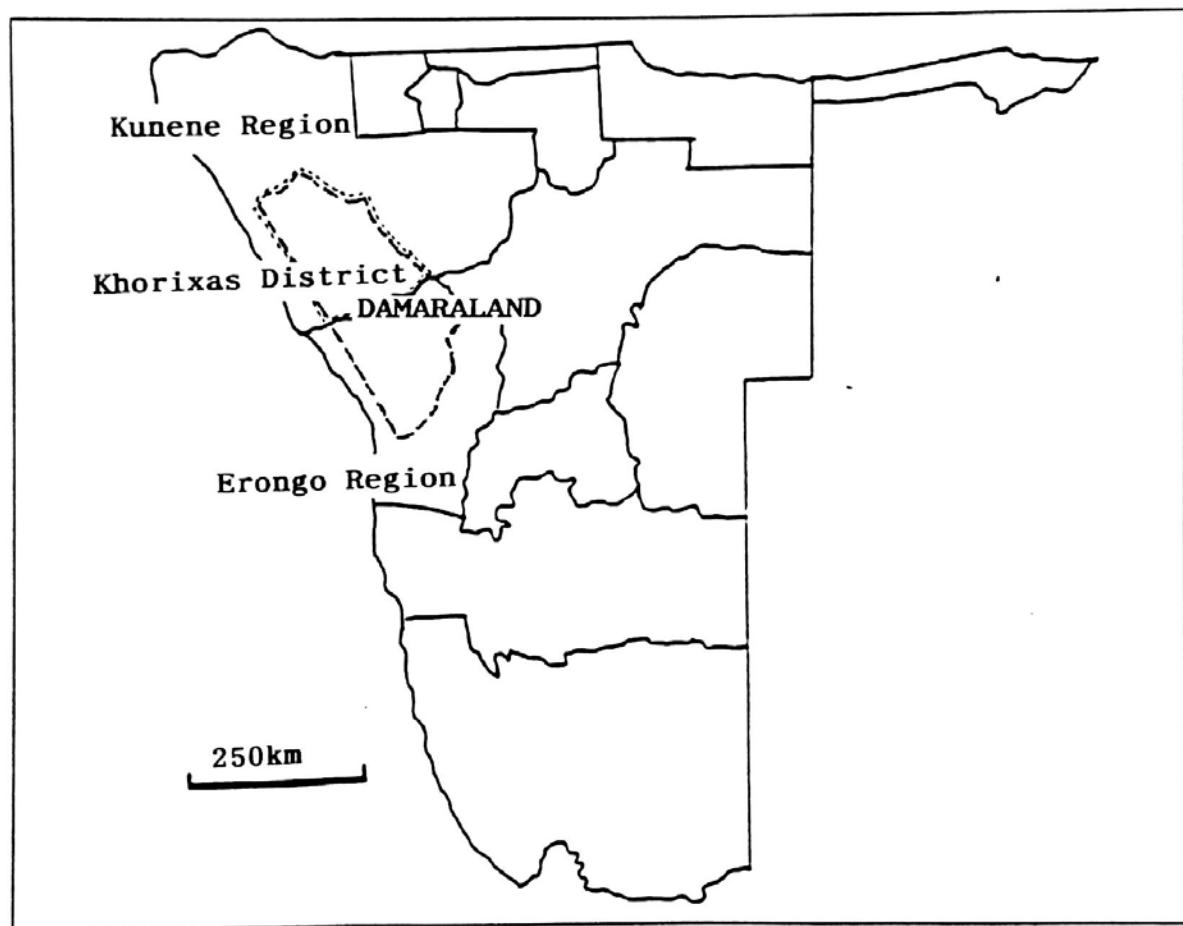
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## 1.0 Introduction

The subject of redistributing farms fenced for freehold tenure and commercial production by European farmers, to farmers from the old communal areas, features prominently in Namibia's Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act, passed by Parliament in March 1995. Namibia is unusual in that historic precedents exist for the movement of land between these two categories. These are primarily related to the Odendaal 'reforms' implemented by the South African administration, which included the incorporation of commercial farm-land into the communal areas of western Damaraland and northern Namaland. Namibia thus has an opportunity to use these important precedents as 'models for tenure transformation' and, by reviewing 'how these experiences have played out' (Bruce, 1994: 4), to derive practical guidelines for the enactment of today's very differently motivated process of communal land reform.



**Map 1. Namibia showing the new Kunene and Erongo Regions, Khorixas administrative district in southern Kunene, and the location of the former Damaraland communal area.**

This paper attempts to inform current debate concerning the possible 'communalization of commercial land' through an analysis of the experiences of communal farmers on several farms in the old communal area of Damaraland (see Map 1). As such it forms part of a wider research initiative focusing on relevant land tenure issues by the Social Sciences Division (SSD) of the Multi-disciplinary Research Centre of the University of Namibia, with support from the Ford Foundation.

## **1.1 The redistribution of commercial land: some background information**

### **1.1.1 Resolutions of the 1991 National Conference on Land Reform and the Land Question**

Land reform involving the redistribution of commercial farmland to communal farmers is motivated by the context of existing inequity of land ownership; 44% of the land area is delineated as roughly 6,292 freehold farms of which 6,123 are white-owned and support some 4,200 commercial farmers, while 43% is designated communal land and is home to an estimated 120,000 rural black households (President of Namibia, 1991: 4; Adams and Devitt, 1992: 1). The remaining land area includes proclaimed conservation areas, the Diamond Area of the Namib, and other State land. A further important feature of this pattern of land distribution is the fact that communal land is located in areas with the poorest agricultural potential; thus, of the roughly 4.5 million hectares constituting the former Damaraland area, 2.4 million hectares are considered agriculturally unusable due to aridity (NEPRU, 1991a: 147).

In 1991 the government engaged in a process of 'national consultation' regarding the land issue, which culminated in the National Conference on Land Reform and the Land Question (Republic of Namibia, 1991a). Of the resolutions drafted at the Land Conference for consideration by Parliament as part of a Land Reform Bill, the following formed the basis for recommendations for affirmative action regarding land redistribution (Republic of Namibia, 1991: 23-34):

- foreigners, who in 1991 owned 6% of farmland, should not be allowed to own farmland;
- underutilised freehold land should be reallocated;
- land belonging to absentee landlords should be expropriated by the government;
- 'very large farms' and/or ownership of 'several farms' should be prohibited;
- disproportionate support to commercial farmers should be redressed; a land tax should be imposed on commercial land and subsidies to commercial farmers withdrawn to 'encourage' land owners to place their farms on the market;
- the veterinary cordon fence which separates the northern communal areas from the southern commercial areas should be removed as soon as possible to enable northern farmers to participate in the commercial livestock



market.

Some of these resolutions have now been enshrined in Namibia's Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act which aims

'To provide for the acquisition of agricultural land by the State for the purposes of land reform and for the allocation of such land to Namibian citizens who do not own or otherwise have the use of any or of adequate agricultural land ...; to vest in the State a preferent right to purchase agricultural land for the purposes of the Act; to provide for the compulsory acquisition of certain agricultural land by the State for the purposes of the Act; to regulate the acquisition of agricultural land by foreign nationals; to establish a Lands Tribunal and determine its jurisdiction; ... (Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act, 1995: 2).

### 1.1.2 Options discussed for land redistribution and management of communal land

Emerging from the resolutions agreed by the Land Reform Conference, a variety of possible land redistribution and communal management scenarios were discussed. Article 16(2) of the Constitution formed the initial basis for possible land redistribution by making provision for the expropriation of land as property by the State in the public interest, subject to appropriate compensation (Republic of Namibia, 1991b: 11). This Article provoked volatile reactions from different interest groups: on the one hand, European owners of such property are anxious for the protection of their interests; to the opposite extreme, groups such as the Swapo Youth League (SYL) maintain that such compensation would not be justified because all land owned by Europeans was 'robbed' from indigenous Namibians and thus constitutes 'possession and use' of this land and not lawful ownership (SYL, n.d.: 2).

In the absence of a clear land reform strategy, and in recognition of the 'welfare function' currently performed by the communal areas, the Conference concluded that the 'the communal areas should for the present be retained, developed and expanded where necessary' (Republic of Namibia, 1991: 28). Outlined below are some of the various land redistribution scenarios discussed at the Conference. For more information see Adams and Devitt (1992).

● **Freehold farms could be purchased by the government and made available to larger herd owners in communal areas**, through offering financially favourable terms as an incentive to participate in this scheme. This is reminiscent of the incentives offered earlier this century to European farmers during the Resettlement Program of the South African Administration (Rohde, 1993: 61). A variety of interest groups favoured this proposal:

- i. white politicians from the opposition who, as farm-owners, consider the introduction of rich black farmers into their community as an optimal solution to the 'unfortunate necessity' of land redistribution;
- ii. black business men and politicians who perceive the scheme as an opportunity for themselves to own farms;

- iii. small-scale farmers who are affected by the impact of large-scale farmers on local resources;
- iv. conservationists who view the control of livestock herds on fenced farms as a solution to perceived environmental degradation on communal land.

Two major problems are likely to affect the success of this scheme. First, is the issue of how to ensure that wealthy communal farmers, and not business men or officials from elsewhere, are targeted. If the scheme benefits the wrong target group it will have no positive effect in terms of reducing pressure on either poorer farmers remaining in the communal areas, or the environmental resources in these areas. Second, in view of the fact that communal farmers currently enjoy free grazing and other services, and are not taxed on their farming activities, there will need to be extremely good incentives for them to enter this scheme. Related to this is the possibility that such farmers will continue to graze their livestock in communal areas, thus conserving grazing on their farms to which they can move their herds when necessitated by shortages on communal land.

Partial implementation of this option has occurred and the Agricultural Development Bank has been established as the most appropriate channel through which such loans are administered. By 1994, however, only two such loans had been taken up by communal farmers in Damaraland, who apparently continued to use communal grazing, thereby negating a primary reason for instituting this scheme (Rohde, 1994: 10-11). This has also proved a problem in southern Namibia where, as the Farmers' Interleague Solidarity Action (FISA) group of the Namibian Community Cooperatives' Alliance (NCCA) complain, 'large farmers from communal areas who obtained loans and bought commercial farms under the previous administration still receive our leaders' permission to graze their herds in the communal areas' (FISA, 1991: 1). Since 1992, 'middle farmers' have also been targeted for loans of N\$10,000 for the purchase of livestock, although by 1994 only 20 from 95 applications had been approved (Rohde, 1994: 10-11).

- The second option discussed is almost the opposite of the first, i.e. **the relocation of the poorest households to commercial farms** purchased by the government, through using the existing division of farms into several fenced camps as the basis for the settlement of individual 'family units'. This is essentially the model on which the redistribution of commercial land to communal farmers following Odendaal was based. From a government perspective, the main problem with this scheme is the high cost that is associated with establishing poor families in new areas and then maintaining services to these farmers. This is illustrated by current rhetoric surrounding widely perceived problems of dependency by communal farmers on government, and accompanying development initiatives which attempt to increase accountability for services among these farmers (cf. Africare, 1993). Concern regarding this option is also expressed by the environmentalist lobby who fear the effects of continuous grazing pressure on farm-camps, the possibility of initially high herd growth-rates following movement to a new area, and perceived low herd off-take rates by communal farmers. Unfortunately, these negative perceptions exist in a near vacuum of empirical evidence from the existing experience of the communalization of commercial land, regarding both the use and management of local resources, and environmental resilience under these production systems.

- It is possible that the **existing communal areas could simply be expanded through the acquisition of farms adjacent to communal area boundaries**. Similarly, **commercial farmland could be purchased for use by communal farmers on a cyclical basis**, for example during drought years. This approach was in fact implemented in drought periods by the pre-Independence government, during which the movement of cattle from communal areas was orchestrated by the relevant Regional Authorities. Unfortunately, the benefits of this approach are directly proportional to the numbers of livestock, primarily cattle, owned by communal farmers. It therefore acts to promote the wealthy while neglecting inhabitants of communal areas who own little or no livestock.

- Various forms of **group or cooperative ranching** were also suggested, based primarily on models from Kenya and Botswana. The former involve the joint management of one or more delineated farms by a group of communal area stock owners. Problems experienced by this approach are associated with making 'corporate management decisions'. This is exemplified by the Maasai Group Ranches of Kenya, where patterns of herding continue to be based along long-standing lines of alliance and involve extensive movement of livestock between different ranches. The latter approach is based on the translation of livestock into shares within a cooperative from which owners receive dividends, and the management of this cooperative as a single corporate unit by a paid manager. This could be conceived as appropriate for stock owners in formal employment who do not herd their animals themselves but wish to continue investing in livestock. It is likely to remain theoretical for a number of reasons, however, including the importance of the non-cash value of livestock ownership, and the fact that a considerable number of family members and employees may derive daily sustenance from a herd in the absence of its primary owner.

### **1.1.3 The Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act of 1995: its provisions for land redistribution**

The purpose of the Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act is to provide stated mechanisms to enable the Minister of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (MLRR) to acquire, with appropriate compensation, agricultural land under free- or leasehold tenure, and to reallocate this land to Namibian citizens with 'inadequate' agricultural land. The imposition of a land tax to be paid by owners of agricultural land as stated in Section 76, can be anticipated to act as an incentive to at least some land owners to place their land holdings on the market.

Under the Act, a Land Reform Advisory Commission is to be established for the purposes of advising the Minister in all matters related to land acquisition and allotment. This Commission is comprised of two officers from both the MLRR and the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development (MAWRD), nominated members of designated organisations 'involved in agricultural affairs', one person nominated by the Agricultural Bank of Namibia, and five 'suitably qualified' persons, including at least two women, who are not employed in the public sector (Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act, 1995: 8-9). Each member shall be appointed by the Minister with approval of the National Assembly to hold office for three years, and may be re-appointed on the expiry of this term of office. A Lands Tribunal is also established under the Act to mediate conflict between

recommendations made by the Minister in consultation with the Advisory Commission, and the owners and lessees of agricultural land.

The categories of agricultural land available for possible acquisition, as described in Sections 14(2) of the Act, include:

- land offered for sale, to which, as stated in Section 17, 'the State shall have the preferent right to purchase' at the price specified by the owner intending to alienate such land<sup>1</sup> (Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act, 1995: 17). The legal rights of the owner, their heirs, co-owners and trustees are explicitly protected by the Act;
- land considered by both the MLRR and the MAWRD as inadequately or under-utilised for agricultural purposes and, following classification as such, may be acquired at a value determined by the State;
- similarly, land holdings exceeding two economic units as defined for different agro-ecological zones may be acquired by the State either in their entirety or as portions of land holdings.

Section 20 of the Act states that in the latter two cases 'if the Minister, acting on the recommendation of the Commission, and the owner of such property are unable to negotiate the sale of such property by mutual agreement, ... the Minister may, subject to the payment of compensation ..., expropriate such property ...' (Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act, 1995: 20-1).

Land owned and acquired by the State may be allocated to Namibian citizens considered to have access to inadequate land for farming purposes. Section 38 makes provision for the subdivision of land acquired under the Commercial (Agricultural) Land Reform Act into surveyed holdings for small-scale farming purposes (Commercial (Agricultural) Land Reform Act, 1995: 37). These holdings will usually be offered for lease with the option to purchase the farming unit after five years from the commencement of the lease. Notification of the availability of this land is to be made in the area in which the land is situated, including information regarding the delineation of farming units, the terms and conditions attached to allotment, and the minimum qualifications required of applicants, as stated in the 'allotment plan' prepared for land in question by the Advisory Commission. Under the conditions attached to the allotment of agricultural land as laid out in the Commercial (Agricultural) Land Reform Act lessees are required to use the land for farming purposes only, except with permission from the Minister to embark on other ventures, and are expected to maintain certain standards with regard to farming practices and maintenance of farm improvements (Commercial (Agricultural) Land Act, 1995: 42-3).

When viewed in the context of the possibilities for land redistribution discussed at the Land Reform Conference of 1991 and reviewed in section 1.1.2, this Act can be seen to be following a path somewhere in the middle of the first two options described above. For

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<sup>1</sup>Although negotiations may be entered into if the purchase price is considered too excessive (Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act, 1995: 18).



example, while not specifying the level of 'wealth' necessary to qualify for land holdings in this scheme, the term 'minimum qualifications' indicates possible exclusion of the poorest communal farmers, particularly if allotments are available under leasehold tenure only. The emphasis on individual land holdings also appears to preclude the option of simply enlarging the existing communal areas, and may possibly hamper the development of group or cooperative ranching efforts as a means of effecting appropriate livestock management strategies and incorporating absentee herders within the communal pastoral system.

#### **1.1.4 Land tenure management within the communal areas and the forthcoming Communal Lands Bill**

To date, the most explicit published reference to the likely shape that land tenure management **within** communal areas may take is found in the Land Conference consensus document which, following the example of Botswana, states that 'Land Boards should be introduced at an early date to administer the allocation of communal land' and 'should be accountable to the government and their local communities' (Republic of Namibia, 1991: 31). These 'Land Boards' would be coupled with the creation of a Council of Traditional Leaders for the purpose of advising the President with regard to appropriate regulation and control of communal land use. This plan was reiterated by the government's report of the Technical Committee on Commercial Farmland (TCCF) which calls for the establishment of a national system of Land Boards with administrative powers to 'control and allocate future communal land in a standardized manner' (TCCF, 1992: 182 *in* Rohde, 1994: 14). A second principle that has emerged is that land ownership in general should be vested in the State which will have powers to allocate land on a leasehold, rather than a freehold, basis (Prime Minister, 1991: 17).

More recently, a draft of the long-awaited Communal Lands Bill indicates that land allocation and management in the communal areas will be vested in Regional Boards comprised of representatives of the MLRR, local authorities and traditional leaders, community members and government extension workers (Draft Communal Lands Bill, 1995: 4). These Regional Boards will thus have the power to allocate land rights under customary law in Communal Land falling under its jurisdiction, to cancel these rights, to allot land, and to demarcate land into economic holdings (Draft Communal Lands Bill, 1995: 6). A land tax will be imposed on all communal land to be paid annually to the Government, at least part of which will be allocated to the Land Development Fund, established for purpose of development and improvement of communal lands (Draft Communal Lands Bill, 1995: 42-4, 50).

Provision for the subdivision of communal land into alienated land holdings is made in various ways. First, for example, any person or group of persons holding recognised rights to communal land is 'entitled to convert such holding into a leasehold tenure of one hundred years', providing this takes 'into consideration local customary law' (Draft Communal Lands Bill, 1995: 30). Similarly, vacant communal land may be delineated and allotted by a Regional Board as economic land units, subject to approval of the Minister. Approved allotments would then be publicised and allocated in a procedure similar to that described above for commercial land acquired by the State. Also set out in the Communal Lands Bill is the establishment of a Lands Adjudication Commission for the purpose of mediating any dispute arising with regard to Communal Land.

### **1.1.5 Communal land tenure reform as a development strategy**

Inextricably tied up with the huge disparity in land distribution described in section 1.1.1 above, is an equally large gap in wealth between many communal farmers and farmers in the commercial sector. The success of development strategies targeting the communal areas is thus seen as intimately related to the success of land reform policies. In the same way, dominant thinking within Namibia regarding what development means in the context of communal livestock farmers, can be expected to dictate the type of land tenure reform that is formulated in both the Commercial (Agricultural) Lands Reform Act, and the forthcoming Communal Lands Bill.

As stated by Adams and Devitt (1992: 14), and as has been the case throughout dryland Africa, official thinking on the development of communal areas managed for livestock production remains firmly fixed on one path; that of 'transforming traditional stock keepers into commercial farmers and replacing customary forms of land tenure with freehold or leasehold title' through 'the subdivision of communal land into fenced holdings'.

The basis for this perception is the belief that 'traditional' livestock production systems and their accompanying tenure arrangements are mutually exclusive with improvements in productivity and the commercialisation of activities. It is held despite evidence from pastoral societies throughout Africa that the privatisation of communal land increases poverty and landlessness, widens the gap between rich and poor livestock owners, and contributes to environmental degradation.

Within the Namibian context, the view that considers titled farms a necessity for development is extremely important because it automatically sets the agenda and tone of possibilities for communal land reform, perhaps prior to the adequate exploration of alternatives. Thus, while the existing focus on the subdivision of land acquired under the Commercial (Agricultural) Land Reform Act may be appropriate in situations where crop cultivation is the primary source of subsistence, evidence from both within Namibia and elsewhere in Africa suggests strongly that it may be inappropriate for livestock production systems under arid or semi-arid conditions. Also significant is the fact that it exists in the near absence of any systematic information regarding management strategies adopted by livestock farmers coping within, and modifying, the constraints and opportunities presented by the existing Namibian communal areas.

### **1.1.6 Interest groups and perspectives on land reform**

An analysis of the perspectives expressed by various interest groups at the National Land Conference regarding the shape that land reform should take, is revealing in terms of indicating who may benefit from supporting different land reform scenarios. Broadly speaking, town-dwellers and commercial farmers alike view communal tenure as an 'obstacle to development' whereas the majority of communal farmers wish to retain this system (Prime Minister of Namibia, 1991: 14). The division of these groups along lines of political affiliation makes clear the deeply political nature of land reform. This was described in Rohde (1994), whose paper forms the basis for much of the following summary.



Broadly speaking, and as indicated above, the commercialisation of communal land is strongly favoured by the political right including supporters of the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), the Herero leadership represented by Chief Riruako, wealthy farmers on communal land anxious to establish rights to 'economic units' and commercial farmers (Rohde, 1994: 12). Chief Riruako (1991: 5), for example, called for 'the immediate surveying, ... and fencing of eastern and southern Kaokoland into economic farm units', while the DTA (1991: 3-4) stated that 'peasant farmers must be encouraged to become commercial farmers' and favoured 'the enclosure of land and the allocation of land to individuals, families and cooperatives'.

The Namibia Agricultural Union (NAU) was in favour of a scheme based on cooperative farming, involving the establishment of 'community land companies' within a single national land market and operating under one law (NAU, 1991). In communal areas these land companies would be based on 'making communal farmers shareholders with tradable rights over specified resources, and subject to market discipline and high input centralised management structures similar to commercial companies' (Rohde, 1994: 12). These views were echoed for Damaraland by the Rural Conservation Committee of the Welwitschia Agricultural Union and the Damara Kings Council in a document written in 1992 regarding the development of a regional land use strategy that incorporates the need for wildlife conservation with livestock production (The Damara Kings Council *et al*, 1993).

Further towards the political left, the socialist oriented South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) was inspired by the villagization programme of Tanzania as 'the most efficient way of utilizing scarce and costly items and limited expertise', as well as being perceived as a scenario 'consistent with African values' (SWAPO, 1991). Tribal Land Boards, modelled on the experience of Botswana, and leasehold tenure models were also considered with the proviso that 'customary land tenure systems are not inherently incompatible with agricultural modernisation' and therefore 'a significant element of community control over land should be retained' (SWAPO, 1991). Reinforcing this, Article 102(5) of the Constitution states that a Traditional Leaders Council be established for the purpose of advising the State President regarding land use and allocation in the communal areas (Republic of Namibia, 1991b: 54; Hangula, 1995: 1).

The traditionalist United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Damara 'King' Justus || Garoëb who, despite the currently waning role of the traditional leadership in the post-Independence administration, retain strong political support among the majority of Damara-speaking farmers in the former Damaraland, appealed for the retention of traditional systems of communal land allocation and management (Rohde, 1994: 13). UDF, for example, stated that 'chiefs should continue to have the rights and power to allocate communal land' and that 'as trustees and custodians of all communal land, ... *should be allocated with specific land for individual ownership*' (UDF, 1991: 4 emphasis added). This statement appears to conform closely to the view that individual wealthy farmers should be encouraged to farm on delineated holdings, while the subsistence production of small-scale farmers, with varying degrees of commercial activity, is maintained within a communal land tenure system. This perspective is supported by Chief || Garoëb who, even with popular support, is facing the reality of declining government sympathy for traditional leadership. His views are crystallised in his statement that 'the traditional leadership should manage the communal land according



to their (i.e. Damara) tradition and culture in close consultation with the Government Administrative machinery' (|| Garoëb, 1991).

Finally, and understandably, there was a strong appeal by organisations representing communities such as Aukeigas and the Sorris-Sorris Communal Farmers, the Spitzkoppe Farmers Union, and Aminuis, Bethanie and Bondelswarts community representatives, for the reclamation of their ancestral lands and a redressing of the wrongs of colonial dispossession. It is likely that a number of these organisations left the Conference disappointed that more was not achieved in this direction.

Since the Land Conference, pressure to clarify land tenure in the communal areas has been expressed by those anxious to implement development or entrepreneurial activities but find it impossible to do so under the present ambiguous tenure situation. The Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET), for example, which aims to promote wildlife conservation through concepts of 'community ownership' of wildlife as valued resources, maintains that the lack of clear tenure arrangements is 'a disincentive to long-term planning and the sustainable use of resources' (Jones, 1993: ii, 42). Both the MET and the Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation would like to see clear 'land-use plans' emerging for the communal areas which prioritise types of land-use, including wildlife conservation, according to the productive potential assessed for different areas.

#### **1.1.7 Conclusions**

The shape of future communal land tenure reform is dominated by centralised policy thinking based on the commercialisation of production activities, the standardisation of land and resource allocation procedures, and the division of both newly acquired commercial land and communal land into leased economic units. Analysis of land and resource management practices at local levels could usefully inform these perspectives by illuminating the different land management options utilised by individuals and families in communal lands, existing disparities in wealth *within* communal areas, and the realities of regional diversity. Following Biesele *et al* (1991: 2), 'the real challenge is to balance Namibia's new democratic ideology with ethno-economic realities'. While a national land policy is clearly needed, as the Prime Minister asserted at the 1991 Land Conference, 'many of the solutions to these highly specific land issues can be generated only at the local level' (1991: 16).

## **2.0 Methods of data collection**

The broad objectives of this study were:

- i. to construct a picture of the 'on-the-ground' management of land and resources by communal farmers within the old commercial farm-land of southern Damaraland;



- ii. to place this picture within the context of current land reform debate and the historical legacy of settlement in this area.

A variety of sources of information have been explored in pursuit of these aims:

- i. One week in October 1995 was spent conducting semi-structured, detailed interviews with household representatives at five farms on the Aba-Huab River, south-west of Khorixas. This work builds on previous fieldwork experience by the author in this area. The farms visited were Blaauport 520, Malansrust 519, Rietkuil 518, Driekrone 516 and Bankfontein 523, all within the Khorixas administrative District of Kunene Region (see Map 2), and interviews were carried out at all settlements on these farms. The primary focus of the fieldwork was to learn about local production systems, and particularly the enactment of communal management of resources by a relocated population within an area where, superficially at least, the landscape geography has been radically affected by its division into commercial farming units.

Unless otherwise stated, case study information presented in the following sections is derived from field data collected through informal interviews at Malansrust<sup>2</sup> Farm and Malansrustpos. Where individuals are referred to by their full names this is with the explicit consent of those concerned. Full documentation of information collected while in the field is presented in Appendix 1.

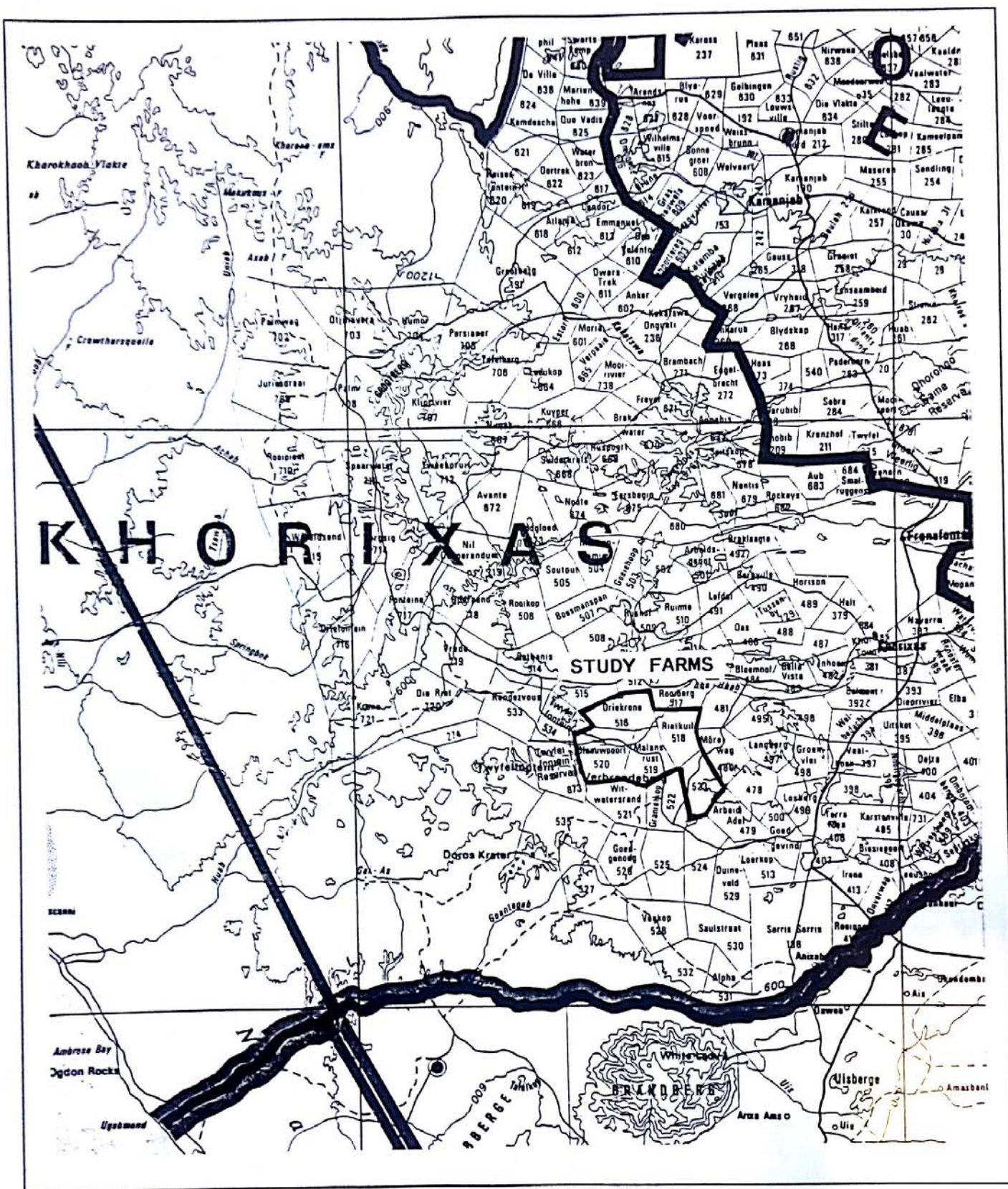
The term 'household' is used here to describe groups of individuals who normally eat food prepared at the same fireplace. As will become apparent, there is a great deal of heterogeneity within households, as well as fluidity through time regarding household members. Generally speaking, however, household groupings are comprised of individuals normally related by kin, who both share an interest in, and benefit from, resources managed by the household group.

- ii. Literature review and archival research conducted within Windhoek provides the context within which the information gathered through fieldwork is situated. Unfortunately, archival records exist for only two of the study farms, Rietkuil 518 and Driekrone 516, and restrictions are placed on public access to documents dated from 1965 on. The following picture of the commercial farming systems which preceded the redistribution of these farms to communal farmers is thus largely derived from Kambatuku's forthcoming paper on archival records for farms in western Damaraland.

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<sup>2</sup>Also known by the Damara (≠Nu-Khoi) name of 'Nerida'.





Map 2. Khorixas District, showing location of study farms.





Map 2. Khorixas District, showing location of study farms.

### **3.0 Human settlement, land use and land tenure in the former communal area of Damaraland: an historical outline**

#### **3.1 A history of land alienation**

##### **3.1.1 Pre-European contact**

The archaeological record indicates that early pastoral land use in this area was based on extensive mobility strategies in response to environmental productivity, overlain by a pattern of aggregation at focal settlement locations during rain periods and dispersal due to the reliance on scarce resources during dry periods (cf. Kinahan, 1983, 1991).

##### **3.1.2 Early regional history**

Recent reconstructions of early Namibian history paint a picture of the north-western region as an area characterised by fluidity of occupation by different cultural groups, who were part of an extensive and dynamic regional trade network (see, for example, Lau, 1979, 1987; Wilmsen, 1989; Fuller, 1993). Initial European influence took a variety of forms:

- i. European exploration of the Namib coast from the 15th century on is documented as tapping into the existing regional livestock exchange network to gain livestock for provisions (Kinahan, 1986: 116). These transactions had a profound effect on the regional livestock economy by essentially exchanging productive subsistence resources for unproductive but highly valued goods such as beads, tobacco and iron products, and thus contributed to the general impoverishment and subsequent decline of regional nomadic pastoralism;
- ii. these unequal terms of trade were continued in the 1700s due to incursions of merchant capital from the Cape through the expansion of well-armed Oorlam Afrikaner commandos into southern and central Namibia;
- iii. involvement in the 1800s in the international trade for wildlife products such as ivory and ostrich feathers instituted the large-scale movement of productive resources out of the region, through the use of indigenous hunting and tracking skills (Hahn, 1928: 230; Lau, 1987: 45). The parameters of this trade were set by Europe and again distorted existing power differences and contributed to conflict within the region;
- iv. in the mid- to late-1800s, missionary activity and the beginning of European settlement in the region, saw the establishment of several mission centres including those at Okombahe, Otjimbingwe, and Omaruru. The resulting settlements often formed the nucleus of the 'Native Reserves' and 'homelands' created during the late 1800s and the 1900s.

##### **3.1.3 European land appropriation and settlement**

The end of the 19th century heralded the beginning of a new era of European impact in southern and central Namibia, first by German colonialists followed by the South African



Administration; amounting to the full-scale alienation of land from indigenous Namibians and its enclosure for use as livestock ranches. By 1883, concession companies had acquired most of central and southern Namibia (Werner, 1991), settlement of which occurred primarily at the turn of the century (Adams and Devitt, 1992: 3). Exacerbating the destitution created by this appropriation of land, were the effects of decades fraught with varying degrees of upheaval related to the incursion of merchant capital from the Cape into the region, the rinderpest pandemic of 1887, and the German-Namibian war of 1904-1907. Linked with the latter were Ordinances passed by the German Authorities in 1905 and 1907 permitting the 'confiscation of property of the insurgent groups', although at the same time the area of Okombahe in southern Kunene was allocated to the Damara 'for their loyalty during the rebellion' (Odendaal Report, 1964: 67). Together with the Basters of Rehoboth and the Nama of Berseba, Okombahe constituted one of only three 'home areas' when South West Africa passed into the hands of the South African Administration after the First World War.

The net result of these processes was the creation of a landless Namibian majority, who invariably wound up either as labourers for settler farmers on land which was historically theirs, or in small home areas which largely acted as a source of labour for white farmers or for industry in the newly established German Colony.

A significant artefact of Germany's colonial rule was the establishment of the so-called 'Police Zone'; effectively separating southern from northern Namibia. Within the Police Zone, direct administrative control allowed for the settlement of Europeans and the confining of the indigenous non-labouring population to Reserves. To the north, 'indirect rule' relied on customary law through the 'traditional' authorities (Gordon, 1991: 3-4). This division instituted the roots of the essentially dualistic economy which has been entrenched within Namibia ever since; the communal northern areas supplied labour to the southern commercial areas, whose economy was buffered by strict restrictions on the movement of livestock and other agricultural produce from the north into the Police Zone. The erecting of the Veterinary Cordon Fence, or 'Red Line' to prevent the spreading of foot and mouth disease and lung sickness into the commercial area, strengthens the geographical reality of this artificial division between the northern and southern areas.

#### **3.1.4 Separate Development: the South African 'Homeland' policy**

South Africa's Native Land Act of 1913, in which 13.3% of South Africa's land area was allocated to its majority African population, provided the prototype for 'separate development' within Namibia during its post-First World War history of administration by South Africa under a League of Nations mandate (Fuller, 1993: 25). A 1922 proclamation (no.11) by the Native Administration further allowed the reservation of what amounted to less than 5% of land in southern and central Namibia as Reserves for Africans who comprised over 90% of the region's population (see Map 3) (Odendaal Report, 1964: 69; Adams and Werner, 1990: 20-24). In north-west Namibia these first Reserves were the primarily Damara-Nama inhabited areas of Fransfontein, Okombahe, and Sesfontein. The Herero Reserve of Otjohorongo, which was later incorporated within Damaraland, was created in 1925. The establishment and maintenance of these Reserves alongside the growing area of titled commercial farms heralded the beginning of the current dichotomy between communal and commercial land in southern Namibia and their associated production systems.

During in the first half of this century these Reserves were periodically expanded through the purchase by government, and incorporation, of a neighbouring farm. Such expansion occurred either in response to requests generated by the inhabitants of the Reserves themselves and mediated by the Reserve Boards in charge of their day-to-day administration, or due to an agenda set by the Administration. The Okombahe Reserve, for example, was enlarged to 400,000ha through the addition of the farm Sorris-Sorris in order to accommodate the Damara inhabitants of the deproclaimed Aukeigas Reserve near Windhoek, due to the pending proclamation of this area as Daan Viljoen Game Park (Odendaal Report, 1964: 69).

Concurrently with this pattern of land allocation, South Africa's Land Settlement Act of 1912 was extended to South West Africa. This provided for the establishment of a Land Board to oversee the South African Administration's agenda for land settlement and the use of State Land (Fuller, 1923: 27). The success of the ensuing national Land Settlement Program in terms of farms settled and increases in the white farming population is quite astonishing; between 1913 and 1962, the number of surveyed and settled farms increased from 1,138 to 5,500, the white population rose from 14,830 to 72,000, and the area thus settled as commercial farms grew from 11,490,000 to 39,812,000 hectares (First, 1963: 248).

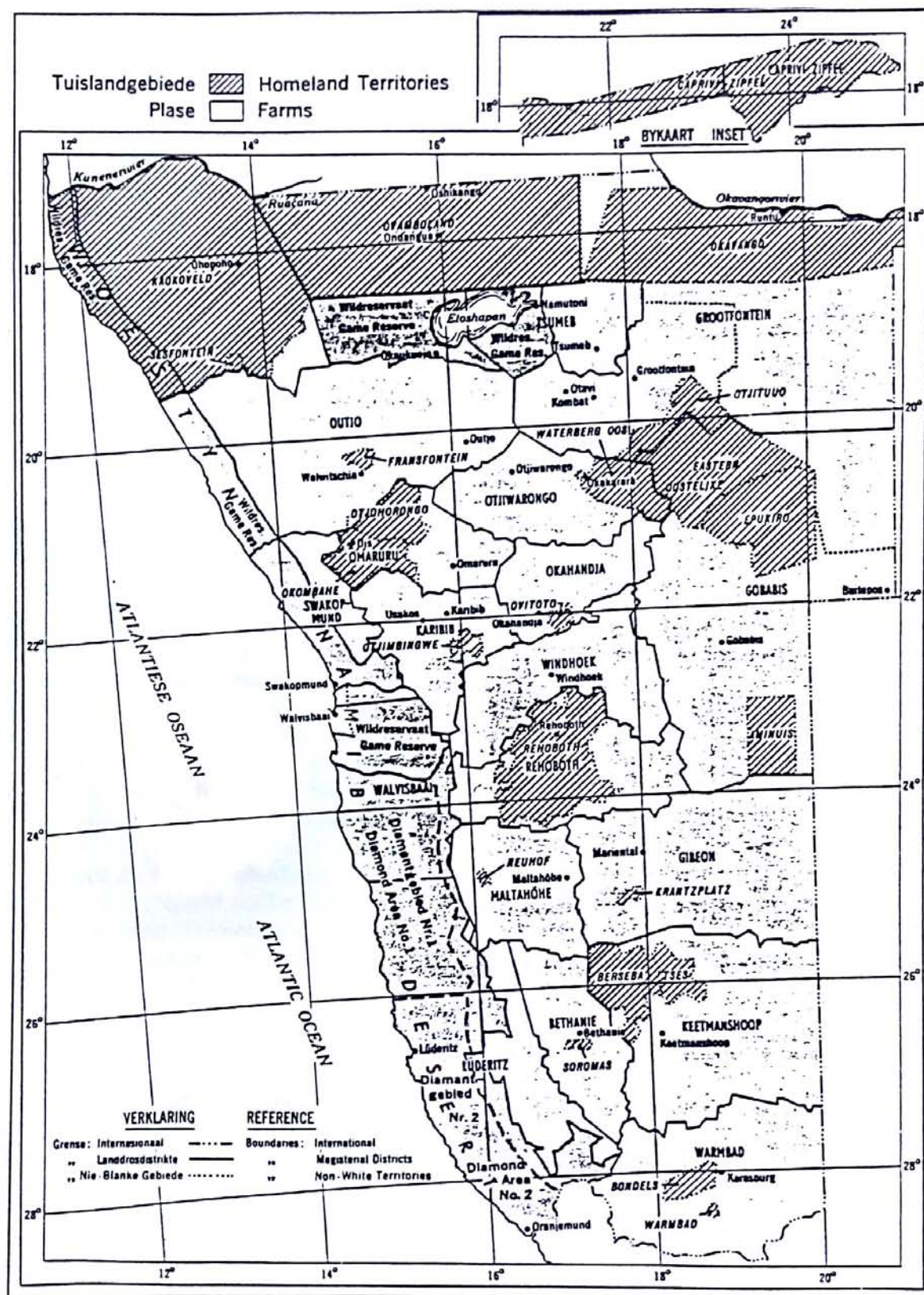
These figures are less surprising, however, when interpreted in the light of the lengths to which the Administration went to ensure settlement of the Police Zone by a white farming population, largely composed of landless Afrikaners forming a political threat within South Africa as an increasingly hostile white lobby (Moorsom, 1982: 30). These included, for example: extremely generous financial terms offered for the purchase of farms<sup>3</sup>, livestock and the development of infrastructure; subsidies and drought assistance which enabled farmers to survive in the face of impending bankruptcy; the instituting of systems of taxation and labour laws which ensured a supply of cheap black labour; and deceptive advertising employed to entice settlers to marginal lands in the west of the country (Moorsom, 1982: 32; Fuller, 1993: 27-30). Despite these favourable terms, reports to the Administration in the 1920s and 1930s repeatedly express concern regarding the ability of settlers to repay their debts, and there is some speculation that many of the commercial farms were never actually paid off (Fuller, 1993: 28-29).

Apart from effectively subsidising a large white settler population while instituting the underdevelopment of indigenous population groups, the Settlement Program had a second important consequence; a boom in value of surveyed farm-land. This was a result of land speculation among settler farmers who, having been allocated land in areas of varying productivity, contrived to obtain better land elsewhere (Fuller, 1993: 30). One way in which they could do this was by offering land adjacent to Native Reserves at very high prices following proposals to expand these Reserves. A 'knock-on' effect of this was to make it prohibitively expensive for Africans to use money from their Trust Funds to purchase land for the expansion of the Reserves, as was the thwarted intention of the Otjimbingwe Reserve in the late 1920s (Fuller, 1993: 45, 47-8).

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<sup>3</sup>Land was paid for on a lease-purchase basis which involved no payment in the first year, and payments with interest in subsequent years which remained lower than the going bank rate of 5% (Fuller, 1993: 29).





**Map 3: Namibia in 1963 showing the existing Native Reserves and communal areas (shaded) of the South African Administration at the time of the Odendaal Commission (source: Odendaal Report, 1964: Fig. 9).**



The region which later became the communal area of Damaraland was one of the last areas to be surveyed and settled due to its vulnerability to drought and its peripheral location regarding more established agricultural areas (Rohde, 1993: 29). According to recent archival work by Kambatuku (forthcoming) it appears that the majority of surveyed farms in the north-west of Damaraland were not settled until 1954. Farms in the area were initially made available to white farmers through the issuing of monthly grazing licenses. Farmers would state their preference for a number of farms on their application and the Land Board would approve one of these to which the licensee had to move within six days of receiving notice of this approval. Qualifying licensees were required to be making a living from farming only, and their farming practices were regularly monitored as the basis on which they could retain their license (Kambatuku, forthcoming: 1). It is interesting to note that these restrictions are echoed almost to the smallest detail within the conditions laid down in the 1995 Commercial (Agricultural) Land Reform Act regarding eligibility for land holdings on acquired agricultural land (see section 1.1.3).

Probationary leases were made available to farmers in the newly surveyed farms of south-east Damaraland in 1958 following the advertisement of these farms in 1957. The eligibility of applicants from among the existing grazing licensees was based on whether appropriate infrastructural improvements had been made to the farm, and again farmers had to prove that farming was their primary source of income (Kambatuku, forthcoming: 2). Leases were granted initially for a one-year probationary period, extended to five years in 1959, after which the farmers had the option of either buying or extending their lease for a further five years. These leases normally attached conditions for farm improvement, but this was usually implemented with very generous State loans and advances. Further State-funded benefits were also showered on the farmers (Kambatuku, forthcoming: 3). In 1959, for example, drought conditions initiated financial relief amounting to exemption from paying interest or rent during a period from April 1959 to March 1961. In addition, loans received for the purchase of cattle were written off without payment.

Despite the considerable State benefits that farmers had access to when settling in these areas, however, it should not be forgotten that they were attempting to establish farming activities in an extremely remote area characterised by wide mountainous vistas and rocky terrain. As the first licensee of Kliprivier Farm describes, having experienced elephant damage to his installations and with numerous sheep with legs broken from the terrain, 'after having gone through all the trouble of constructing seven miles of road, a well, dam, trough and a dip tank, I cannot see a way of making a living out of the farm' (Kambatuku, forthcoming: 12).

As described above, some farmers used the subsidised settling of the Damaraland farms as a profit-making exercise through land speculation. The farm Palmwag, for example, was purchased in January 1964 for £1506 and in the same year was tendered for sale to the Administration when it was valued at R44,946. It was eventually purchased by the Government for R56,000, after which the occupier remained on the farm for several months as a lessee for R83/month (Kambatuku, forthcoming: 5). Similarly, archival records indicate that the farms Rietkuil and Driekrone were both purchased by the government for greatly more than their original value, enabling at least one of the owners, a Mr JWA Steenkamp from Rietkuil, to purchase a farm elsewhere, in this case Sommerau in the Gibeon District for R52,855.73 bought in 1964.



### 3.1.5 The 'Odendaal Commission': its recommendations and implementation

The process of 'separate development' was taken to its logical extremes in the early 1970s through the implementation of the 1962 'Commission of Enquiry into South West African Affairs', otherwise known as the 'Odendaal Commission' after the Chairman of the Commission, the Hon. F.H. Odendaal. The Commission's terms of reference were 'to enquire thoroughly into further promoting the material and moral welfare of the inhabitants of South West Africa, and more particularly its non-white inhabitants ... while taking fully into consideration the background, traditions and habits of the Native inhabitants' (Odendaal Report, 1964: 3). Its 'considered conviction' was that 'the continued existence of a home area for each individual group would be in the best interests of the various population groups, and that, ... these homelands should exist as such and become increasingly independent' (Odendaal Report, 1964: 79, 107). The primary objective of the Commission was thus to identify the so-called 'land requirements' of the main racial groups, and delineate an appropriate area of land for each group in the light of these investigations. The resulting recommendations involved the creation of 11 black authorities responsible for the administration of ethnically defined Bantustans, such that these were conceived of as 'separate states' with their own legislative councils (Adams and Werner, 1990: 93). In this way, land distribution was rationalised along racial lines, ensuring that every black person was registered as an inhabitant of a specific tribal area thus favouring the movement of cheap black labour out of the homelands, while retaining those not required in the white economy.

Within the Police Zone, the Odendaal plan to create communal farming areas along ethnic lines essentially involved the expansion of the existing Native Reserves of Damara, Nama and Herero people into the marginal western, southern and eastern parts of the country respectively (Odendaal Report, 1964: 79; Adams and Devitt, 1992: 7). Damaraland was thus created around the Fransfontein, Okombahe and Otjohorongo Reserves, together with Sesfontein to the north of the Red Line, and with the addition of over 4 million hectares of surveyed and fenced commercial farms, unsurveyed State land and game reserves (Odendaal Report, 1964: 109-111). While the Odendaal Commission maintained that this would provide 'great opportunities for increasing livestock populations' and thus make an 'important contribution to the economy of Damaraland', it also states that constraints on crop production mean that 'Damaraland will always be dependent on supplies of imported staple food' (Odendaal Report, 1964: 295, 297).

The Odendaal Report estimated the Damara population throughout southern Namibia to total some 44,000 in the early 1960s. Given that much of the Damaraland homeland consisted of marginal desert areas which could not be utilized on a continuous basis, this amounted to some 250has per 'family' (although it is unclear how 'family' was defined), compared with an average of 8,500has for each white settler previously farming in this area (Odendaal Report, 1964: 31, 89-93). Today it is apparent that the Commission's plan was only partially implemented; in 1981, of a total Damara population of 76,000 most were living in Katatura or working elsewhere as labourers, and only an estimated 24,000 were living within Damaraland (NEPRU, 1992, *in* Rohde, 1993: 31).



### *The incorporation of commercial farms into the new communal area of Damaraland*

Following the Odendaal Commission, a total of 223 previously white-owned farms, covering an area of 1,872,794has, was included within Damaraland, each farm varying from 4,000 to 25,000has in size, with an average of approximately 8,500has (Odendaal Report, 1964: 89-93).

By the mid-1960s, many of the white settler farmers had already vacated these farms (Kambatuku, forthcoming: 3), partly due to the declining viability of commercial farming in a situation so dependent on the fluctuations of the South African economy (Rohde, 1993: 31). Farms were valued by an Evaluation Committee which established the amounts to be paid for a farm, and were purchased by the Administration for this price less the amount that farmers owed on their leases and other loans (Kambatuku, forthcoming: 3). In 1964 and 1965, for example, a total of 70 farms, comprising some 698,908has, were valued in Damaraland from which 60 offers were accepted by the farmers (Kambatuku, forthcoming: 3). The Administrator was called to interject and negotiate in instances where offers were not accepted.

Following the purchase of these farms, and prior to their incorporation within the Damaraland 'homeland', they were leased out by the government body known as State Settlement and Farmers Assistance, as emergency grazing to white farmers from other regions (Kambatuku, forthcoming: 3). Both Rietkuil and Driekrone were leased in this manner as emergency grazing to farmers from elsewhere. The turnover of these farmers appears to have been very high, with farms often leased to a different farmer every month.

In the early 1970s, the purchased Damaraland farms were eventually made available to the Bantu Commission for redistribution to Damara farmers in the new 'homeland'. Considering that most of these farms had been settled in response to extremely generous terms offered by the South African Administration, and were then purchased at land values which included improvements, it is likely that their previous white owners benefitted substantially from the arrangement.

Movement by communal farmers to the new Damara 'homeland' began in the early 1970s, in the absence of either a 'traditional' land allocation system or any legislated regulation of settlement (Rohde, 1994: 6). It is generally considered that people were forcibly moved to these areas (Adams and Werner, 1990: 93; Adams and Devitt, 1992: 7), although little documentary evidence exists regarding this process (Rohde, 1993: 19). Forced removals certainly occurred, as was the case when in 1974 the entire community of Riemvasmakers were moved from Upington in South Africa where an army base was to be created. This movement, to some of the most marginal western farms in Damaraland, was justified on the basis of tenuous links between the Nama spoken by old people within the Riemvasmaker community and Damara in Namibia, which enabled them to be considered 'Damaras born outside South West Africa' and thus with a 'right' to 'citizenship' of Damaraland (Odendaal

Report, 1964: 93; Rohde, 1993: 19)<sup>4</sup>. The Odendaal Report (1964: 95) states that in cases where people had to move to their respective homelands, they would receive 'reasonable compensation' for the property they left behind. It appears from field evidence presented in sections 5 and 7, that farmers also actively sought out and applied for preferred farming areas. Such evidence indicates that farmers, many of whom were leaving positions as labourers on commercial farms, also perceived the movement to their new farming areas favourably as an opportunity to become relatively independent.

Current perspectives regarding communal areas tend to be rather negative, both with regard to the environmental effects of settlement and land use in what are regarded as marginal areas, and the ability of communal farmers to appropriate for themselves the opportunities and resources presented by these new farming areas. UDF (1991: 5), for example, states that 'environmental catastrophe (is) imminent in most of the communal areas', while Adams and Devitt (1992: 7, 11), assert that 'these areas are profoundly impoverished and degraded' due to the increasing concentration of people around boreholes, and portray farmers as the mere passive recipients of forced removal who remain dependent on resources subsidised by the State.

It is worth introducing a note of caution in response to these perspectives. First, such assertions regarding environmental degradation are made in the absence of empirical evidence and, as a visit to the Kunene Region following the rains of early 1995 dramatically emphasises, fail to take into account the importance of rainfall-driven, rather than livestock-controlled, primary productivity. Second, and as will become clearer in the analysis of field data in this report, they overlook the fact that farmers also participated actively in the process of resettlement, and over the last two decades have evolved functioning systems of land, infrastructure and livestock management within a geographic pattern of settlement not of their creation.

### **3.2 Land administration and allocation: an historical analysis of local government**

Until Independence, the communal areas created by Odendaal were administered separately by 'second-tier authorities', consisting to a large degree of both recognised and created traditional leaders. These authorities are now defunct, and new administrative boundaries have been drawn along non-ethnic lines such that land from both the communal and commercial areas is included within the new Regions. The old communal area of Damaraland is thus now divided along the Ugab River into the Kunene Region in the north, and the Erongo Region in the south. A ramification of this process has been a decline in the power of the traditional leadership, related to desires to create a national Namibian identity.

As Adams and Devitt (1992: 17) point out, 'local authorities have suspended action pending directions from the centre; the centre, unaccustomed to dealing with the perplexing problems of small farmer and communal area development has itself been waiting for inspiration and

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<sup>4</sup>Despite this, however, they were refused the right to register for the Regional elections in November 1992 on the grounds that they were not Namibian citizens. Following press coverage of this issue, these rights were eventually granted (New Era, 1992, in Rohde, 1993: 20).

direction from elsewhere'. The current weakness of the new Regional Authorities, who are hampered by the concentration of decision-making power in central government, means that Damaraland retains its social, economical and administrative identity (Rohde, 1994: 2). To understand the challenges facing government today in creating a strong regional administrative structure, without alienating claims from within Damaraland to this power-base, it will be useful to consider an overview of 'homeland' administration throughout this century.

### **3.2.1 The Native Reserves: creation of a 'traditional' power structure**

Prior to Odendaal, the Native Reserves were administered by Reserve Boards chaired by the local Superintendent and comprised of a local headman elected by the South African Administrator as a member of the Bantu Affairs Commission, and up to six locally elected members (Odendaal Report, 1964: 73). Votes for the latter were reserved for men living in the Reserves, despite the fact that many adult males were absent from the Reserves due to migrant labour. These boards were responsible primarily for managing the Reserve Administration Trust Funds into which all revenues from the reserve were deposited. These revenues were largely derived from taxes instituted in a time of labour shortages to prevent a situation of having 'too many serviceable natives in the reserves' (SWA, 1928: 32, *in* Fuller, 1993: 32). The traditional leadership of the Reserves were denied the right to allocate land or to hear criminal cases (Gordon, 1991: 5).

In 1962, the 'governing bodies' of the area which was to become Damaraland consisted of the following:

- Fransfontein had one headman and five councillors;
- Okombahe had one paramount chief, one headman and 7 councillors;
- Otjohorongongo had one headman and six councillors.

The position of 'paramount chief' of the Damara was created by the Administrator in 1954 when Dawid Goroseb from Okombahe was appointed 'at the request of the Damara themselves' (Odendaal Report, 1964: 73).

Within areas north of the Police Zone, including Sesfontein, 'traditional' forms of government were retained due to the opinion that they 'were not affected' by the 'wars and rebellion' characterising the south of the country prior to and during German colonial rule (Odendaal Report, 1964: 75). This is despite the fact that, in Sesfontein at least, most inhabitants had only recently become permanently settled there and comprised a diversity of groups which, prior to the late 19th century, had inhabited dispersed areas with little continuous contact with each other. Local government existing within Sesfontein at this time, which the Odendaal Report (1964: 77) describes in two lines as consisting of the leadership of a Nama headman over the small Topnaar Nama and Damara populations, had thus emerged within the dynamics of a new permanent settlement inhabited by a variety of interest groups. In this case, the decision not to control the structure of local government is likely to have had more to do with inaccessibility, and the fact that the northern areas had escaped



being surveyed and fenced with a view to commercial activity, rather than the long-term existence of a coherent traditional administrative structure.

### 3.2.2 Administration of the Odendaal Damara 'homeland'

The Odendaal Commission recommended that Damaraland be administered by a statutory Legislative Council 'consisting of the present functioning rulers, namely the appointed Chief or his deputy, the three headmen of Okombahe, Sesfontein, Fransfontein, and the seven Councillors of Okombahe, ... together with as many elected members as the members of the existing government bodies may determine: *provided that such elected members shall not constitute more than 40% of the Legislative Council*' (Odendaal Report, 1964: 93, emphasis added). These members would be elected by registered voters among the 'citizens' of Damaraland. Homeland 'citizenship' would be supported by legislation to include 'every Damara born in or outside Damaraland, as well as every Damara born outside South West Africa but now declared permanently resident in Damaraland' (Odendaal Report, 1964: 93).

An Executive Committee including the appointed Chief, a Headman elected by him, and three other members elected by the Legislative Council but not necessarily members of the Council, were vested with all executive powers. Below this 'second-tier authority' twelve wards were established within Damaraland, each with a headman and three councillors who, although their powers were not 'legal' as defined by statutory law, had a certain degree of autonomy in mediating local issues (Rohde, 1994: 6). All legislation remained subject to approval by the President of South Africa. Khorixas (then Welwitschia) was designated the administrative seat of Regional Government.

Once this administrative structure was in place, the Odendaal Commission intended that the Legislative Council gradually take over the administrative functions performed by the Pretoria-based Department of Bantu Affairs, excluding sectors such as Defence, Foreign Affairs, Transport and Water Affairs. With regard to land, the 'second-tier authority' was essentially considered the 'trustee' of the land which ultimately remained in the ownership of Central Government (Adams and Werner, 1990: 95). Among the powers of the Legislative Council, with 'permission' of the President of South Africa, was the right to alienate land added to Damaraland to individual citizens or to non-citizens (Odendaal Report, 1964: 95). This provided the basis for the granting of concessions within Damaraland for various enterprises.

Elections were not in fact held in Damaraland until 1978 when they were boycotted by all political groups except the Damara United Front who were linked with the South-African backed DTA. In 1980 the Damara Council, led by the new Paramount Chief, Justus || Garoëb, received a massive majority, heralding the emergence of a strong regional power encompassing an ideology based on promoting a strong Damara ethnic pride and identity, justified as a prerequisite for 'national Namibian consciousness' (Fuller, 1993: 101). Legitimation of a rather static, and historically discredited, tribal identity was enshrined by 'Ordinance No. 2', passed by the Damara Legislative Assembly in 1986. This authorised the

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<sup>5</sup>See, for example Lau (1979).

positions of traditional leaders, as well as South West African Democratic United Front (SWADUF) and SWAPO representatives, by vote in the Assembly. It also facilitated the flow of patronage to the newly created wards in the form of legitimate government payments for the administrative services of their headmen and councillors, and the distribution of pensions and wages through this local power structure (Brown 1991; Rohde, 1993: 33). The Damara Council's continued success prior to Independence was thus based on positive perceptions regarding its ability to redistribute wealth to the wards, and its attempts to overcome historically ingrained negative stereotypes of the Damara people without compromising support for the nationalistic ideology of SWAPO (Rohde, 1993: 33).

Prior to the consolidation of the Regional Authorities in the late 1970s, and as field data indicates, the allocation of farms rested with the previous municipal authorities, who were also responsible for organising the movement of livestock and the payment of compensation to farmers. As the newly created Regional Authorities gathered strength, recognised procedures developed regarding the allocation of land, the movement of livestock, and the mediation of conflict. Generally speaking, requests or appeals regarding the above should be made first to the local headman and councillors of each ward, with final decisions made by the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture and supported by information provided by the Agricultural Extension Officers. In reality, however, rights to use land and grazing, and conflict arising with regard to this, are usually negotiated informally. Refusal for the use of land and related resources is rare, and it is uncommon for such issues to be taken above the existing ward leadership (Rohde, 1993: 35). The reality of such negotiation regarding the use of resources is clear from the case study information presented in section 6.

The Regional Authorities have also, in times of serious drought, initiated the movement of livestock to try and offset the worst of anticipated losses. In the severe drought of the early 1980s, farms were purchased to the east of Damaraland for the purpose of emergency grazing (NEPRU, 1991c: 279), and all transport and herding of cattle was subsidised by the Regional Authorities. Several farmers interviewed for this study indicated that they had sent cattle to these farms as part of this scheme. Similarly, the Damara Council purchased several farms adjacent to Damaraland and resettled communal farmers there (Rohde, 1993: 51).

Finally, the Regional Authorities were responsible for collecting monthly grazing fees of 5c/small stock and 60c/cattle in order to supplement their budget for farming subsidies such as water installation maintenance and drought relief (NEPRU, 1991b: 168). Since Independence, these fees remain largely unpaid in the absence of an organised and accountable administrative body (Rohde, 1993: 35).

### **3.2.3 Current local power structures**

The current situation in Damaraland is one in which all property held by the Regional Authorities has reverted to central government, the former regional administration in Khorixas is now largely headed by appointees made by central government, and the position of tribal leaders is seen as 'increasingly symbolic' (Rohde, 1993: 35, 36). Tribal leaders and the Agricultural Extension Officers of the previous regional office continue, however, to fulfil important roles with regard to both land allocation and the mediation of conflict



(Rohde, 1994: 7). As Hangula states (1995: 15), while 'all communal land is *de jure* vested in the State President ... its *de facto* control and allocation ... rest, by delegation, with the competent traditional institutions of the respective communal areas'.

As an emerging regional and local power, the Farmer's Union, in its various forms, is also beginning to fill some of the gaps created by the dissolving of the Regional Authorities and in the absence of a strong regional administrative organisation to take their place. The recently established Welwitschia Regional Agricultural Union initiated by several of the Agricultural Officers of the previous regional administration has, for example, been engaged in facilitating meetings between wards in Damaraland to mediate resource conflicts, as well as organise the recent government subsidised movement of farmers to the Ugab for grazing purposes (Rohde, 1993: 63, 1994: 9). Each ward has its own branch of the Union and thus it is able to operate in coordination with the traditional ward leadership.

At present, the Union has proved effective in facilitating extension work, organising alternative livestock marketing options, and in lobbying government on behalf of regional and local farmers' interests (Rohde, 1993: 63). Its problems include its ability to attract, and extract subscriptions from, a wide and active membership, and its lack of funding for transport and other necessary resources. Positive local perceptions of the Agricultural Unions was indicated in the socioecological survey conducted in the Huab catchment in 1992 by the Ministry of Environment, during which these organisations were cited as the most appropriate bodies through which the Ministry of Environment and local NGOs should work within the region (Jones, 1993: 54).

#### **4.0 A brief overview of farm geography and physical resources**

##### **4.1 Settlement patterns**

Within the old commercial farming area of Damaraland, human settlement, and the kraaling of livestock, is determined largely by the location of functioning boreholes. As commercial farms, boreholes were located at what became the site of primary habitation, usually as close as possible to communication routes, and at farm-posts established for providing water to livestock being herded in remote areas of the farm. The typical settlement pattern that has emerged today is one of the growth of a larger farm settlement around the old commercial farmhouse, with fewer households at the more remote farm-posts. This, however, is not always the case. At Bankfontein, for example, severe problems with water supply at the old farmhouse have limited settlement here to one household and kraal, and a larger settlement has grown at one of the farm's two posts, even though this settlement also periodically experiences problems with water availability.

## **4.2 Infrastructure**

### **4.2.1 Water**

On all of the farms visited during the course of this study, water is provided by boreholes and pumped either by wind or diesel-engine powered pumps. There are usually two functioning boreholes on each farm, one at the old farmhouse, and one at the farm-post. Often more boreholes had been drilled on the farms, some of which still yield water but have no pump. If there are problems with water supply from these boreholes, natural springs, or wells dug by hand in the Aba-Huab River bed, may occasionally be relied on.

### **4.2.2 Fences**

Farm fences fall into two categories; internal fences erected by the commercial farmers to facilitate rotational grazing patterns between different farm camps, and the perimeter fence which marks the boundary of the farm. Study farms in the Aba-Huab area had between two and four camps.

### **4.2.3 Buildings**

Generally speaking, the only semi-permanent buildings which exist as a legacy from the days of European farm settlement are the farmhouse and associated out-buildings.

## **4.3 Climate**

The single most important climatic feature of this area is its absolutely low rainfall and the associated unpredictability of this rainfall through time and space. Time series rainfall data<sup>6</sup> from 1899-1980 for Fransfontein, and for 1935-1940 and 1967-1980 from Uis, for example, have Coefficients of Variation<sup>7</sup> of 45.89% and 67.79% respectively. These high coefficients suggest that rainfall in the area, and ecological dynamics related to this, are better described by their variability than by average values.

Accompanying this low and variable rainfall are extremely high evapotranspiration rates, estimated as in the region of 2000-3000mm<sup>a-1</sup>. This combination of factors means that, as is characteristic for dryland areas, environmental productivity is primarily moisture, as opposed to, nutrient limited.

Temperatures are characterised by high diurnal and seasonal variations.

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<sup>6</sup>Rainfall data from the Weather Bureau, Windhoek; the Climate Research Unit, University of East Anglia; and the National Meteorological Library, London.

<sup>7</sup>i.e the standard deviation expressed as a percentage of the mean.

#### 4.4 Vegetation<sup>8</sup>

The vegetation of the study area can be described as extremely varied in terms in structure, physiognomy and species distribution, reflecting diverse topographic factors and related soil and micro-climate characteristics. Floristically it is highly individual. Important habitats include the following:

- linear stretches of riparian forest along ephemeral rivers and water-courses, comprised of tall single-stemmed *Acacia* spp. and *Faidherbia albida*, and spreading thickets of *Salvadora persica* and *Tamarix usneoides*. This habitat is extremely important in the provision of dry season forage for livestock, particularly in the form of nutritious *Acacia* and *F. albida* pods. Most edible fruits are found in this habitat;
- granitic plains of coarse sand with largely *Commiphora* spp. and *Colophospermum mopane* open woodland and shrubland, with a dense grass understorey following good rainy seasons;
- granite kopjes and inselbergs which are a feature of the landscape of this area and which tend to be characterised by a number of species with somewhat more restricted distributions, the most conspicuous of which is *Acacia montis-usti*.

#### 4.5 Animal wildlife<sup>9</sup>

The area is host to a high diversity of animal wildlife with some 81, 176, and 101 species of mammals, birds and reptiles respectively recorded for the Huab catchment area as a whole (Brown, 1993; Griffen *et al*, 1993a, 1993b). Of these, elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) and chacma baboons (*Papio ursinus*) directly impinge on farmers' lives and production systems, as will become apparent in the following sections. Communal farmers currently have no legal entitlement to these animal resources. The Ministry of Environment and Tourism is, however, aiming to implement schemes which will confer use rights to wildlife by local people and thus facilitate income generation from wildlife (Jones, 1993: 48).

#### 5.0 Who lives there? A portrait of farm occupants based on case study information

*Case study (see Fig. 1): Malansrust farm was named after its previous European owner. Following Odendaal it was allocated to an appointee within the traditional leadership in Khorixas who was thus the first 'communal farmer' to inhabit the old*

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<sup>8</sup>A full list of plant species and families referred to in this document is presented in Appendix 2.

<sup>9</sup>A full list of animal species and families referred to in this document is presented in Appendix 2.



commercial farmhouse. Following his death the farmhouse was inherited by his family and is now considered the property of his nephew, Gottlieb, a lorry-driver for Water Affairs in Khorixas. More recent settlers include three separate households related by kin, and the household of a farmer who worked as a labourer under the old European farmer. Towards the end of 1994 Malansrust was also the temporary residence of a household from a farm to the south. Malansrust-pos is located approximately 6kms to the east of the Malansrust farm settlement, and has been inhabited since 1978 by primarily one couple.

There are currently six separate households clustered around the old commercial farmhouse at Malansrust, and one household at Malansrust-pos:

1. The old farmhouse has been occupied since 1989 by Willem Janse, a Nama-Damara labourer working for Gottlieb. Willem previously lived in Windhoek. As well as Gottlieb's livestock, he also herds his brother Joseph's, a teacher from Fransfontein who is currently studying in Cape Town and who is married to Gottlieb's daughter. Willem is paid N\$80/month by his brother.

2. Eating separately but employed to assist with the herding of Gottlieb's and Joseph's livestock is an Angolan labourer who has been here for 4 months and will probably return to Angola next year. He is paid N\$150/month.

3. Since 1975, Mr Albert Tsuseb and his dependents have also had occupation rights to Malansrust. Mr Tsuseb was born at Gurub Farm (/Gurub) near the !Kuseb River and spent a large portion of his working life as a farm labourer at Callvania Farm<sup>10</sup> in the same area. In 1974 he went to Khorixas on a social visit to his wife's family, during which he requested the traditional leadership for a place where he could establish himself as a farmer. As stated above, Malansrust had already been allocated to a representative of the traditional leadership who suggested that Mr Tsuseb also farm there. Mr Tsuseb readily returned to Callvania to resign from his job and fetch his livestock. Soon after this, Mr Tsuseb began work as a kitchen-worker at Braunfels Agricultural College, south-east of Khorixas, leaving his wife and children to look after the livestock at Malansrust. He is now retired and currently lives at Malansrust with his grand-daughter and her three-year-old son, both here since November 1994, his sister's daughter and her three-year-old daughter, both here for two years, and a labourer from Khorixas, here for one year. The two young women receive a home and subsistence in lieu of payment for their help with herding and household tasks, while the male labourer is paid N\$60/month.

4. Albert Tsuseb's son, Ismael, has his own house at Malansrust, although he is currently seeking work in Swakopmund.

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<sup>10</sup>Also called /Hunimas after the Damara>Nama name '/hunib' for the shepherd's tree *Boscia albitrunca*.

5. Since 1987, Albert Tsuseb's cousin Simon (their mothers were sisters), and his wife Martha, have also farmed at Malansrust. Simon was born in Kuri gates near the !Kuisieb River, and grew up at Okamahoro Farm, north of the Swakop River between Okahandja and Otjimbingwe, and where his uncle was working. In 1957, when his uncle died, Simon went to Okahandja to look for work and soon

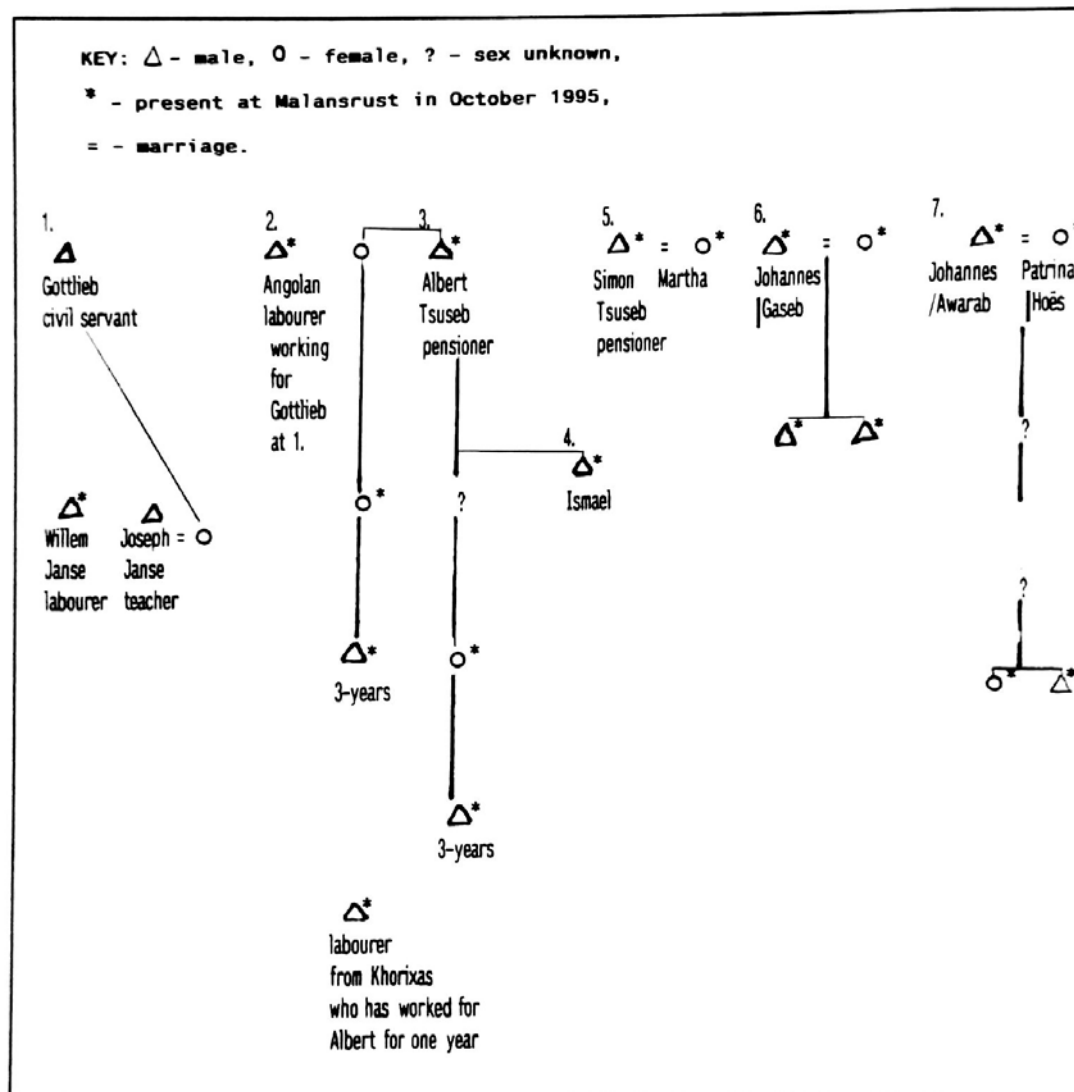


Fig. 1. Household structure and kin relationships between occupants at Malansrust Farm, October 1995.

found a job with the Agra Cooperative where he continued to work for 32 years. He was allocated a farm via the Okahandja Municipal Authorities in 1972. Since then, he has kept his livestock on various farms until his move to Malansrust in

1987. He also continued to work in Okahandja for most of this time, his job at Agra being followed by work with Meatco and then gardening for the Inandawa School. He has lived permanently at Malansrust only since 1994 when he retired from formal employment. He and Martha, previously a domestic worker in Windhoek, were married in 1979 at the neighbouring farm of Bankfontein.

6. In ca. 1966, Johannes || Gaseb began work at Malansrust as a lorry driver for Mr Malan. He left Malansrust when Mr Malan moved and his employment ceased, and returned in 1994 with his wife and two adult sons.

7. Johannes /Awarab from Sesfontein, and his wife Patrina || Hoës from Uis, are the sole resident farmers at Malansrust-pos. They moved here in 1978 after applying for a government permit for a farm on which to herd the livestock in which he had invested his wages from working as a builder in Sesfontein and then Khorixas. They are currently looking after two of Patrine's great grand-children.

### 5.1 An analysis of current farm occupants

An analysis of the study farms indicates that farm occupants fall into the following loose and interrelated categories:

- most farmers are **Damara/Nama-speaking**, often employing labourers from these language groups as well as Owambo- and Herero-speakers. One of the five farms surveyed, Driekrone, was solely inhabited by Herero and Owambo herders who moved here in 1993 from east of Khorixas in response to the early 1990s' drought. This pattern is broadly reflective of the groups represented by registered farmers throughout Damaraland, which in 1991 included 848 Damaras, 436 Hereros, 83 Owambos, 81 Namas, 41 coloureds, and 11 'other' ( || Garoëb, 1991: 2);
- livestock herded on these farms often belongs to **farmers whose main source of income comes from skilled or unskilled employment in the formal sector**, usually for the civil service in the regional centre of Khorixas<sup>11</sup>. During their years of employment, some of their salary is thus invested in livestock. These farmers spend varying amounts of time on the farm, forming a continuum between those who seem to be more or less permanently absent, and those who return to the farm during most weekends;
- following retirement, many wage employees who have maintained herds in the farm area, go to live out their retirement years with their livestock, the collecting of state pensions providing a small cash income. At the same time, these farmers may be entrusted with the care of livestock belonging to children or relatives in wage employment elsewhere. A large proportion of permanent farm occupiers are, therefore, **pensioners**, of which there are approximately 2600 in Damaraland receiving N\$135/month (Rohde, 1994: 5);

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<sup>11</sup>It is worth noting that the government employs some 2,100 people within Damaraland (Rohde, 1994: 5).



- another important group of semi-permanent farm occupants are **pre-school age children**, many of whom are left in the care of their grand-mothers and grand-fathers while their parents are occupied with wage labour elsewhere;
- **younger adult family members who are not in wage employment** of some description also often spend prolonged periods of time with their older relatives, assisting with herding and household tasks and benefitting from both a place to live and a source of subsistence;
- finally, **farm labourers** are an extremely important component of the farm population, not least because it is often they who are responsible for the day-to-day management of the herd for farmers who are absent. Many pensioners also employ farm labourers. Most labourers are men in their twenties, often with some family link to the farmers they work for. There is also a considerable number of young men who seek employment for relatively short periods of time (one to two years) from areas such as central Owambo and Opuwo where unemployment is high. Farm labourers are paid anywhere between N\$60-N\$150/month, plus food rations. At the Land Conference, a great deal of attention was paid to the poor working conditions and wages of farmworkers on commercial farms; as FISA (1991: 4) states, however, the conditions of farmworkers in communal as well as commercial areas should be addressed.

From the above analysis it can be seen that the communal area farms indeed perform a considerable welfare function for a wide range of people, providing pensioners, the unemployed, and young children with a home, subsistence and informal employment.

## 5.2 The origins of current farm occupants

The first communal farmers to occupy the old commercial farms took up residence at these farms in 1972. In no instances was it recorded that farmers moved here prior to this date, contrary to popular opinion that farmers were forced to the newly created Bantustan of Damaraland immediately after the Odendaal Commission in the mid-1960s (cf. NBC, 1992). Most farmers describe how they applied to the appropriate government authorities for permission to move to the new 'homeland' having already explored the areas they were considering moving to. Current farm occupants of the study farms come from the following areas and backgrounds:

- several families originate from the Khomas Hochland area of the !Kuseb River, and this area is known from the records of early European explorers to the region to have had a substantial Damara population (see, for example, Andersson, 1856). Prior to moving, individuals who moved to Damaraland from this area often worked as farm labourers for commercial farmers, and usually came from families with a history of this type of employment. Several times it was reported that restrictions on the head of livestock they were allowed to own when working on these farms were an important 'push factor' in their decision to move;

- similarly, several farmers were previously labourers for commercial farmers in the Outjo District and also cite livestock ownership restrictions as an important factor in their movement to Damaraland. Often women from this area were employed as domestic workers in the homes of commercial farmers;
- a substantial proportion of families moved to the old commercial farms of the Damaraland 'homeland' from Fransfontein Reserve. In this case they often moved first to grazing areas of the Reserve such as Springbokvlakte-pos which were opened up through the establishment of State-funded water-points, and then applied for a farm when these areas became more crowded;
- a very small number of farmers used the opening up of the old commercial area of Damaraland as an opportunity to return to their ancestral lands in the region;
- some farmers come from the old northern communal areas of Owambo and Kaokoland and, as pointed out above, farm labourers are often from these regions.

## **6.0 Farming systems under freehold and communal tenure**

### **6.1 Private land and commercial production prior to Odendaal**

Farmers who settled on the north-western commercial farms in the 1950s based their livelihoods mainly on the farming of karakul sheep and goats, the ownership of large stock generally increasing in the early 1960s (Kambatuku, forthcoming). Archival records for Rietkuil and Driekrone indicate herd structures consistent with this general pattern. Herd numbers during this period show wide fluctuations, generally following a pattern of increase in the late 1950s, dramatic drought-induced losses in the early 1960s, and herd recovery in the mid-1960s. As Rohde (1993: 31) summarizes, livestock farming in these farms was based on the extensive herding of cattle and small-stock and the movement and redistribution of stock between camps. The actual implementation of these tasks was dependent on cheap black labour, the contract labour system devised by the Labour Commission in 1938 lowering local wages through the easy recruitment of labourers from areas north of the Police Zone (Fuller, 1993: 32; Rohde, 1993: 31).

Movement of livestock between farms was common and the archival records are replete with requests to the Administrator, through the Land Board of the Department of Lands, to move to pastures elsewhere (Kambatuku, forthcoming). Farmers would also often apply for permission to sublease their farms in order to assist family and friends with regard to grazing and water. Variations in herd size are often related to the addition and removal of 'visitor herds' rather than to real increases and losses (Kambatuku, forthcoming: 2). Sub-lessees could move their livestock as long as the addition of this herd with that already grazing at the recipient farm did not exceed the carrying capacity decided for this farm. As Kambatuku (forthcoming: 2) points out, however, there was no stated ecological procedure for estimating these carrying capacities. Furthermore, given that primary productivity is widely variable in western Namibia due to fluctuating rainfall, it is likely

that rather static notions of carrying capacity are of limited use for resource management in this area. Farm inspection reports indicate clearly the contradictions inherent in imposing the concept of carrying capacity on this variable area; for example, 'when the Senior Agricultural Officer inspected the farm (Palmwag 702) on the 2nd of February 1967, he found that the farm had no pastures whatsoever, even though there was no one occupying it', and it had been unoccupied since mid-1966 (Kambatuku, forthcoming: 5). In this case, the observed lack of pasture is certainly due to low rainfall and not to 'over-grazing' by livestock as is often assumed.

## 6.2 Current farming systems on 'communalized' commercial farms

### 6.2.1 Livestock

The herding of livestock is usually the primary productive activity in which households are engaged on the communal area farms. As illustrated below, the ownership and herding of livestock is, however, extremely varied.

#### *Case study: livestock ownership<sup>12</sup> by household at Malansrust*

1. *Gottlieb, having suffered stock losses during the early 1990s' drought, now owns 8 cattle, 70 goats, 11 pigs, 20 sheep and five chickens. Joseph Janse has 5 cattle and 33 goats. Their labourer, Willem, is the proud owner of 1 chicken.*

3. *When Albert Tsuseb moved to Malansrust in 1975, he had livestock herds in the order of 50 cattle, over 100 goats, 9 donkeys and 6 horses. Due to cumulative drought losses, Mr Tsuseb now has only 8 cattle, 45 goats, 2 donkeys, 1 horse, and several chickens. His children also have the odd animal herded as part of this herd.*

4. *Albert Tsuseb's son, Ismael, has no cattle or goats but keeps doves and several donkeys.*

5. *When Simon Tsuseb applied to the Okahandja Municipal Authority for a farm in 1972 his total livestock ownership was recorded as 90 goats, 12 cattle and 5 donkeys<sup>13</sup>. Simon and Martha currently have approximately 70 goats, 21 cattle, 4 donkeys, and chickens.*

6. *Johannes has a small herd of only 19 goats, plus 3 donkeys and 7 chickens.*

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<sup>12</sup>Livestock figures are derived from both field data and regional Dept. of Agriculture and Rural Development records.

<sup>13</sup>Data recorded from Mr Tsuseb's original invoice (dated 31-8-72) for the Government-funded movement of livestock by rail to the newly created Bantustan of Damaraland.



7. Johannes and Patrine at Malansrust-pos have 22 goats, 4 donkeys and several chickens.

### *Livestock distribution*

At the five farms surveyed, as at Malansrust, there are wide differentials in the livestock wealth identified with different households. Only a small number of farmers owned any cattle at all, while most farmers had small-stock, mainly goats. It is usual for farmers to own a few donkeys and several chickens. Less common is ownership of horses, pigs and sheep. This pattern of livestock ownership recorded for the study farms is strongly representative of livestock distribution throughout the former Damaraland as recorded by Rohde (1993: 35, 1994: 4). In 1992, for example, average herds of 14 cattle, 99 small stock units (goats or sheep) and 3 donkeys were recorded. These figures mask large differences in ownership, however, illustrated by the fact that the ten wealthiest herders owned approximately 15% of the cattle and 4.6% of registered farmers owned 25% of the total stock numbers. Women, mainly widows or divorcees, comprise approximately a quarter of registered farmers and, on average, tend to have herds of around 65% of the average recorded for male farmers. Many families, as indicated by the case study information, have herds which are too small to be viable in the long-term.

Herd-building is intimately related with the evolution of the family (see, for example, Du Pisani, 1978: 12; Fuller, 1993; Rohde, 1993: 43). As Rohde (1993: 45-46) points out, the retention of 'entitlements of access' to the extended family network and its productive base, i.e. livestock, is essential for the welfare of many less wealthy family members. Children are allocated livestock which form the core of independent herds and livestock are further redistributed as gifts on important family occasions such as weddings. As children establish themselves as independent herders elsewhere, or become drawn into other families through marriage, there is potential for the network of farms to which families have access, to widen. The distribution of livestock through extended kinship relations means that herds are often comprised of animals belonging to more than one individual. Products from these animals may be utilised by those responsible for their herding but decisions regarding the liquidation of an animal through sale, exchange or slaughter may normally only be made by the owner. Due to these patterns of livestock distribution, the number of livestock owners is probably considerably higher than the number of individuals registered as farmers with the Ministry of Agriculture<sup>14</sup>.

The above figures indicate that, although the majority of farmers own very small herds, it remains possible for some farmers, particularly if they are part of a family network characterised by a high degree of cohesiveness (Rohde, 1993: 48), to become relatively wealthy in terms of livestock. The largest livestock herds recorded during the fieldwork for this project were owned by a farmer at Blaauport Farm and consisted of approximately 100 cattle and over 200 goats. This same farmer had access to a strong network of close family members at farms elsewhere, including Moria to the east of the

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<sup>14</sup>In 1993 the number of registered farmers in Damaraland excluding Otjohorong totalled 1841 (WRAU, 1992, in Rohde, 1993: 43).

Grootberg, Spitzkop-pos near Fransfontein, and Blydskap Farm south of Kamanjab. In other words, this farmer had considerable options, should the need arise, for negotiating arrangements for the movement of his livestock between places where he already had a strong family link, and vice versa. Similarly, herding responsibilities can be shared between family members in times when drought conditions precipitate movement. In early 1995, for example, this farmer's niece's cattle from Moria Farm were herded with his, first at Goedgenoeg Farm to the south of Blaauport, and then at Blaauport itself, before hers were returned to Moria by the labourer in her employ.

### *Herd structure and management*

Many features of herd management by pastoralist societies throughout Africa are related to maintaining rapid reproductive rates, and high milk productivity both for subsistence and for young animals. Herd structure is defined primarily by a much higher ratio of female to male animals, within all species of livestock. These are strategies designed to provide for subsistence on a day-to-day basis through the production of milk, and to ensure herd survival in an environment characterised by recurrent drought by having herd sizes large enough to both withstand losses in dry years and promote rapid recovery following drought. As an investment strategy, livestock as a form of currency can also be 'liquidated' as and when the need arises.

Within Damaraland, these features of herd structure are very much apparent, with herds of both cattle and goats commonly having between only one to three males of reproductive age. In cases where herds have no mature males, animals are 'borrowed' from neighbouring farmers for reproductive purposes.

The daily management of the herd largely revolves around watering the livestock; most herds free-range during the day and are kraaled at night, the keeping of young at the kraals ensuring the return of adult animals. The old farm camps may be used as the basis for loose systems of grazing rotation, coordinated between the various farmers with livestock at the farm. Although most active animal husbandry occurs within the context of the kraal system close to people's homes, farmers have a substantial knowledge regarding favoured nutritious forage species and plant species used for animal medicinal purposes. Both men and women are involved in animal husbandry tasks.

The keeping of feral doves and pigeons by households is strongly illustrative of the fact that farming animals does not only have a utilitarian function: the primary reasons for keeping doves is an appreciation of their call which is considered calming, and because 'they are beautiful'. These birds are domesticated by consistent feeding. The importance attached to them by farmers is illustrated by one farmer who moved temporarily to Malansrust in 1994, both bringing her doves with her and taking them with her on her return in 1995 to Goegevind Farm to the south of Malansrust.



### *Herd offtake*

Concern is often expressed regarding low offtake rates by subsistence pastoralists, and the promotion of destocking through such offtake is repeatedly discussed as a means of averting perceived environmental degradation. Figures regarding offtake, however, are usually based on animals sold at formal auctions run by national cooperatives, and fail to take into account those sold or exchanged informally, and slaughtered for home use.

In addition, very real disincentives exist for communal farmers to engage in the formal livestock economy by selling livestock through government auctions. Not least of these is the fact that these auctions remain a 'buyer's market'; commercial farmers reportedly organising themselves to bid in tangent and keep prices down (Fuller, 1993: 50; Rohde, 1994: 5). Drought periods are also poor times to destock from the perspective of the farmer as prices fetched are low due both to the bad condition of animals and flooding of the market as animals are sold to provide the cash needed to purchase food. Even with subsidies of N\$120 per breeding cow, offered through the Central Government Drought Relief scheme of the early 1990s, prices were considered too low to make up for the fall in prices due to loss of condition (Rohde, 1993: 52). Nevertheless, during these same years, sales at livestock auctions rose by some 40% although, due to the low rate of offtake through official auctions, this represented a reduction in total herd of less than 20% (NISER, 1992).

Herd population dynamics, particularly among small-scale subsistence farmers, are strongly reflective of rainfall-driven variations in primary productivity. During the prolonged drought of the early 1980s, for example, herds were depleted to an estimated 20% of their pre-drought levels. Similarly in the early 1990s' drought Agricultural Extension Officers in Damaraland were estimating total stock deaths of 30-35% (NISER, 1992) and work initiated by the SSD indicates that Damaraland was the worst affected region in Namibia (Devereux *et al*, 1994: iii, 14-6). Both instances have, however, been followed by rapid increases in stock numbers when the drought broke.

#### **6.2.2 Gardens**

All the farms visited had small 'kitchen gardens' for the cultivation of vegetables. The households at Malansrust, for example, cultivate vegetables in a communal garden near the old commercial farmhouse, while a separate garden is cultivated by the single household at Malansrust-pos. The only farm which did not have a garden currently under cultivation was Driekrone, the reasons given being problems caused by raiding elephants and baboons. The absence of gardens at this farm is probably also related to two other reasons: first, the fact that Driekrone is occupied by Herero herders who tend not to have as strong a gardening ethic as Damara and Nama farmers, particularly those exposed to missionary activities on the old Native Reserves; second, the low number of women inhabitants who often (but not exclusively) do much of the gardening work.

A wide range of vegetables was observed in these gardens, including maize, carrots, onions, cabbages, beetroots, sweet potatoes, chilies, pomegranates, pumpkins and water

melons. The indigenous succulent plant [*Hoodia*]<sup>15</sup> sp. cf. *currori* (!khobas), whose stems are relished as a snack food, was also planted in several of the gardens.

A major problem and disincentive to expanding these gardens is the destructive damage to both gardens and water supply that can be caused by elephants. Most farmers in the Huab catchment, if they have not personally experienced elephant damage to their gardens, have observed it in their neighbours'.

### **6.2.3 Cash income**

There are four main sources of cash income; formal employment, payment of farm labourers, State pension, and a wide range of informal income-generating activities.

#### ***Formal employment***

The vast majority of those herders who are absent for varying amounts of time due to formal employment work as teachers, hostel matrons, drivers and so on, for the various Government Departments with regional offices in Khorixas. As stated above, these individuals are often the wealthiest livestock owners on the farms, their investment of cash income in livestock being both an expression of a cultural way of life and a form of material insurance for the future.

#### ***Payment of farm labourers***

A form of redistribution of cash income from the formal sector is the informal payment of farm labourers. The maximum wage recorded at the study farms was N\$150/month, although many labourers receive less than N\$100 and some as little as N\$60. In addition to this cash income, however, farm labourers also receive rations of foods such as maize-flour, sugar, and oil, and have usufructuary rights to livestock products, primarily milk consumed in various forms. Although farm labourers aspire to possess their own herds, few actually own livestock.

#### ***State pension***

Farm occupants of over retirement age are entitled to receive a State pension of N\$135/month. This income usually supports a wide range of farm inhabitants who are related to pensioners, including grand-children and young unemployed adults. For many households it is the only source of income for the purchase of maize, on which people are enormously dependent as a staple food, of so-called 'luxury items' such as tea, coffee and sugar, and of clothing. Some old people also experience problems with their application for a pension, and consequently receive no cash income at all.

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<sup>15</sup>Genus under taxonomic revision (Craven, 1995: pers. comm.).



At the study farm of Malansrust, State pensions are received by Albert and Simon Tsuseb.

### ***Informal income-generating activities***

Several informal income-generating activities were observed within the small sample of farms surveyed for this project. Most of these depend on the extraction of 'free' raw materials from the local environment and their processing into commodities with a higher exchange value. The products may be sold or exchanged locally, or may be directed at tourist traffic through the area. Such activities include the following:

- the production of alcoholic beverages is often practised and organised by women. This is usually based on the collection of *Stipagrostis* spp. grass seeds (**sâun**) from harvester ant nests and either the brewing of these seeds into beer or the distilling of this beer into liquor (**bâuga**). The latter product has a high local exchange value, both for cash or for other commodities. At Malansrust the distillation of liquor was regularly practised by Johannes || Gaseb's wife, forming a focus for social visits from neighbouring farms. The process of producing beer and liquor from these indigenous grass seeds can be considered highly sustainable despite naturally fluctuating primary productivity because the same batch of seeds is used repeatedly, thus lasting for up to three to four years;
- semi-precious stones found locally may be sold to tourists driving through farms. This is usually practised by young adult and teenage males, often farm labourers. At Bankfontein, for example, the young labourer at the main farmhouse usually takes a selection of these stones to cars who have to stop at the farm-gate which crosses the road close to the farmhouse;
- carving using wood from *Commiphora glaucescens* (**/hub**) may also be practised as a means of extracting income from tourists. Albert Tsuseb at Malansrust, for example, currently carves small trinket boxes from this wood which he tries to sell for N\$6/box.

### **6.2.4 Use of indigenous vegetation resources**

The following information is derived solely from field data collected at the study farms.

#### ***Fuel***

All fuel for cooking and generating heat comes from the local vegetation, the preferred firewood species being *Colophospermum mopane*. Oil and paraffin lamps are sometimes used for lighting.

### ***Building poles***

Timber from local vegetation is the primary material used for construction purposes, additional material being corrugated iron and scraps of metal. *Acacia monti-usti* is often used for building poles due to the straightness of its stems, but this wood is reportedly not very durable (Craven, pers. comm., 1995) and these poles may thus have to be replaced relatively quickly.

### ***Diet***

Dietary surveys were conducted with several households in both May and October 1995, using 24-hour dietary recall techniques as well as recording intended food consumption for the day of the survey. These indicated that, while the bulk of the diet consisted of maize with either fresh or curdled goat or cow's milk and occasionally meat, gathered plant foods are also important. Gathered plant foods eaten during the days of these surveys included the roasted seeds of *Monsonia umbellata* (≠ **khari bosui**), and the fruits of *Euclea pseudebenus* (**tsawib**), *Cordia* sp. cf. *gharaf* (|| **khos**), and *Salvadora persica* (**xoris**). Wild fruits such as these were reported as often eaten by labourers when in the field. The leaves and stems of *Myrothamnus flabellifolius* (|| **khootorotorosen**) is also consumed as tea. In addition, many households make beer for home consumption from grass seeds, largely *Stipagrostis* spp. (**sâu.n**), gathered from harvester ant nests. This may be consumed as a nutritious supplementary food.

### ***Livestock forage***

Livestock production systems are dependent on the grazing and browsing resources provided by local vegetation. As mentioned above, of particular importance for dry season are the pods of various leguminous species, especially the ana tree, *Faidherbia albida*.

## **6.3 Communal management of State property**

The land, its improvements by both commercial farmers and the government, and wildlife surviving on the land, technically belong to the State. These are all subject, however, to varying degrees and strategies of management by communal farmers. Management decisions can be interpreted in relation to the perceptions held by communal farmers of their rights to different resources, and the rational choices they make regarding livestock management in the context of an unpredictably varying environment.

As Rohde states (1993: 45), 'pastoral economy is based on access to land and its resources as the best means of building and storing wealth through livestock'.



### 6.3.1 Land

At first glance, the farm geography established by the surveying and delineation of commercial farms, and represented by their fences, water points and farmhouses, appears relatively static. The stable demarcation of these farms on maps of the area from both before and after the delineation of the new Regions and Administrative Districts, adds to their perceived concrete reality. Overlying and tangled up with this farm geography, however, are complex movements of both people and livestock (not to mention other traded commodities).

In 1992, for example, a large-scale movement of livestock away from the western and southern Odendaal farms took place towards better grazing in the east and north and along the Ugab, Huab and Omaruru Rivers (Rohde, 1993: 50). At the same time the Aukeigas community, who had been forcibly moved to the farm Sorris-Sorris in 1956, expressed their disgust at the marginal and drought-affected conditions under which they were being forced to live by moving to and squatting outside their ancestral lands near Windhoek. In 1994 the north-east pattern of movement was to some extent reversed, with farmers from the drought-stricken Khorixas and Kamanjab areas moving south towards the Ugab River. Even before the establishment of the communal area of Damaraland, Köhler (1959: 48-49) reports the regular migration of livestock to the Namib when surface water is available following good rain seasons, and the movement of whole communities to the forage resources of the Omaruru River following drought in the early 1950s (Rohde, 1993: 51).

The resulting fluidity through time and space can be exemplified by the following case study. This is presented in detail in the belief that the reality of migration, and the negotiation process by which it is accompanied, is of primary importance in understanding how the 'communalization of commercial farms' has been enacted.

#### *Case study: reconstructed migration history for Malansrust Farm (see Map 4)*

##### *Gottlieb's cattle:*

##### *i. pre-1989*

*Gottlieb moved his cattle to Potgietersrust at Horison Farm north-west of Khorixas. His goats remained at Malansrust in the care of his employee Willem Janse who, because all the other farmers had moved away with their livestock, was the sole inhabitant of Malansrust during this time;*

##### *ii. 1994*

*Gottlieb returned his cattle to Malansrust.*

*Albert Tsuseb and dependants:*

*i. 1975*

*Albert Tsuseb was given permission to farm at Malansrust where he moved from Callvania Farm in the Khomas Hochland area;*

*ii. 1983*

*due to the early 1980s' drought, Mr Tsuseb made arrangements for his cattle and goats to be moved to Duineveld Farm, south of Malansrust. This move was on the advice of the Regional agricultural authorities who distributed fodder supplements there. Mr Tsuseb's daughter accompanied the livestock while he and his wife remained at Braunfels Agricultural College, where he was in employment. During this move, no one from his family remained at Malansrust, but labourers staying in the old commercial farmhouse ensured that his place at the farm was not occupied in his absence;*

*iii. 1984*

*the Tsuseb family returned their livestock to Malansrust following the good rain season of 1984;*

*iv. 1988*

*their livestock were moved to Potgietersrust in what appears to have been a joint management decision for the livestock of Gottlieb, Albert Tsuseb and Simon Tsuseb. Albert describes how they were taken by Government Agricultural Extension Officers to search for good grazing areas, following which they negotiated with the farmer at Potgietersrust, who agreed to their use of grazing on 'his' farm. During this time there was again no one from Albert's family at Malansrust, but labourers resident at the old farmhouse ensured that his claim to Malansrust was maintained;*

*v. 1991*

*returned the livestock to Malansrust;*

*vi. 1992*

*Albert organised the movement of his livestock to Swartdam, a farm-post of Gainatseb Farm on the main Khorixas-Outjo road. He observed the good grazing there when travelling on this road so requested the Nama resident farmers for permission to herd his livestock at this farm. It seems that at first they were concerned that there would be too many livestock but eventually agreed, reportedly without 'upfront' payment of any kind, and Albert's livestock were herded there for two years by his children;*

*vii. March 1994*

*Albert's livestock were returned to Malansrust and will remain here until below-average rainfall makes it necessary to move again.*



*Simon and Martha Tsuseb:*

i. 1972

*Simon Tsuseb applied for a farm in Damaraland through the Okahandja Municipal Authorities in 1972 and was given a permit for Granietkop Farm, directly south of Malansrust. He requested to go to Granietkop after having observed this area when looking for an appropriate farm for his livestock. His livestock remained here for four years, during which time he was in employment at Okahandja and the herding was carried out by his mother's sisters with assistance from two boys from the family. When these boys went to school, the old women could no longer cope with all the herding and household tasks and so Simon had to move his livestock even though the grazing remained good at Granietkop;*

ii. 1976

*due to the effective shortage of labour for herding at Granietkop, Simon transferred his livestock to an adjacent farm, Bankfontein, where his brother, Martin Tsuseb, was farming. The livestock remained in Martin's care until 1987 when Simon moved to Malansrust;*

iii. 1981

*in response to the early 1980s' drought, Simon's livestock were moved with his brother's herd east to farms in Gobabis District such as Blouperd and Vergenoeg. This move was orchestrated by the Regional Agricultural Authorities to try and prevent livestock losses in the west. It is reported that the livestock were distributed between different farms to spread the risk of loss;*

iv. ca. 1984

*Simon and Martin Tsuseb's livestock returned to Bankfontein;*

v. 1987

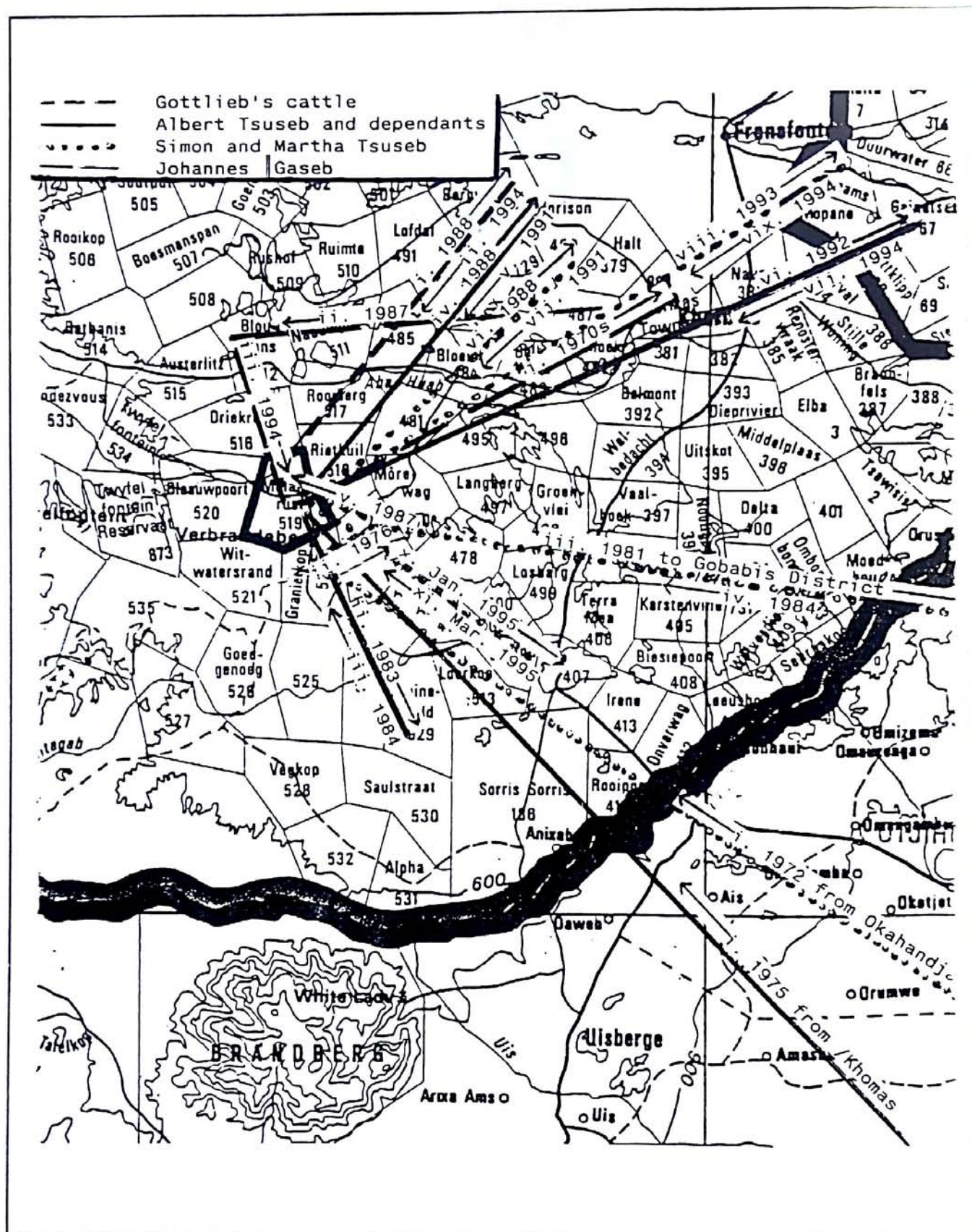
*Simon and Martha moved to Malansrust where Simon's cousin Albert was already farming. As Simon was still working at Okahandja, Martha would look after the livestock during the week with assistance from a male labourer already inhabiting Malansrust;*

vi. 1988

*Simon and Martha decided that their livestock should move with Gottlieb's and Albert's to Potgietersrust due to drought-induced local grazing shortages. The livestock remained there until the end of 1990;*

vii. January 1991

*they returned with their livestock to farm at Malansrust;*



Map 4. Mapped migration routes for the four most permanent households at Malansrust Farm.

viii. 1993

due to drought in the early 1990s, they moved their livestock to /Haraxam-pos<sup>16</sup> between Fransfontein and Gainatseb Farm. Before this move they actively went to look for places with good grazing (Simon owns a Datsun 1300 bakkie which he uses when looking for grazing in drought years) and, after negotiating with the people already at /Haraxam-pos, applied to the Ministry of Agriculture at Khorixas for a permit to move their livestock. It seems that the inhabitants of /Haraxam-pos, with whom they had had no prior contact, were at first reluctant to have more livestock on their farm and agreed to this move on condition that it didn't involve 'too many' animals. A labourer was employed to go with and herd the livestock;

ix. March-April 1994

the livestock were returned to Malansrust;

x. January 1995

due to the lack of good grazing at Malansrust, and after negotiating with farmers at Goedgevind Farm to the south, Simon and Martha took their livestock to this farm. While here they stayed away from the existing farm settlement, going into the settlement only for their and their herd's water needs;

xi. March 1995

following the good rains of early 1995, Martha and Simon returned to Malansrust. At present they are not planning to move again because the grazing remains plentiful at Malansrust. If and when this area enters another drought period, however, they will certainly endeavour to move with their livestock to farms with better grazing resources.

### **Johannes || Gaseb**

i. early 1970s

from being in paid employment as a lorry driver for Mr Malan, the commercial farmer at Malansrust, Johannes moved to Khorixas where he worked as a labourer for the Dept. of Water Affairs;

ii. 1987

Johannes moved with his dependants to Bloukrans Farm east of Khorixas where his cousin (his father's brother's son) was farming;

iii. 1994

due to the early 1990s drought, Johannes moved to Malansrust.

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<sup>16</sup>Judging by the description of its location, this is probably on Naacham Farm to the east of Fransfontein, although there is also a farming post called Narachaampos in the west of the old Fransfontein Reserve.



### ***Wilhemina Dagú Seibes***

*In 1994 Malansrust was the recipient of a family, headed by Wilhemina Dagú Seibes, from Goedgevind Farm south-east of Malansrust, to which Simon and Martha had moved at the beginning of the year. Wilhemina negotiated informally with Mr Albert Tsuseb for permission to graze her livestock here, and moved here with her eldest daughter, a daughter-in-law, and a great, great, grand-daughter. She is not related to anyone at Malansrust but is known to the occupants of Malansrust and inhabited Blaauport-pos 'a long time ago' and so is familiar with the area. She was originally an inhabitant of Otjimbingwe (Atsâs). In May 1995 she had at Malansrust 16 cattle, 26 goats, six donkeys, four horses, 30 chickens and 26 doves.*

*i. November 1994*

*Wilhemina left Goedgevind and moved to Malansrust;*

*ii. June 1995*

*she returned to Goedgevind.*

### ***Johannes /Awarab and Patrine || Hoës at Malansrust-pos:***

*i. 1978*

*moved to Malansrust-pos with a government permit from Khorixas where Johannes had been working since 1972. They have remained here ever since.*

### ***Solomon:***

*i. ca. 1990*

*Solomon, from Owambo, moved to Malansrust-pos with his livestock after discussing the possibility of using the grazing there with Johannes /Awarab;*

*ii. ca. 1993*

*he left Malansrust-pos, reportedly to work at Twyfelfontein Farm.*

### ***Alwina Tanises (née !Gaoses)***

*Alwina and her dependants were temporary inhabitants of Malansrust in the 1990s. This move is described below in the context of her full migration history.*

*i. ca. 1940s (?)*

*Alwina's family moved from ≠Nu-!nabes area (i.e. Blaauport Farm) to the Ugab (!U≠gab) River in the north-west corner of the Okombahe Reserve. Alwina grew up in this area and married her husband there. Together they had large numbers of livestock, including cattle.*

ii. 1980

*After her husband died in the late 1970s their cattle were herded by her husband's brother, who is described as not the most conscientious of herders. Some time after her husband's death they consequently suffered severe stock theft, reportedly by Herero-speaking herders from Omatjette in the old neighbouring Reserve of Otjohorongo. She reported this incident to the police in Uis, and to the traditional councillors, both of whom declared they could do nothing because the cattle were unmarked and could not be officially identified as hers. This event led to her leaving the Ugab and joining her mother and the rest of her family who, in 1974, had moved from the Okombahe Reserve to Blaauport-pos. Her mother's move had been stimulated by the opportunity, created by the redistribution of land, to return to her old home area. An added incentive for this move was the increased pressure on resources at the Ugab caused by the influx of the Aukeigas (!Ao- || Aexas) community in 1956, when their original home area was appropriated by the South African administration and transformed into Daan Viljoen Game Park;*

iii. 1992

*Alwina moved with her own dependants to Malansrust-pos following personal divisions between her and her siblings at Blaauport-pos;*

iv. May 1995

*due to problems with water supply at Malansrust-pos, Alwina moved with her dependants to Blaauport, following informal negotiations with the occupants of the old commercial farmhouse who were among the first communal farmers at Blaauport. She is reportedly unrelated to these farmers.*

### **Features of migration**

The above case study indicates the reality of several features of migration:

- the ability to move in response to drought-induced shortages of grazing is probably the most important herd management strategy employed throughout the world by pastoral societies inhabiting variable environments. This remains so in the old commercial farms of Damaraland, despite the early division and recent re-allocation of land to which this area has been subjected;
- although migration may last several years it is usually temporary in that most farmers appear to return to what may be considered as their farm 'base'. This farm tends to be the one that a farmer or his or her family were originally allocated following implementation of the Odendaal plan;
- farmers which own cattle often choose to move only their cattle in response to drought. Even when both large and small stock are moved, cattle are usually moved first in response to drought due to their greater need for quality fodder and their large water requirements. For wealthy absentee farmers, leaving their goats in the care of a labourer



at their 'base' farm also performs the function of maintaining their claim to that farm even while their main source of livestock wealth is not being farmed there;

- migration by wealthier farmers during drought, tends to be over larger distances than small-scale farmers. This is related to a number of factors which act to buoy up the wealth of these farmers, including their access to farms which are dispersed geographically through widely spread kinship networks, and the greater amount of resources they can divert to the process of moving. This is borne out by Rohde (1993: 49) who observes that wealthier herders tend to display the highest degree of flexibility regarding mobility and destocking, strategies which are related to herd ownership as a form of capital investment;
- most movement is organised informally between farmers but the choice of areas to which people move their livestock may be influenced by information released by government-employed Agricultural Extension Officers, particularly if the distribution of drought fodder is involved. Movement may or may not be sanctioned by the appropriate government permits. In some instances of extreme emergency the government has in the past organised the movement of livestock to alternative grazing. This occurred in the drought of the early 1980s when the Regional Authorities bought farms in other regions to which cattle were moved from Damaraland;
- in some cases, particularly where the livestock owner is in employment elsewhere, the movement of livestock may be prompted by labour shortages. This may cause the amalgamation of herds belonging to related individuals and their redivision when labour is found or the owner themselves takes up full-time farming;
- personal reasons may also prompt movement, as is illustrated by the citing of family differences as the reason for Alwina's move from Blaauport-pos to Malansrust-pos;
- the continual movement of people and productive resources taking place means that the population of a farm represents only a proportion of individuals who can claim rights to occupy that farm (cf. Rohde, 1993: 40, 42).

### *Features of negotiation*

Complex processes of negotiation surround and infuse the act of migration. These often involve some or all of the following features:

- most migration is first informally negotiated between farmers, and only then sanctioned by the appropriate government authorities, if at all. A great deal of migration occurs without notification of the government;
- negotiations regarding the use of grazing and water usually take place between relatives, i.e. at the 'point of least resistance' (Rohde, 1993: 34). It is comparatively rare for negotiation to take place between farmers who are not known to each other;



- agreements do not involve any form of upfront payment or compensation of grazing, and surprise was repeatedly expressed at the suggestion of payment of any kind, particularly if the agreement was between family members. There are two reasons for this. First, the power of reciprocity infusing the social and kinship institutions with which livestock herding is intimately bound, means that the farmers allowing the use of grazing on 'their' farm are protecting their own future options for grazing should their farming area experience drought-induced shortages. Second, the knowledge that the land and its resources technically belong to the State means that even the most commercially oriented of communal area farmers has no legal support whatsoever for the charging of 'rents' to incoming farmers;
- only two incidents recorded during the field study and regarding the movement of livestock appeared to involve a degree of conflict. In both cases, the farmers were previously unknown to each other and disagreement was due to concern by the recipient farmers over the sizes of herds to be moved;
- because most situations are negotiated successfully and conflict is minimal, the role that government institutions play in mediating potential conflict is correspondingly small.

### 6.3.2 Infrastructure

People invest considerable amounts of time, energy and resources on maintaining infrastructure during their occupancy of a farm. Even though they technically lack ownership rights over basic infrastructure, they are actively involved with its day-to-day management and maintenance, and with negotiation relating to who has rights of use to these resources.

#### *Water*

In an arid environment such as western Namibia, water is the primary limiting factor for both human settlement and livestock herding. Land reform in communal areas is thus inextricably tied up with the issue of who shoulders responsibility for the costs of its continued availability.

The provision of water is currently the official responsibility of the Dept. of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development, but the practical aspects of this are mainly implemented by the Dept. of Water Affairs (Africare, 1993: 7). State controlled and subsidised water provision within the newly created Bantustans was a necessary condition for the implementation of the Odendaal plan and the associated resettlement of communal farmers. There is thus a long history within the communal areas of the reality of State-ownership over water and the infrastructure necessary for its supply.

Today, farmers are generally perceived as 'dependants' of the government in terms of water supply. They are also, however, active managers of the use of this resource and



participate in the maintenance of installations through procedures by which damage or the need of repair is reported to the relevant authorities.

With annual operating costs of over US \$1 million for maintaining water provision in the Kunene and Erongo Regions alone (Africare, 1993: 8), the government is understandably anxious to find ways of dispersing some or all of these costs away from central coffers. It should be pointed out, however, that this remains lower than US \$10/person and, given the socialist aims of the government, could be considered the responsibility of the government in its provision of basic welfare to its rural population.

In an attempt to make the transition between institutionalised dependence on government for water provision and user accountability, the NGO Africare, following a request for assistance by the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development, is currently implementing a program 'to provide technical assistance and training to establish a maintenance system and capacity' for water provision in drought-prone communal areas (Africare, 1993: 7). The primary aim of this program is to empower communal farmers by instituting the participation of rural populations in the rehabilitation and maintenance of boreholes, through the establishment and training of water-point management committees at 'village' level. The establishment of these committees involves the identification of one or two individuals as 'water caretakers' responsible for simple repairs, routine maintenance checks, and the management of a fund comprised of cash or in kind payments by consumers to cover the costs of water-point maintenance (Africare, 1993: 10).

During the fieldwork conducted for this project, one farmer, Justine !Haraës from Rietkuil Farm, had recently attended an Africare and Department of Water Affairs workshop for the training of treasurers for these water-point committees. A description of the inhabitants of this farm and their recent histories in relation to their occupancy of this farm is presented below as a means of illustrating some of the problems and advantages inherent in the application of the water-point committee scheme on this farm.

#### *Case study: Rietkuil Farm (!Haoberos<sup>17</sup>)*

*After Odendaal, the main Rietkuil Farm was allocated to three sisters of the !Nawases family from Otjikondo settlement in Outjo district, whose movement to Rietkuil in 1972 was assisted by government-funded transport. They were the first communal farmer inhabitants of the old commercial farmhouse at Rietkuil. Today, a fourth sister, Justine Haraës (né !Nawases), is household head at the old farmhouse, and she and a daughter of one of the original !Nawases sisters are now the only remaining members of this first family of communal farmers at Rietkuil. Justine is also originally from Otjikondo where she was a domestic worker for a white household. Together with her husband, a builder, she moved to Fransfontein and then to Khorixas, where she again entered employment as a domestic worker. During this time their livestock were in the care of her mother*

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<sup>17</sup> !Hao' reportedly refers to the significance of social communication around the evening cooking fire.

at Smalruggens Farm, north of the Fransfontein Reserve. Following her husband's death in 1981, she applied to the Regional Authorities in Khorixas for permission to move her livestock from Smalruggens Farm to Rietkuil where her sisters were. In recent years, as her elder sisters died and family children departed for school, she encouraged the movement to Rietkuil of additional farmers.

#### **Current occupiers by household, and their livestock**

1. Three adults and two children currently live with Justine. These are her sister's grandson, who Justine brought up and who now works as a Community Game Guard for the WWF Huab Catchment Project, her grandson with his girlfriend and her son, and her granddaughter.

Justine's herd consists of her own animals plus some belonging to her children. At present she has 77 goats, and roughly 50 cattle. She is also responsible for her sister's grandson's livestock, which amount to eight cattle, 24 goats, 2 horses and 1 donkey.

Following her move to Rietkuil in 1982, there have been times when, in response to drought-induced lack of grazing, Justine wished to move her livestock to other farms. She has been unable to do so, however, because of a lack of labour. Consequently she reportedly suffered livestock losses and her livestock 'Owner's Record Card' for 1985-1990 indicates that her goats fell dramatically from 24 with 11 lambs to only 4.

2. Michael, a teacher at Eddie Bowe Primary School in Khorixas, and his wife Susana, have been farming at Rietkuil for four years. This is their first farm, although Michael's family have a history of farming at Okombahe. He heard that Justine was looking for another farmer to move to Rietkuil through Justine's brother-in-law who is the headmaster at T.H.F !Gaeb primary school in Khorixas. Michael visits the farm every weekend with his wife and eight children.

Michael and Susana currently have 6 cattle, 67 mature and 68 juvenile goats, 7 female sheep and 9 lambs, 2 donkeys and 12 chickens with 2 cockerels.

3. Living separately from Michael are two Damara labourers who look after his livestock while he is not here. They are paid N\$100 and N\$80 per month, plus food rations.

4. Philippina, Justine's niece, has had a separate house at Rietkuil since her mother died, where she lives with her partner, Emmanuel. They have no livestock and appear to be largely dependent on food given by Justine. Neither Emmanuel or Philippina receive a state pension, although she has repeatedly applied for one. They own 3 chickens.

5. One other house at Rietkuil is inhabited on a temporary basis only. This belongs to Justine's half sister Alberta, who works at Eddie Bowe Primary School



hostel. She comes to Rietkuil in the holidays with her five children. In 1990 Alberta moved her 6 cattle to graze near the Huab (|| Hu!ab) River. Due to the drought, however, only 1 of these survived and is now looked after by Justine at Rietkuil.

6. Finally, in 1992, on hearing that Justine was farming alone at Rietkuil, her brother-in-law moved there together with his livestock. His residence at Rietkuil, however, ceased with his death in 1993, following which his livestock were divided among family members in the Fransfontein and Khorixas areas.

### **Infrastructure**

#### **Water**

There are two boreholes at Rietkuil, from which water is drawn by wind-pumps. Fenced gardens are cultivated close to these water-points.

#### **Fences**

Rietkuil is divided into four camps. These are reportedly used in rotation by Michael and Susana's livestock, but there is little communication between the farmers at Rietkuil regarding grazing strategies. The fences are in bad condition due to general disrepair coupled with elephant damage.

An analysis of the above description of a farm settlement indicates several features of crucial significance for the management of focal resources such as water, and the establishment of related farm committees. These can be grouped under two categories which make the perception of farming communities as relatively united and stable 'villages' somewhat more complicated.

1. The heterogeneity expressed by farm occupants on many different levels cannot be overemphasised. Farm settlements appear superficially as coherent groupings of households. This, however, is largely a function the importance of water in focusing the location of households, and not because of strong underlying relationships binding all of these households. There are many examples of such heterogeneity in the above case study:

- while many of the farm's current occupiers are related by kin in some way, this is certainly not the basis for the settlement of all households on this farm. Family ties are extremely important in facilitating the movement of livestock between farms, and often in the choice of farm for more permanent settlement, but it is equally true that often people who have no prior experience of each other are settled together on a farm, and may or may not develop relationships of reciprocity over time;



- wide disparities in wealth, both in terms of livestock and access to alternative sources of income, exist between farm occupiers. This raises a plethora of issues in terms of the communal management of focal resources, related in particular to the real danger of a system in which the less wealthy shoulder the costs of more wealthy, but often absentee, farmers. For example, should contributions towards the maintenance of farm water supply be related in some way to the income or wealth of farmers and their households, perhaps based on numbers of livestock herded at the farm? Given that many farmers have significant alternative sources of income, should this be taken into consideration when deciding their share of the costs? With so many of the more wealthy farmers spending varying and sometimes prolonged periods of time away from the farm, how can their contribution to the costs of watering their herd be elicited?

2. The case study of Rietkuil indicates the reality of such factors as the largely drought-driven movement of livestock and people between farms, varying periods of farm occupancy by different households and individuals, absentee herding of different degrees, and the retention of claims to farms by individuals over sometimes prolonged periods of absence from the farm. All of these are expressions of the fluidity and flexibility which overlays the apparently static geography of the surveyed commercial farms, and through which people in Damaraland manage the land and its resources to maintain and increase the movable property (i.e. livestock) which comprise household wealth. The success of committees for the management of focal resources will thus be dependent on their ability to respond creatively and flexibly to variable farm communities.

### *Fences*

On all of the study farms both the internal and periphery fences were reported as maintained by the farmers themselves or, more accurately, by farm labourers. Most fences are, however, in a state of general disrepair. A number of reasons can be cited for this, the most important being the lack of capital that farmers have with which to replace fencing material. This contrasts with the situation as commercial farms when European farmers were given generous loans for the construction of fences. A second major problem concerns the extent of elephant damage to fences. This in effect constitutes the damaging of State property by State property and is understandably a disincentive to the investment of time, money and labour that is required to repair such damage.

The use of fences as part of farm management strategies varies widely. Sometimes it was reported that the fenced camps are used as part of a loose system of grazing rotation which was coordinated between members of the farm. On other farms the existing camps did not appear to feature strongly in herd management decisions and there was no coordination of herding between farmers. Finally, it is apparent from the above description of migration that the boundaries of farms, marked by fences, are very much recognised and unnegotiated incursions across these fences into neighbouring farms are frowned upon.



## ***Buildings***

The old commercial farmhouses are generally perceived as 'owned' by the first communal occupiers of the farm or their family. These farmers tend to be the most wealthy farm occupants in terms of both livestock and access to alternative income. As such they are often temporary inhabitants of the farm, and labourers in their employ are the permanent occupiers of the farmhouse. The continued habitation of labourers in these farmhouses where prolonged absence by the farmer is the norm, may be functional in ensuring the maintenance of the farmer's claim to the house.

Self-built houses are perceived as owned exclusively by those who built them. Building a house on a farm may again aid the retention of occupation rights to the land following a period of absence. Labourers for other farmers, and other remaining occupants of a farm settlement, may be asked to watch over these houses if the household moves away for a prolonged period of time.

### **6.4 Discussion: similarities and divergences between farming systems under private and communal tenure**

There are a number of broad similarities between the systems of farming engaged in by European farmers prior to the implementation of the Odendaal Plan, and by African farmers following the creation of the Damaraland 'homeland'. These belie the obvious differences in these two systems which often form the focus of analysis. Broadly speaking, the similarities can be identified as follows:

- a basic tenet of the success of both European and African farming systems has been the ability to respond to variability in pasture production through movement. Despite the leasehold and freehold tenure to which European farmers had access, they are recorded as moving repeatedly when local drought conditions made this necessary. Individual farms were thus continually accommodating sub-lessees for periods of varying lengths, and conversely it was not uncommon for farms to be completely vacant during droughts. Similarly, migration is common among today's communal farmers and consequently farms within Damaraland are home to a continually changing farming population;
- negotiation regarding migration, and the accompanying assistance afforded to farmers, occurs mainly among family and friends within both systems. Informal negotiation usually precedes notification of the relevant authorities;
- commercial productivity by European farmers was largely dependent on the employment of cheap black labour. Within the current communal system, the availability of cheap labour remains extremely important. Significantly, cheap labour is essential for farmers with a more commercial orientation within the communal area of Damaraland, and is the basis on which farmers employed within the cash economy elsewhere can continue farming;



- the survival of both systems has been facilitated by the distribution of subsidised fodder supplements during drought periods, and the State-funded facilitation of livestock movement to better pastures. Significantly for those who maintain that commercial production systems are more efficient, both systems have thus experienced the periodic need for the injection of drought relief resources;
- finally, both European and African farmers diversified their productive base through the cultivation of gardens for home consumption.

In terms of differences between the two farming systems, the most significant is the extremely high degree of capital input that European farmers received from the South African Administration. The importance of this can not be over-stressed, for without it many of these farms would not have survived as commercial units for the short period that they did. In contrast, and without recourse to loans and advances from the government, the old commercial farming area of Damaraland under the current system of communal tenure and management supports a far larger number of farmers and their dependants engaged in a wider variety of both subsistence and commercial-oriented productive activities. As Rohde states (1994: 10), when compared with commercial farming areas of the same size, this is greater by an order of magnitude than either the numbers of people, or the productivity in terms of livestock numbers, sustained by these latter areas. This is in spite of the higher agricultural potential of the commercial farming areas, and the huge government subsidies that have flowed historically to these areas.

## **7.0 Conclusions and recommendations**

As stated in section 1, land reform is envisaged as an integral part of development in the communal rangelands of Namibia. Two major aims of such development can be identified:

- i. that it is ecologically appropriate;
- ii. that it encourages the equitable distribution of wealth and access to resources as a means of alleviating poverty.

These two aspects will be considered in turn with the proviso that they are deeply interrelated.

### **7.1 What is 'ecologically appropriate' in the context of arid Namibia?**

A wealth of literature pertaining to arid land ecology indicates that the productivity of dryland ecosystems is better described by its variability through time and space, rather than by its average values (see, for example, Sandford, 1983; Wiens, 1984; Caughley *et al*, 1987; Ellis and Swift, 1988; Westoby *et al*; Behnke *et al*, 1993). It is also postulated that this variability is largely rainfall-driven, and not due to overgrazing by livestock. The relevance of this thinking regarding ecosystem dynamics to north-western Namibia has



been strongly illustrated by the response of the biotic environment to this year's (1995) above-average rainfall; large areas proclaimed as on the brink of collapse (Infoscience, 1994: 22) and beyond the point of recovery displayed their resilience by producing dense stands of nutritious *Stipagrostis* spp. grasses.

This has implications for both the choice of land tenure and appropriate livestock management for this region, and for perceptions regarding existing management strategies. In particular, it stresses that management decisions should seize the opportunities presented for herd growth during good years, in order to minimise losses in bad years. This is precisely what both communal farmers **and** the commercial farmers preceding them have attempted to do, largely through management decisions which involve migration to avoid herd losses due to local or regional shortages of grazing. This has major implications for land tenure reform in this area; most importantly, it suggests that **even when farmers have secure tenure to large land-holdings they choose to migrate in response to environmental conditions**. Related to this it indicates that, for both European and African farmers in the former Damaraland area, the success of livestock herding was, and is, related to maintaining reciprocal links to as wide a network of kin and friends as possible.

In terms of instituting ecologically appropriate development and land tenure reform within the Damaraland area, a number of guiding principles can be drawn from both the historical experience of this region, and the current literature regarding arid land ecology and management elsewhere:

- security of tenure to units of land, whether on a lease- or a free-hold basis, will **not** ensure security of livelihood, unless options for movement between these units are retained. Experience elsewhere in dryland Africa, as in north-west Namibia, shows that where defined land units are allocated to farmers they continue to migrate when necessary. Such an approach to land tenure in this area has also been suggested by Rohde (1994);
- conflict arises not necessarily over the use of land as an extensive resource, but over specific resources such as water or localised and valued sources of fodder. Emphasis should thus be placed on strengthening procedures for guiding the allocation of usufructuary rights to, and mediating conflict over, such focal resources, rather than on maintaining rights to an extensive land area (Behnke, 1993). The relevance of this type of approach can be illustrated by perceptions from another Namibian communal area, Bushmanland, where the Nyae Nyae Farmers' Cooperative conceives of 'resource control as having greater priority than land ownership *per se*' (Bieseke *et al.*, 1991: 11);
- in order to provide an alternative to attempts to maintain herd sizes during drought years, farmers must have access to markets which allow them to benefit meaningfully from the sale of livestock **before** animals begin to lose condition. This would enable farmers engaging in the formal economy to derive maximum benefits from destocking, by providing capital which can be reinvested in livestock when environmental conditions are more favourable.



## 7.2 Options for equitable development

To date, most government interventions, both central and regional, have acted to disproportionately benefit large- and middle-scale farmers while excluding the poorest income groups. Examples include the following:

- subsidised movement out of Damaraland in the 1980s was only available to farmers with cattle, and similarly farms purchased for emergency grazing in the 1980s were only available to relatively wealthy farmers;
- subsidies of N\$120 per breeding cow offered at auctions as an incentive to destock benefitted only those with cattle;
- during the drought relief scheme of the early 1990s credit was provided to small-scale farmers. These were based on livestock numbers, however, such that credits of up to N\$200 were allocated depending on numbers of animals up to a maximum per farmer with 10 cattle or 50 goats. Although this scheme targeted low income groups with small herds, credit received on a cumulative scale such as this benefits those with greater numbers of animals, within the limits of the scheme;
- eligibility for the loan scheme offered to 'middle farmers' in 1992 to facilitate restocking was based on a minimum number of livestock owned which did not take into account drought-incurred animal losses and excluded the poorest farmers with the greatest need for restocking assistance;
- recently, the advice and sanctioning of migration by Agricultural Extension Officers has benefitted those with enough stock to make it worthwhile to migrate. These farmers then impact upon resources in areas inhabited by poorer farmers. This occurred in 1994, for example, when a number of large-scale farmers moved to the Ugab River, thus utilising grazing which local farmers were unable to take advantage of due, at least in part, to the losses they had sustained in previous drought years.

These examples illustrate that a shift in emphasis is necessary to ensure that small-scale farmers benefit from, and do not bear the costs of, initiatives to assist farmers. This would require a progressive approach to assistance schemes, which might include, for example:

- a focus on the restocking of small-scale farmers rather than promoting the existing livestock wealth of larger-scale farmers;
- the compensation of small-scale farmers for the use of grazing resources by wealthy farmers moving to 'their' area;
- wealthy farmers who have exercised the option to lease or purchase commercial farms should be prohibited from continuing to use communal grazing, or only be allowed to do so if recipient communal farmers can receive suitable compensation;



- meaningful administrative integration of commercial and communal systems within the new regions could facilitate the flow of benefits between both systems. In particular, the instituting of a land tax on commercial holdings, if managed at a regional level, could be used to fund development and necessary subsidies to small-scale communal farmers;
- the empowerment of small-scale farmers in their use and management of resources will require capacity building of appropriate local-level organisations. If local-level ecological, social and economic diversity is to be taken into account, then more opportunity should be allowed for management decisions to emerge from the grass-roots, rather than be imposed by higher levels within the regional and national administrative hierarchy. All groups should be represented by these organisations, including women and farm labourers.

### 7.3 Concluding remarks

As discussed in section 1, a bias exists in both the Commercial (Agricultural) Lands Reform Act of 1995, and the Draft Communal Lands Bill, towards facilitating the subdivision of both acquired agricultural land and existing communal land, and making available these land holdings to farmers, primarily on a leasehold basis; i.e. towards strengthening legal mechanisms for land demarcation and privatisation. From the analysis of dryland livestock farming systems under both communal and commercial tenure presented in this study, however, it would appear that this type of tenure reform is more appropriate for systems of sedentary agriculture dominated by crop cultivation rather than livestock herding. In other words, for the higher-rainfall, and densely populated, northern areas such as the old communal area of Owambo, the northern area of the new Rundu District, Okavango Region, and the new Caprivi Region.

In particular, the continuum described in this study between land use in Damaraland during both its history as demarcated commercial farms and currently as communal land, suggests that migration is an enduring and adaptive feature of livestock production in this area. Similarly, research within Namibia and from elsewhere in dryland Africa indicates that such flexibility and opportunism are the most ecologically and socially appropriate principles of management within such environments. Conversely, security of tenure to fixed parcels of land does not ensure security of livelihood. Rather, the maintenance of access to dispersed key resources such as water and dry season fodder, is of primary significance to the livestock farmer.

In a country dominated by semi-arid conditions, and where livestock production under extensive farming systems remains the primary opportunity for both subsistence and commercially-oriented activities, it is essential that the reality of these resource requirements and management systems are addressed explicitly in land tenure reform. This implies that appropriate land reform should encompass the strength of communal tenure in its ability, through how it is enacted, to support a large number of people with a mixed subsistence economy which has livestock production as its productive and cultural core. Finally, these principles are not only relevant to the former communal area of Damaraland, but also to other areas of southern and central Namibia with similar productive characteristics.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Field data from the study farms

#### 1. Blaauport (=Nu-!nabes) and Blaauport-pos (Dimab)

Like many of the old commercial farms in Damaraland, Blaauport is named after its previous European owner, Mr Andries Blaau. In the redistribution of these farms Blaauport was allocated to three brothers of a Nama/Damara-speaking family, Johannes, Gottard and Wilfred. Prior to this in 1971, this family from the old Fransfontein Reserve had moved their livestock to new State-funded water installations at Springbokvlakte in the south of the Reserve near Khorixas. Due to overcrowding at Springbokvlakte, however, these brothers had actively been seeking an appropriate farm on which to have more exclusive rights for farming their livestock. After observing Blaauport Farm and hearing that no one had yet laid claim to it since the departure of Andries Blaau, they lodged their application to the appropriate Authorities at Khorixas (then Welwitschia) for permission to occupy the farm, and eventually moved there in November 1972.

At first the old farmhouse was divided between Gottard and Wilfred and their families, with Johannes building a separate house for his family some distance away. When Wilfred died in 1986 his wife Alfreda built a separate house approximately 150m away from the farmhouse where she currently lives with her new partner. Today the family's livestock wealth is spread relatively widely throughout southern Kunene Region. Apart from Blaauport the family retains official rights to at least the following farms: Johannes, who became a very wealthy herder, bought the commercial farm of Blydskap near Kamangab in Outjo District in 1992; Evelina, Gottard's sister, has cattle at Spitzkop pos near Fransfontein where they are herded by a labourer; Gottard's niece, Carolina and her husband who works as an electrician in Khorixas, have livestock at Moria Farm east of the Grootberg area; and Gottard and Anna-Marie's second and fourth living sons have livestock at Welkom Farm.

#### *Current occupiers and their herds*

There are three households at Blaauport and one at Blaauport-pos:

1. The old farmhouse is inhabited by Gottard, his wife Anna-Marie, and a labourer Johannes, the 21-year-old nephew of Gottard who has been responsible for the day to day care of Gottard's livestock for 15 months. Various grand-children also spend periods of time in the care of Anna-Marie: in October 1995, the three-year-old daughter of Anna-Marie and Gottard's second living son, the five-year-old daughter of their fourth son, and the one-year-old great-grand-son of Gottard's sister, were all staying at Blaauport. Gottard and Anna-Marie consider themselves to have exclusive rights, or rights of 'ownership', to the farmhouse. 6

Gottard has 99 cattle, roughly 200 goats, and 4 horses.

2. Alfreda, the 68 year old widow of Wilfred, is currently living with her new partner, Oscar, and her nephew, Abraham, who is responsible for her's and Oscar's livestock. In May 1995 they were also paying a 25-year-old Herero labourer from Opuwo, to assist with herding. He disappeared in July, however, following a reportedly drunken brawl involving people at the neighbouring farm of Malansrust, and owing both Alfreda and Abraham money. 3

In May 1995, Alfreda and Oscar, together with Alfreda's four youngest children, had 164 goats of which 21 were pregnant and 59 were lambs. Oscar also had 7 cattle, of which 3 were adult cows, 2 were males and 2 were female calves. These are herded with Gottard's cattle. They also had 3 donkeys and kept chickens. In addition, Alfreda's elder children have herds elsewhere in Damaraland. Alfreda's fourth child, Paulina, for example, who works at Welwitschia Junior School hostel in Khorixas, keeps goats at her sister-in-law's mother's farm (Anker in north-east Damaraland) where her elder brother works as herder.

3. The third household consists of a family of relatively recent arrivals to Blaauport itself, although the female side of the family has long lived at Blaauport-pos (Dimab) and are considered to be part of the Däureb<sup>1</sup> Damara 'nation' that originally inhabited this area. It is these people that know the old Damara name of =Nu-!nabes for the area currently delimited

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<sup>1</sup>After the Damara name of Däures for the Brandberg.



as Blaauport Farm. The core of the household are Alwina Tanises (né !Gaoses) and her current partner Gabriel Somaeb. Various close relatives also reside here on a temporary to semi-permanent basis. Currently these include Alwina's fifth daughter Magrietha, previously a domestic-worker in Walvis Bay, and her two pre-school age children.

Alwina and Gabriel have a small herd of goats and keep chickens.

4. Alwina's mother and several siblings continue to reside at Blaauport-pos (Dimab).

#### *Additional sources of income and subsistence*

All three households separately cultivate small gardens, irrigated mainly by hand and producing vegetables for home consumption. A wide range of vegetable crops was observed in these gardens, including maize, carrots, water-melons, pumpkins, tomatoes, onions, chilies, cabbages, beetroot and pomegranates. The indigenous succulent plant *Hoodia* sp. cf. *currori* (!khobas), whose stems are eaten with relish as a snack food, is also planted in these gardens.

Dietary surveys were conducted with households at Blaauport in both May and October 1995, using 24-hour dietary recall techniques and recording intended food consumption for the day of the survey. These indicated that the bulk of the diet consisted of maize with goat or cow's milk, either fresh or curdled. Goat meat is eaten occasionally. Gathered plant foods eaten during the days of these surveys included the roasted seeds of *Monsonia umbellata* (\*khari bosui) and the fruits of *Euclea pseudebenus* (tsawib), *Cordia* sp. cf. *gharaf* (!khos), and *Salvadora persica* (xoris). Wild fruits such as these were reported as often eaten by the labourers Johannes and Benjamin when in the field. The leaves and stems of *Myrothamnus flabellifolius* (!khootorotorosen) was also consumed as tea by Johannes and Benjamin and by Alwina's household. In addition, both Alfreda's and Alwina's households make beer from grass seeds, largely *Stipagrostis* spp. (sâu.n), gathered from harvester ant nests. This may be consumed as a nutritious supplementary food. Alwina also distills liquor (bāuga) from this beer which she sells locally.

#### *Infrastructure*

##### *Water points*

There are two boreholes at Blaauport and one at Blaauport-pos. At Blaauport the one that is depended on by the farmers and their livestock has a wind-pump which is maintained by Water Affairs. If there is a problem with this pump they call the regional Water Affairs' office in Khorixas from Morewag Farm, approximately 40kms east of Blaauport. Prior to the redistribution of Blaauport, the second borehole had a diesel-engine powered pump. Today this water point is only used in emergencies at which time water is drawn by bucket. There is a separate water supply at Blaauport-pos.

##### *Fences*

Blaauport is divided into 3 camps. Both the internal and perimeter fences are repaired by the inhabitants of Blaauport, primarily the labourers. Johannes who works for Gottard maintains that the camps are important for separating young and old cattle to prevent the calves from taking all the milk. Elephant damage is reported to be the main cause of the disrepair of both internal and perimeter fences.

#### *Migration history for Blaauport*

##### Gottard and Anna-Marie from Fransfontein Reserve:

###### i. 1971

moved to Springbokvlakte in the south of Fransfontein Reserve following the installation of State-funded water points to open up grazing and settlement opportunities in this previously sparsely populated area. After hearing that these water points were operational, they took the initiative to move themselves and, because it was on land that had remained communal throughout the commercialisation of the Damaraland area, they did not have to ask permission from the Government authorities to move;

###### ii. November 1972

took up residence at Blaauport Farm after making the relevant applications to the Regional Authorities;



iii. 1980

their cattle were moved through a Government drought-relief scheme to the eastern wetter areas (described as Tsumeb area) where they were taken care of by government labourers. They stayed in this area for approximately one year, during which time only one head of Gottard's cattle died;

iv. 1982

the cattle were retrieved from Tsumeb area and taken by Gottard to Kromgat Farm near Fransfontein. This move was negotiated informally between Gottard and his nephew who had habitation rights to this farm. Gottard's herd was then herded with his nephew's cattle while Gottard and Anna-Marie remained at Blaauport with their goats. No monetary payment was made by Gottard in exchange for the right to 'rent' access to grazing resources at Kromgat, but his nephew would have benefitted from effective ownership over products such as milk from Gottard's cattle during this time;

v. 1984

Gottard's cattle were returned to Blaauport after the above-average rains of 1984;

vi. ca. 1987

after two years of below-average rainfall, Gottard and Anna-Marie moved to Rockeys pos on Rockeys Farm with both their cattle and their goats. This pos was uninhabited due to problems with water availability and had previously been inhabited by Gottard's nephew prior to his move to Kromgat Farm (see above) following negotiations with the people already farming there. Both of these reasons enabled Gottard and Anna-Marie to move relatively easily to Rockeys Pos. As Gottard was working in Khorixas at this time, Anna-Marie was responsible for the bulk of the herding. To get around the problems of water availability at Rockeys pos, the larger cattle and goats would be taken to the Rockeys water point approximately 3kms away for water. Water for the young animals and the household was collected from here on foot. While they were based at Rockeys pos, Gottard and Anna-Marie locked the farmhouse at Blaauport in an effort to prevent anyone from moving in. Even so, they experienced the loss of considerable amounts of building material from the house, particularly corrugated iron from the roof;

vii. ca. 1990

Gottard and Anna-Marie returned with their livestock to Blaauport where they remained for the following 3-4 years;

viii. November-December 1994

when, in late 1994, it appeared that the rains would fail in the 1994/1995 season, Gottard organised the movement of his and his niece's (Carolina) cattle to Goedgenoeg Farm, south of Blaauport. This farm is not permanently occupied so was a focus for migration by farmers based further north. When they arrived at Goedgenoeg there were already two households there, belonging to a Herero farmer and to a Damara farmer who had moved from Olifantspad near Fransfontein. Gottard's nephew, Johannes, went with the cattle and was responsible for all herding tasks;

ix. March 1995

the cattle were returned by Johannes to Blaauport following the exceptionally good rains of early 1995. At present the availability of grazing and browse in the area is considered extremely good and Gottard has no plans for the movement of his livestock in the foreseeable future.

#### Johannes, Gottard's brother:

i. November 1972

moved from Fransfontein Reserve to Blaauport Farm;

ii. 1980-1992

it is likely that Johannes moved his livestock in a manner similar to that described for Gottard Hendriks, but as Johannes was unavailable for interview it has not been possible to reconstruct in detail this part of his migration history;

iii. 1992

purchased the commercial farm Blydskap from its previous Afrikaans owner.

#### Carolina, Gottard's niece:

Carolina's cattle are normally farmed at Moria Farm, east of the Grodberg. She employs Benjamin ||Hoabeb, a 38-year-old labourer originally from Nooidam near Windhoek, as a cattle-herder and he was responsible for all movements of her cattle following the drought years of



the early 1990s. In May 1995 Carolina had 21 cattle with Gottard's herd, and a substantial goat herd which remained at Moria Farm. In addition, Benjamin, her labourer, owned several sheep and 1 cow:

i. November-December 1994

in response to the lack of grazing in the Grootberg area Carolina's cattle were moved with Gottard's to Goedgenoeg Farm, south of Blaauport:

ii. March 1995

Carolina's cattle accompanied Gottard's in their return to Blaauport Farm, following the good rains of early 1995. As she is related to Gottard, her use of grazing on 'his' farm was informally negotiated:

iii. July 1995

Benjamin returned with the cattle to Moria Farm.

### Wilfred (dec'd) and Alfreda:

i. pre-1972

moved with their livestock from Outjo area to Kaokokroon Farm, west of Khorixas, after applying to the Regional Authorities for a place to farm their livestock. During this time Wilfred was working as a brick-maker in Khorixas and Alfreda stayed at the farm:

ii. 1972

because many people from Khorixas moved to Kaokokroon in the initial stages of implementation of the Odendaal plan, they joined Wilfred's brothers in the move to Blaauport Farm. Here they were mainly small-stock farmers with a few cattle which were herded with Gottard's. From 1972 Wilfred and Alfreda remained at Blaauport with their small stock until his death in 1986, following which she was joined by her current partner Oscar, and her nephew Abraham. Oscar's few cattle (see above) are herded with Gottard's larger herd so have probably followed the pattern of movement described above.

### 3. Alwina Tanises (né !Gaoses):

i. ca. 1940s (?)

Alwina's family moved from Nu-!nabes area (i.e. Blaauport Farm) to the Ugab (!U-gab) River in the north-west corner of the Okombahe Reserve. Alwina grew up in this area and married her husband there. Together they had large numbers of livestock, including cattle.

ii. 1980

After her husband died in the late 1970s their cattle were herded by her husband's brother, who is described as not the most conscientious of herders. Some time after her husband's death they consequently suffered severe stock theft, reportedly by Herero-speaking herders from Omatjette in the old neighbouring Reserve of Otjohorongo. She reported this incident to the police in Uis, and to the traditional councillors, both of whom declared they could do nothing because the cattle were unmarked and could not be officially identified as hers. This event led to her leaving the Ugab and joining her mother and the rest of her family who, in 1974, had moved to Blaauport pos. Her mother's move from the Ugab had been stimulated by the opportunity, created by the redistribution of land, to return to her old home area. An added incentive for this move was the increased pressure on resources at the Ugab caused by the influx of the Aukeigas community in 1956, when their original home area of 'khaos' was appropriated as Daan Viljoen Game Park:

iii. 1992

Alwina moved with her own dependants to Malansrust-pos following personal divisions between her and her siblings at Blaauport-pos:

iv. May 1995

due to problems with water supply at Malansrust-pos, Alwina moved with her dependants to Blaauport, following informal negotiations with Gottard at the old farmhouse.

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<sup>19</sup>Named after the abundant *Euphorbia virosa* in this area.



## 2. Malansrust (Nerida) and Malansrust-pos

Malansrust was again named after its owner in its days as a privately owned farm. Following Odendaal it was first allocated to an appointee within the traditional leadership in Khorixas and the inhabitant of the old commercial farmhouse. Following his death the farmhouse was inherited by his family and is now considered the property of his nephew, Gottlieb, a lorry-driver for Water Affairs in Khorixas. More recent arrivals include three separate households related by kin, and the household of a farmer who worked as a labourer under the old European farmer. Towards the end of 1994 Malansrust was also the temporary recipient of a household from a farm to the south. Malansrust-pos is located approximately 6kms to the east of the Malansrust farm settlement, and has been inhabited since 1978 by primarily one couple.

### *Current occupiers and their herds*

There are currently six separate households clustered around the old commercial farmhouse at Malansrust, and one household at Malansrust-pos:

1. The old farmhouse has been occupied since 1989 by Willem Janse, a Nama-Damara labourer working for Gottlieb. Willem previously lived in Windhoek. As well as Gottlieb's livestock, he also herds his brother's, Joseph, a teacher from Fransfontein who is currently studying in Cape Town and who is married to Gottlieb's daughter. Willem is paid N\$80/month by his brother.

Gottlieb, having suffered stock losses during the early 1990s' drought, now owns 8 cattle, 70 goats, 11 pigs, 20 sheep and 5 chickens. Joseph Janse has 5 cattle and 33 goats. Willem himself is the proud owner of 1 chicken.

2. Eating separately but employed to assist with the herding of Gottlieb's and Joseph's livestock is an Angolan labourer who has been here for 4 months and will probably return to Angola next year. He is paid N\$150/month.

3. Since 1975, Mr Albert Tsuseb and his dependents have had occupation rights to Malansrust. Mr Tsuseb was born at Gurub Farm (/Gurub) near the !Kuseb River and spent a large portion of his working life as a farm labourer at Callvania Farm<sup>20</sup> in the same area. In 1974 he went to Khorixas on a social visit to his wife Alwina né !Garoëb's family. During this visit he asked the traditional leadership where he could go and establish himself as a farmer. As stated above, Malansrust had already been allocated to a representative of the traditional leadership who suggested that Mr Tsuseb also farm there. Mr Tsuseb readily returned to Callvania to resign from his job and fetch his livestock. These were in the order of 50 cattle, over 100 goats, 9 donkeys and 6 horses when he moved to Malansrust. Soon after this move to Malansrust, Mr Tsuseb began work as a kitchen-worker at Braunfels Agriculture College, south-east of Khorixas, leaving his wife and children to look after the livestock at Malansrust. He is now retired and currently lives at Malansrust with his grand-daughter, here since November 1994, and her three-year-old son, his sister's daughter, here for two years, and her three-year-old daughter, and a labourer from Khorixas, here for 1 year. The two young women do not receive payment for their help with herding and household tasks, while the male labourer is paid N\$60/month.

Due to recent drought losses, Mr Tsuseb now has only 8 cattle, 45 goats, 2 donkeys, one horse, and several chickens. His children have the odd animal herded as part of this herd.

4. Albert Tsuseb's son, Ismael, has his own house at Malansrust, although he is currently seeking work in Swakopmund. He has no cattle or goats but keeps doves and several donkeys.

5. Since 1987, Albert Tsuseb's cousin Simon (their mothers were sisters), and his wife Martha, have also farmed at Malansrust. Simon was born in Kuri-gates near the !Kuseb River, and grew up at Okamahoro Farm, north of the Swakop River between Okahandja and Otjimbingwe, and where his uncle was working. In 1957, when his uncle died, Simon went to Okahandja to look for work and soon found a job with the Agra Cooperative where he continued to work for 32 years. He was allocated a farm by the Okahandja Municipal Authorities in 1972, who recorded his total livestock ownership as 90 goats, 12 cattle, and 5 donkeys of which 4 were female and 1 was male<sup>21</sup>. Since then, he has farmed on various farms (described below) until his move to

<sup>20</sup>Also called /Hunimas after the Damara>Nama name '/hunib' for the shepherd's tree *Boscia albitrunca*.

<sup>21</sup>Data recorded from Mr Tsuseb's original invoice (dated 31-8-72) for the Government-funded movement of livestock by rail to the newly created Bantustan of Damaraland.



Malansrust in 1987. He has also continued to work in Okahandja for most of this time, with his job at Agra followed by work with Meatco and then gardening for the Inandawa School. He has lived permanently at Malansrust only since 1994 when he retired from formal employment. He and Martha, previously a domestic worker in Windhoek, were married in 1979 at the neighbouring farm of Bankfontein. Simon owns a Datsun 1300 bakkie which he uses when looking for good grazing areas in drought years.

They currently have approximately 70 goats (including lambs), 21 cattle, 4 donkeys, and chickens.

6. In 1966, Johannes ||Gaseb began work at Malansrust as a lorry driver for Mr Malan. He left Malansrust when his employment ceased and Mr Malan moved, and returned in 1994 with his wife and two sons. 4

He has a small herd of only 19 goats (including lambs), plus 3 donkeys and 7 chickens.

7. Johannes /Awarab from Sesfontein, and his wife Patrina ||Hoës from Uis, are the sole resident farmers at Malansrust-pos. They moved here in 1978 after applying for a government permit for a farm on which to herd the livestock in which he had invested his wages from working as a builder in Sesfontein and then Khorixas. They are currently looking after two of Patriline's great grand-children. 4

They have 22 goats, 4 donkeys and several chickens.

#### *Additional sources of subsistence and income*

The households at Malansrust all cultivate vegetables in a communal garden near the old commercial farmhouse, while at Malansrust-pos Johannes and Patriline have their own separate garden. The real potential of elephant damage at both gardens is a constraint on investment in these gardens.

Additional income generating activities include the carving of boxes from the wood of *Commiphora glaucescens* (/hub) by Albert Tsuseb which he sells for ±N\$6/box, and the distilling of liquor (bauga) from wild *Stipagrostis* spp. grass seeds (sâu.n) by Johannes ||Gaseb and his wife, which they sell locally.

Simon and Albert Tsuseb, and Johannes ||Gaseb at Malansrust-pos, receive state pensions.

#### *Infrastructure*

##### *Water points*

There is one borehole at Malansrust from which water is pumped by a diesel-engine powered pump. The diesel for the pump is provided by the Dept. of Water Affairs but has to be fetched from Khorixas by the farmers themselves. This task is split between the Tsusebs and Gottlieb, all of whom have cars, and a 200l drum is collected roughly once every 2-3 months. Recently the pump broke and all the inhabitants of Malansrust, together with the livestock, had to rely for two months on water provided by a small spring in the Aba-Huab River close to the farm settlement. This was filled with large rocks and debris in the floods following the rains of early 1995 and had to be cleared by hand, mainly the task of Willem Janse, Gottlieb's labourer. The pump has now been fixed and the farm again has a strong water supply.

Malansrust-pos has a separate borehole with water drawn by a wind-pump.

##### *Fences*

There are two main camps at Malansrust and one small one which is sometimes used for herding goats. Albert Tsuseb reported that the farmers at Malansrust communicate with each other regarded the grazing of different camps, and that the camps form the basis for simple grazing rotations. Maintenance of the fences is the joint responsibility of all the farmers at Malansrust, but many remain in disrepair, largely due to elephant damage.



### Migration history for Malansrust

#### Gottlieb's cattle:

i. pre-1989

Gottlieb moved his cattle to Potgietersrus at Horison Farm north-east of Khorixas. His goats remained at Malansrust in the care of his employee Willem Janse who, because all the other farmers had moved away with their livestock, was the sole inhabitant of Malansrust during this time:

ii. 1994

Gottlieb returned his cattle to Malansrust.

#### Albert Tsuseb and dependants:

i. 1975

Albert Tsuseb was given permission to farm at Malansrust:

ii. 1983

due to the early 1980s' drought, Mr Tsuseb made arrangements for his cattle and goats to be moved to Duineveld Farm, south of Malansrust. This move was on the advice of the Regional agricultural authorities who reportedly distributed fodder supplements there. Mr Tsuseb's daughter accompanied the livestock while he and his wife remained at Braunfels Agricultural College, where he was in employment. During this move, no one from his family remained at Malansrust, but labourers staying in the old commercial farmhouse ensured that his place at the farm was not occupied in his absence:

iii. 1984

the Tsuseb family returned their livestock to Malansrust following the good rainy season of 1984:

iv. 1988

their livestock were moved to Potgietersrus in what appears to have been a joint management decision for the livestock of Gottlieb, Albert Tsuseb and Simon Tsuseb. Albert describes how they were taken by Government Agricultural Extension Officers to search for good grazing areas, following which they negotiated with the farmer at Potgietersrus, who agreed to their use of grazing on 'his' farm. During this time there was again no one from his family at Malansrust:

v. 1991

returned the livestock to Malansrust:

vi. 1992

Albert organised the movement of his livestock to Swartdam, a farm-post of Gainatseb Farm on the main Khorixas-Outjo road. He observed the good grazing there when travelling on this road so requested the Nama occupants for permission to herd his livestock at this farm. It seems that at first they were concerned that there would be too many livestock but eventually agreed and Albert's livestock were herded there for two years by his children:

vii. March 1994

Albert's livestock were returned to Malansrust and will remain here until below-average rainfall makes it necessary to move again.

#### Simon and Martha Tsuseb:

i. 1972

Simon Tsuseb applied for a farm in Damaraland through the Okahandja Municipal Authorities in 1972 and was given a permit for Granietkop Farm, directly south of Malansrust. He requested to go to Granietkop after having observed it when looking for an appropriate farm for his livestock. His livestock remained here for 4 years, during which time they were herded by his mother's sisters with assistance from two boys from the family. When these boys went to school, the old women could no longer cope with all the herding and household tasks and so Simon had to move his livestock even though the grazing remained good at Granietkop:

ii. 1976

due to the effective shortage of labour for herding at Granietkop, Simon transferred his livestock to an adjacent farm, Bankfontein, where his brother, Martin Tsuseb, was farming. The livestock remained in Martin's care until 1987 when Simon moved to Malansrust:



iii. 1981

in response to the early 1980s' drought. Simon's livestock were moved with his brother's herd east to farms in Gobabis District such as Blouperd and Vergenoeg. This move was orchestrated by the Regional Agricultural Authorities to try and prevent livestock losses in the west. It is reported that the livestock would be spread between different farms to spread the risk of loss:

iv. ca. 1984

Simon and Martin Tsuseb's livestock returned to Bankfontein:

v. 1987

Simon and Martha moved to Malansrust where Simon's cousin Albert was already farming. As Simon was still working at Okahandja, Martha would look after the livestock during the week with assistance from a male labourer already inhabiting Malansrust:

vi. 1988

Simon and Martha decided that their livestock should move with Gottlieb's and Albert's to Potgietersrus due to drought-induced local grazing shortages. The livestock remained there until the end of 1990:

vii. January 1991

they returned with their livestock to farm at Malansrust:

viii. 1993

due to drought in the early 1990s, they moved their livestock to /Haraxam-pos<sup>22</sup> between Fransfontein and Gainatseb Farm. Before this move they actively went to look for places with good grazing and, after negotiating with the people already at /Haraxam-pos, applied to the Ministry of Agriculture at Khorixas for a permit to move their livestock. It seems that the inhabitants of /Haraxam-pos, with whom they had had no prior contact, were at first reluctant to have more livestock on their farm and agreed to this move on condition that it didn't involve 'too many' animals. A labourer was employed to go with and herd the livestock:

ix. March-April 1994

the livestock was returned to Malansrust:

x. January 1995

due to the lack of good grazing at Malansrust, and after negotiating with farmers at Goedgevind Farm to the south, Simon and Martha took their livestock to this farm. While here they stayed away from the existing farm settlement, going into the settlement only for their and their herd's water needs:

xi. March 1995

following the good rains of early 1995, Martha and Simon returned to Malansrust. At present they are not planning to move again because the grazing remains plentiful at Malansrust. If and when this area enters another drought period, however, they will certainly endeavour to move with their livestock to farms with better grazing resources.

#### Johannes //Gaseb

i. early 1970s

from being in paid employment as a lorry driver for Mr Malan, the commercial farmer at Malansrust, Johannes moved to Khorixas where he worked as a labourer for the Dept. of Water Affairs:

ii. 1987

Johannes moved with his dependants to Blaaukrans Farm east of Khorixas where his cousin (his father's brother's son) was farming:

iii. 1994

due to the early 1990s drought, Johannes moved to Malansrust.

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<sup>22</sup>Judging by the description of its location, this is probably on Naacham Farm to the east of Fransfontein, although there is also a farming post called Narachaampos in the west of the old Fransfontein Reserve.

#### Wilhemina Dagü Seibes

In 1994 Malansrust was the recipient of a family, headed by Wilhemina Dagü Seibes, from Goedgevind Farm south-east of Malansrust. Wilhemina negotiated informally with Mr Albert Tsuseb for permission to graze her livestock here, and moved here with her eldest daughter, a daughter-in-law, and a great, great, grand-daughter. She is not related to anyone at Malansrust but is known to have inhabited Blaauport-pos 'a long time ago' and so knows the area. She was originally an inhabitant of Otjimbingwe (Atsâs). In May 1995 she had at Malansrust 16 cattle, 26 goats, 6 donkeys, 4 horses, 30 chickens and 26 doves.

- i. November 1994  
Wilhemina left Goedgevind and moved to Malansrust;

- ii. June 1995  
she returned to Goedgevind.

#### Johannes /Awarab and Patrine //Hoes at Malansrust-pos:

- i. 1978  
moved to Malansrust-pos with a government permit from Khorixas where Johannes had been working since 1972. Have remained here ever since.

#### Solomon:

- i. ca. 1990  
Solomon, from Owambo, moved to Malansrust-pos with his livestock after discussing the possibility of using the grazing there with Johannes /Awarab;
- ii. ca. 1993  
he left Malansrust-pos, reportedly to work at Twyfelfontein Farm, possibly at the Aba-Huab rest-camp.

#### Alwina Tanises (né !Gaoses) (see notes above on migration for Blaauport Farm):

- i. 1992  
moved to Malansrust-pos with her livestock and dependants, following family differences at Blaauport-pos;
- ii. May 1995  
due to problems with water availability at Malansrust-pos, moved to the farm settlement at Blaauport.

### **3. Bankfontein and Bankfontein-pos's 1 and 2**

The pattern of settlement at Bankfontein Farm is slightly unusual, with only one household currently based at the old commercial farmhouse while the larger farm settlement has grown around one of the two farm-posts. This is due to problems with water supply at Bankfontein itself, although water availability at the more densely populated farm-post is also severely affected during drought years.

In 1974, Mr Martin Tsuseb, the elder brother of Simon Tsuseb and the cousin of Albert Tsuseb at Malansrust Farm, was given permission to farm at Bankfontein Farm. Martin's family were originally from the Khomas Hochland (/Khomas) reaches of the !Kuseb River<sup>23</sup>, his parents later working for commercial farmers in this area. Martin also worked a farm labourer at Ravenberg west and Ravenberg east Farms near Gross Barmen in Okavango District. One of his stated reasons for applying for a farm in the Bantustan of Damaraland was because he was allowed to keep a maximum of only five cattle as a labourer on these farms. Before submitting his application for a farm he drove with his brother Simon to look around the farms that were available in the area near the Brandberg up to the Aba-Huab River catchment. By this time the farms further east in the Khorixas area had already been allocated to communal farmers. Martin owned cattle, goats, donkeys and horses when he moved to Bankfontein, most of which he bought at Gross Barmen with the exception of his goats which he inherited from his mother.

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<sup>23</sup>At a place known as !Uri-!uwib.



Martin was thus the first inhabitant of the old commercial farmhouse. He was then joined by Moses, the brother of Martin's wife, who also still farms at Bankfontein. Following problems with water availability at Bankfontein, Martin moved to Bankfontein-pos 1, where he still farms. Other farmers that arrived later in the 1970s farm at Bankfontein-pos 2.

#### *Current occupiers and their herds*

At present, there is one household at the old commercial farmhouse, one at Bankfontein-pos 1, and four at Bankfontein-pos 2.

#### *Bankfontein farmhouse*

1. Currently residing here is a 22-year-old labourer called Dawid Taku from Osona near Okahandja. He works as a herder for his uncle, Moses, the brother-in-law of the first communal farmer at Bankfontein, Martin Tsuseb. Moses is an ambulance driver who now works in Khorixas having previously worked in Okahandja. He comes by car to the farm on most weekends. Dawid has always lived with his aunt and uncle and is currently paid N\$60/month as well as food rations to look after Moses' livestock.

At present Moses has 26 goats with 14 lambs, 3 donkeys and 23 chickens at Bankfontein. He and Dawid also have a small herd of cattle at Swartdam on Gainatseb Farm (see below).

#### *Bankfontein-pos 1*

2. Having been the first communal farmer at Bankfontein, and former inhabitant of the commercial farmhouse, Martin Tsuseb now lives at Bankfontein-pos 1 with his wife, his mother-in-law and his son. His herds consist of 22 cattle, roughly 40 old and 40 juvenile goats, 2 donkeys, 1 horse, 1 mule and several chickens. One of his cows and 2 of his goats now belong to his niece as a wedding gift for her recent marriage, and these, together with her husband's 3 cattle and 20 goats, are herded with Martin's livestock.

#### *Bankfontein-pos 2*

3. Johanna and Stephanus Helongi (Damara- and Owambo-speaking Namibians respectively), together with her father, Simon, and her sister-in-law, Hendriede, approached Martin Tsuseb in 1976 with a view to moving to Bankfontein from the nearby Groenpor Farm. Following discussion, they were 'given' Bankfontein-pos 2 and moved here in the same year establishing separate households at Bankfontein-pos 2 (see below). Apart from herself and her husband, who is a roadworker and spends a considerable time away, she also prepares food for three elderly 'grandfathers': her father, who left Okonjera in Owambo as a young man and worked as a contract labourer on farms between Otavi and Outjo; her uncle Zagaria Somaeb from Groenpor Farm where she and her husband first moved to when they started farming in Damaraland; and Zagaria's brother Max who has lived here for four years and previously worked as a builder in Kamanjab before farming at Anker. She is also currently caring for three of her brother's children and one small child of her own.

They have 46 goats with 36 young, 4 donkeys and 30 chickens.

The cattle belonging to people at Bankfontein-pos 2 are herded in an aggregate herd of roughly 90 animals.

4. Philippus Seibeb, an uncle of Johanna's, moved here in 1982 with his partner (now deceased) when he retired from work on the commercial farm of Otjidabi in Kamanjab area. He had 9 cattle when he left Otjidabi, which the farm-owners were complaining were too many to keep there. The government authorities directed him to Bankfontein as 'his family's farm'. Philippus grew up on Katjikanero Farm near Kamanjab where his family worked as labourers. He now lives on his own and cooks for himself, and is occasionally visited by his children who are in Khorixas.

Philippus has 7 cattle which are herded in the aggregate herd at Bankfontein-pos 2 (see above), 20 goats, purchased with his pension, and 15 lambs, 4 donkeys and 6 chickens.

5. Hendriede Seibes (né Hoeses) is married to Philippus Seibeb's nephew, and moved to Bankfontein-pos 2 in 1976 with Johanna and Stephanus Helongi. At present her 25-year-old son, Usiel Hoeses, and the 15-year-old brother of Usiel's girlfriend, Emmanuel Somaeb, stay with Hendriede and help with herding tasks.

She has 42 goats with 40 young, 3 donkeys, 36 chickens and many doves.



### *Alternative sources of subsistence and income*

Each of the three settlement locations at Bankfontein has a garden, although the garden at Bankfontein-pos 2 is defunct at present due to water shortages. Both water availability and elephant damage are major constraints to productivity at this farm. Martin Tsuseb is a pensioner and the four elderly men at Bankfontein-pos 2 are pensioners, while Moses and Stephanus are civil servants. Dawid sells semi-precious stones collected from the farm.

### *Infrastructure*

#### *Water points*

Bankfontein itself has 4 boreholes but three are defunct. A wind-pump draws water from the remaining operational borehole. Each of the farm-posts, referred to here as Bankfontein-pos 1 and 2, has a borehole with water drawn by a wind-pump. Bankfontein-pos 2, however, experiences considerable problems with water supply in times of drought, when farmers frequently have to water their livestock at the neighbouring farm of Rietkuil, several kilometres away.

#### *Fences*

There are 3 camps around the main farmhouse, and one large camp at each of the two farm-posts. The fences are fixed by the farmers themselves.

### *Migration history for Bankfontein*

#### Martin Tsuseb:

##### *i. 1974*

Martin moved into the Bankfontein farmhouse, following his resignation from labouring work at the Ravenberg Farms in Okahandja District:

##### *ii. 1981*

Martin's cattle were moved with his brother Simon's to Gobabis District due to the early 1980s' drought (see notes above for Malansrust Farm):

##### *iii. ca. 1984*

Martin's cattle returned to Bankfontein:

##### *iv. ca. 1990*

Martin moved his household and livestock to Bankfontein-pos 1 due to problems with water availability at the Bankfontein farmhouse.

##### *v. 1994*

due to the drought year's of the early 1990s Martin moved his cattle to Arbeid Adel Farm to the south-east of Bankfontein. He could see that there was good grazing there so he negotiated with the farmers (who were also originally from /Khomas area) to have access to it:

##### *vi. ca. March 1995*

the cattle returned to Bankfontein-pos.

#### Moses:

##### *ca. 1985-1990*

following discussions with Martin Tsuseb, who is related by kin to Moses' wife, Moses arranged for his livestock to be farmed at Bankfontein. He subsequently moved his livestock to Bankfontein-pos 2 where his nephew Dawid Taku helped him with herding tasks:

##### *ca. 1990-present*

Moses moved his livestock to the old Bankfontein farmhouse due to problems with water availability at Bankfontein-pos 2. Although the water situation at Bankfontein-pos 2 was worse, Bankfontein had its own problems due to the dam being broken, and this had already caused Martin Tsuseb to move to Bankfontein-pos 1:

##### *May 1995*

Moses arranged for his cattle to move to Swaartdam, a farm-post of Gainatseb Farm, because two cows were stolen last year, reportedly by an inhabitant of a neighbouring farm who tried



to sell them at a livestock auction at Onverwag on the Ugab River. They were recognised by Stephanus Helongi from Bankfontein-pos 2 and, after reporting the incident to the police, one was retrieved and the 16 remaining cattle, together with 5 cattle belonging to his nephew Dawid, were moved to Swartdam. Swartdam is where Moses' son Daniel, who is a civil servant in Khorixas, has farmed for the last six years, building on kinship-ties with family already there. Moses employs a labourer from Khorixas to work with the cattle at Swartdam. His goats and other livestock remain at Bankfontein in the care of his nephew, Dawid Taku.

Johanna and Stephanus Helongi, and the movements of the aggregate cattle herd from Bankfontein-pos 2:

i. 1975

Johanna and Stephanus moved, with their cattle and goats, to Groenport Farm (=Groenvlei?) east of Bankfontein, where her uncle Zagaria Somaeb (her mother's brother) had lived since 1972. Before they began farming in Damaraland, Johanna was a domestic-worker on a farm in Outjo District known as /Gorab. The commercial farmers for whom they were working assisted them in their move by taking them to Khorixas and helping them apply to the relevant authorities. On seeing that Johanna's uncle, a farm-worker from Kamanjab area, had already received permission to farm at Groenpor, they were told they should move there. Previous to this, Johanna had never met her uncle. There were no other households farming at Groenpor at this time:

ii. 1976

Johanna and Stephanus sought permission from Martin Tsuseb to move to Bankfontein because the rocky ground at Groenpor was unsuitable for livestock farming. After receiving permission to move from the appropriate government authorities, they became the first communal farmers to be based at Bankfontein-pos 2.

iii. ca. early 1980s

during the early 1980s' drought, their cattle were taken by government labourers to farms in Gobabis area. This was the first time their livestock were moved from Bankfontein since they started farming there:

iv. ca. 1984

cattle returned to Bankfontein-pos 2:

v. 1989

again due to drought-induced lack of grazing, they organised for Stephanus' brother to take the cattle of Bankfontein-pos 2 to Oas (/Oas) Farm north of Bankfontein. This move was arranged informally through an Owambo farmer at Oas who is known to Stephanus. Johanna and Stephanus remained at Bankfontein-pos 2 to look after the goats:

vi. 1991

the cattle were returned to Bankfontein-pos 2:

vii. 1994

they moved the cattle of Bankfontein-pos 2 to Versteendewoud Farm where the government was distributing drought fodder and food aid. They remained here for roughly 4 months:

viii. late 1994

returned to Bankfontein-pos 2.

Hendriede Seibes

Hendriede accompanied Johanna and Stephanus in their move to Groenport and from Groenport to Bankfontein-pos 2, and in later years her cattle have been herded with theirs. Her migration history will therefore not be related separately here.

#### 4. Rietkuil (!Haoberos<sup>24</sup>) and Rietkuil-pos

After Odendaal, the main Rietkuil Farm was allocated to three sisters of the !Nawases family from Otjikondo settlement in Outjo district, whose movement to Rietkuil in 1972 was assisted by government-funded transport. They were the first communal farmer inhabitants of the old

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<sup>24</sup> '!Hao' reportedly refers to the significance of social information exchange around the evening cooking fire.

commercial farmhouse at Rietkuil. A fourth sister, Justine Haraés (né !Nawases), now lives in the old farmhouse, and she and a daughter of one of the original !Nawases sisters are the only remaining members of this first family of communal farmers at Rietkuil. Justine is also originally from Otjikondo where she was a domestic worker for a white household. Together with her husband, a builder, she moved to Fransfontein and then to Khorixas, where she again entered employment as a domestic worker. Following her husband's death in 1981, she applied to the Regional Authorities in Khorixas for permission to join her sisters at Rietkuil, where she arrived in 1982. In recent years, as her elder sisters died and family children departed for school, she encouraged the movement to Rietkuil of additional farmers, including Michael, head of the second main household at Rietkuil.

Rietkuil-pos, several kilometres to the north of Rietkuil itself, has been occupied by Emmanuel and his family for some twenty years, his son, Willy, now also having his own household and kraal here.

#### *Current Occupiers and their livestock*

##### *Rietkuil*

1. Three adults and two children currently live with Justine. These are her sister's grandson who Justine brought up and who now works as a Community Game Guard for the WvF Huab Catchment Project, her grandson with his girlfriend and her son, and her granddaughter. 6

Justine's herd consists of her own animals plus some belonging to her children. At present she has 77 goats and roughly 50 cattle. She is also responsible for her sister's grandson's livestock which amount to 8 cattle, roughly 24 goats, 2 horses and 1 donkey.

2. Michael, a teacher at Eddie Bowe Primary School in Khorixas, and his wife Susana have been farming at Rietkuil for four years. This is their first farm, although Michael's family have a history of farming at Okombahe. He heard that Justine was looking for another farmer to move to Rietkuil through Justine's brother-in-law who is the headmaster at T.H.F !Gaeb primary school in Khorixas. Michael visits the farm every weekend with his wife and eight children. 10

Michael and Susana currently have 6 cattle, 67 mature and 68 juvenile goats, 7 female sheep and 9 lambs, 2 donkeys and 12 chickens.

3. Living separately from Michael are the two Damara labourers he employs to look after his livestock while he is not here. They are paid N\$100 and N\$80 per month, plus food rations. 2

4. Philippina, Justine's niece, has lived at Rietkuil since her mother died, with her partner, Emmanuel. She has no livestock and appears to be largely dependent on food given to her by Justine. Neither Emmanuel or her receive a state pension, although she in particular has applied repeatedly for one. They only own 3 chickens. 2

5. One other house at Rietkuil is inhabited on a temporary basis only. This belongs to Justine's half sister Alberta, who works at Eddie Bowe Primary School hostel. She comes to Rietkuil in the holidays with her five children. Justine looks after her single remaining cow at Rietkuil.

##### *Rietkuil-pos*

6. Emmanuel, who originally worked for the Omaruru municipality, received a permit to farm at Rietkuil-pos and has been here since the redistribution of land following Odendaal. Currently living with him are his mother, Fillipyne, his nephew, Gotlod, who has worked for Emmanuel for twelve years, a second labourer, Isaskar, and Emmanuel's brother's two children who are cared for by Fillipyne, their grand-mother. Emmanuel has two goat kraals and keeps regular written notes on the status of his herd. In October 1995 he had a total of 130 mature goats with 37 lambs, as well as 2 cows, 1 donkey, and a number of chickens. 6

6. Willy, Emmanuel's son who works for Water Affairs in Khorixas, has his own house and kraal at Rietkuil-pos. His relative, Johannes, has been here since 1990 to herd Willy's livestock, together with Willy's wife's sister, Cornelia Somaes, and her son. Willy currently has 93 goats with 13 lambs, 1 cow and her calf, 2 donkeys and 10 chickens. 3

#### *Alternative sources of income and subsistence*

There is a communal garden in which all the occupiers at Rietkuil can cultivate, and a separate garden close to the old commercial farmhouse which is cultivated by Justine and dependants. 19



Dietary survey information from both May and October 1995 at Rietkuil indicates that household nutrition is strongly affected by differing degrees of access to varying resources. Justine, for example, was able to provide her household with a relatively balanced diet consisting of maize-porridge, milk, either fresh or curdled, and beans purchased from the shop at Morewag, presumably with cash from her pension. In May, however, they were also eating the yellow maize distributed by the Drought Relief scheme as emergency fodder for livestock. Philippina and Emmanuel on the other hand, who appear to rely mainly on handouts from Justine, were eating a very limited diet consisting of one meal a day of maize and milk. In contrast, Michael Doeseb's family, were eating healthy-sized meals of maize with the nutritious seeds of *Monsonia umbellata* (#khari bosu), accompanied by goat meat or milk.

At least three of the household heads at Rietkuil are employed as civil servants in Khorixas and are absent from the farm for the majority of the time. Justine, and possibly other inhabitants, also receive a state pension. In addition, Justine makes beer from the grass seeds of *Stipagrostis* spp. (sãun) which she sells or exchanges locally.

### *Infrastructure*

#### *Water*

There are two boreholes at Rietkuil, from which water is drawn by wind-pumps. Justine had recently been on a workshop organised by the Dept. of Water Affairs in conjunction with the NGO Africare. This was designed to train Treasurers for the 'Water Point Committee' system that these organisations are trying to establish throughout southern Kunene as a means of transferring management responsibility and accountability for water installations to individual farm settlements.

#### *Fences*

Rietkuil is divided into four camps which are reportedly used in rotation by Michael and Susana's livestock but there is little communication between the farmers at Rietkuil to all follow the same grazing strategy. The fences are reportedly in bad condition due to general disrepair coupled with elephant damage.

### *Migration history for Rietkuil*

#### Justine Haraés (né 'Nawases):

- i. pre-1982  
when Justine and her husband lived in Fransfontein and Khorixas their livestock were in the care of her mother at Smalruggens Farm, north of the Fransfontein Reserve;
- ii. 1982  
Justine and her livestock moved from Smalruggens Farm to Rietkuil;
- iii. post-1982  
even though Justine wanted to move her livestock to other farms in drought years she has been unable to do so because of a lack of labour. She has suffered livestock losses as a consequence. Her livestock 'Owner's Record Card' indicates that her goats fell dramatically from 24 with 11 lambs in 1985/86 to only 4 in 1990, although her cattle showed increases from 4 with 3 calves to 19 with 12 calves in the same time period.

#### Alberta:

- i. 1992  
due to the early 1990s' drought, Alberta moved her 6 cattle to be farmed near the Huab River. Unfortunately 5 of these animals died;
- ii. December 1994  
her remaining cow was returned to Rietkuil.

#### Kale and Magdalena:

On hearing that Justine was alone at Rietkuil Kale, Justine's brother-in-law, moved there with his livestock to join her.

i. 1992  
moved to Rietkuil, probably from Fransfontein area:

ii. 1993  
when Kale Haraeb died in 1993, his livestock were divided between family members at Fransfontein and Rotion-pos near Khorixas.

#### Emmanuel and Willy at Rietkuil-pos:

It was reported that Emmanuel's and Willy's livestock have never been removed from Rietkuil-pos in response to drought. Instead, they simply graze the goats further away in the hills on the farm.

### 5. Driekrone and Driekrone-pos

Prior to Odenaai, Driekrone Farm belonged to a Mr Berger. Since then it has been uninhabited for many years due to its remote situation, and reportedly because of previous problems with elephant. In 1993, two families of Herero and Owambo herders moved here from east of Khorixas in response to drought. Driekrone-pos has been inhabited periodically in the past but there is no one currently farming there.

#### *Current occupiers and their herds*

There are two households at Driekrone, the heads of which spend varying amounts of time actually at Driekrone:

1. Wilfred has farmed his livestock here since 1993 and his household is based at the old commercial farmhouse. His wife, Tarenawa, is the half-sister of Gottlieb who farms at Malansrust, and the daughter of Tobias who is the second farmer at Driekrone. Two of Tobias' sister's grandsons also live here. Three labourers from Owambo take care of the daily herding tasks. These young men were employed by Wilfred following a trip he made to Owambo specifically to look for labourers. Two began working at Driekrone last year, while the third arrived in February 1995. Prior to these men, Wilfred employed a Kavango-speaking Namibian as a herder.

Wilfred currently has eight cows, 78 mature goats and an uncounted number of lambs, three donkeys, two horses, pigs and chickens.

2. Tobias, originally from Owambo, is head of the second household at Driekrone, based at the old commercial farmhouse. With him live his son, two Owambo-speaking labourers, and Tobias' great grandson.

Tobias has 16 cattle, 137 mature goats and 83 juvenile goats, seven donkeys and 20 chickens.

#### *Infrastructure*

##### *Water*

There are two boreholes at Driekrone, both with wind-pumps, one of which is at the main farm settlement while the other is at Driekrone-pos. The latter farm-post is currently uninhabited so the pump has been disengaged; both pump and borehole are, however, functional. The two households now living at Driekrone have not established gardens, reportedly due to problems with elephants and baboons.

##### *Fences*

Driekrone was once divided into two camps, but the dividing fence had been removed by the time the current occupiers of Driekrone moved there. They maintain the perimeter fence.

#### *Migration history for Driekrone and Driekrone-pos*

##### Wilfred and Tobias:

Wilfred and Tobias have managed their livestock together for many years.



i. ca. early 1970s  
Wilfred and Tobias were farming at Lofdal Farm, west of Khorixas:

ii. ca. 1980s  
they moved to Macaria Farm, south-east of Khorixas:

iii. June 1993  
due to the early 1990s' drought, they decided to try and find a farm with better grazing for their livestock. After driving around farms in the region and seeing that Driekrone had good grazing and was unoccupied, they requested permission from the relevant authorities in Khorixas to move there. It is likely that the relationship between Wilfred's wife and Gottlieb who farms at Malansrust, also influenced their decision to look in this area.

There is currently no one occupying Driekrone-pos. This farm-post has, however, been the recipient of two herders in previous years:

Ben:

i. 1990  
moved here from Fransfontein due to the drought:

ii. 1992  
returned to Fransfontein.

Leonard:

i. 1994  
moved to Driekrone-pos with his large cattle herd from Outjo District due to the 1990s' drought:

ii. 1995  
returned to Outjo District following the good rains of early 1995.

## Appendix 2. Species and family of plants and mammals referred to in the text

*Plants (following Kolberg et al. 1992)*

### CAPPARACEAE

*Boscia albitrunca* (Burchell) Gilg & Benedict

### MYROTHAMNACEAE

*Myrothamnus flabellifolius* Welw.

### FABACEAE

*Acacia montis-usti* Merxm. & A. Schreiber

*Colophospermum mopane* (Kirk ex Benth.) Kirk ex Léonard

*Faidherbia albida* (Del.) A. Chev.

### GERANIACEAE

*Monsonia umbellata* Harvey

### EUPHORBIACEAE

*Euphorbia virosa* Willd.

### BURSERACEAE

*Commiphora glaucescens* Engl.

### SALVADORACEAE

*Salvadora persica* L.

### TAMARICACEAE

*Tamarix usneoides* E. Meyer ex Bunge

### EBENACEAE

*Euclea pseudebenus* E. Meyer ex A. DC.

### ASCLEPIADACEAE

[*Hoodia*] *curreri* (Hook.) Decne.

### BORAGINACEAE

*Cordia gharaf* (Forsskal) Ehrenb. ex Asch.

### POACEAE

*Stipagrostis* spp.

### Mammals

### CERCOPITHECIDAE

*Papio ursinus*

### ELEPHANTIDAE

*Loxodonta africana*



draft

SOCIAL SCIENCES DIVISION

Study of the conversion of former commercial farm land to  
'communal' tenure and use

Draft terms of reference

The consultant will undertake field work and other investigations in order to produce a descriptive and analytical study of not less than 10,000 words on the conversion of former commercial farm land to 'communal' tenure and use in an area of the former Damaraland. The research and analysis will be designed with the primary purpose of providing information and recommendations relevant to Namibia's current land reform process, which aims to convert some commercial farm land to 'communal' ownership and use. The research will therefore seek to draw lessons for current land reform planning from the experience of the past, very differently motivated, conversion of tenure in the study area.

The report of the investigation will include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- an environmental and socio economic description of the study area, indicating, inter alia, local farming conditions and practices, demography and subsistence strategies;
- an historical outline of human settlement, land use and land tenure in the area;
- a description and analysis of the tenure conversion that took place when former commercial farms were rezoned following the Odendaal Commission: indicating, for example, the resettlement and land allocation arrangements that were made, and how and from where the new land users were brought into the area;
- a description and analysis of the land tenure and administration arrangements currently operating in the area, explaining the types of land rights held, how rights are transferred, etc.;
- a description and analysis of local government and resource management institutions currently operating in the study area which are relevant to land use and management;

**draft**

- a description and analysis of production systems, marketing and income generated by land use in the area before and after the tenure conversion;
- a description and analysis of current herd and natural resource management strategies in the area, indicating whether and how infrastructure such as fences and boreholes are maintained; the role of the old farm geography in determining present management and grazing systems; how current herding strategies and mobility compare with those of former commercial farmers in the area; and how past and present tenure patterns affect coping strategies in times of drought;
- conclusions and recommendations which assess and explain how far the post Odendaal tenure conversion is relevant to land reform planning in Namibia today, indicating (where appropriate) guidelines and strategies that may be suggested by the experience of the study area.

The consultant will submit a draft report to the SSD not later than 13 November, 1995. Provided that SSD provides comments on the report within seven days, the consultant will submit a final report not later than 24 November, 1995.

SSD will pay the consultant a fee of N\$7,500.00 for performance of the above services and submission of a final report acceptable to the SSD. This fee will be payable in full on notification by SSD to the consultant that the final report has been accepted.

SSD retains the right to publish the report of the study in its series of SSD Research Reports.

All insurance, taxation and other liabilities and arrangements in connection with performance of the above services will be the sole responsibility of the consultant, and the SSD accepts no liability in any such regard.