What's in a Map?
Regional Restructuring and
The State in Independent Namibia

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ABSTRACT

The significance of redrawing maps to reflect changing geopolitical orders is discussed as a prelude to an overview of the process by which the post-colonial state has been restructured in Namibia and its internal political map redrawn since independence in 1990. This, in turn, provides the context for a detailed discussion of the establishment and early performance of the thirteen regional councils which commenced work at the beginning of 1993. The Act establishing these bodies accords them wide powers in relation to development promotion and the management of small settlements but in practice central government has not devolved any substantive functions or resources to them. Consequently, regional councils have to date performed essentially a limited consultative role, being unable to fulfil their potential as catalysts for area-based development planning. Hence, elected councillors perceive their position to be invidious because they represent specific geographical constituencies but have neither the power nor resources to address people's needs directly. They can merely make representations to central government ministries. The final section of the paper provides a detailed evaluation of the situation in the light of recent international experience with decentralised state structures, and recommends a series of improvements which have very modest resource implications.

INTRODUCTION

In literal terms a map is merely the representation of a bounded territory, filled with relevant information, drawn to a stated scale according to certain conventions and using specific colours and symbols to indicate the required features. At the same time, few other documents can have such potent symbolic meaning and the commensurate ability to arouse strong emotions. For maps reflect how we see - or would like to see - our world and the division of control over it. As such they are human artifacts, stylised representations of the globe or parts of it, which reflect the political, economic and cultural norms and values of those responsible for commissioning and drawing them, as well as the purpose(s) for which they are compiled. In other words, there is no uniquely 'right', 'correct' or 'best' form of cartographic representation.

This is perhaps most easily illustrated with reference to the ongoing controversy over the choice of projection for representing the Earth's globe by means of a flat, two-dimensional map. This cannot be done entirely accurately, so some distortion is necessary, usually involving a trade-off between accurate portrayal of the shape of landmasses and the their respective areas. Most traditional projections have favoured shape, resulting in some exaggeration of the size of the polar and high latitude regions relative to equatorial zones. Because these have become familiar over time, we have subconsciously come to think of them as 'natural' or 'right'. The outcry spawned by publication in the 1970s of the Petermann's Projection - which sacrifices accuracy of shape in favour of relative geographical area - largely reflected the unfamiliarity, strangeness and 'difference' of the shapes of the respective continents in most people's eyes. Whether it is actually any 'better' or more useful depends on how well suited it is to the intended purpose of a given map as much as on subjective aesthetics. There can be no purely 'objective' or universal yardstick. The same argument applies to world maps drawn in different countries. People accustomed to world maps centred on the Greenwich meridian, and thus having Western Europe and Africa in the centre, with the Americas on the left and Asia and the Pacific on the right, often have difficulty adapting to Japanese world maps centred on Japan, for instance.

Internationally recognised sovereignty over a given territory is one of the defining features of a country or nation-state. National identity is thus inextricably bound up with and expressed through territory and landscape, in addition to the exercise of 'traditional' forms of control over particular territory and sovereign rights to the resources within it. However, as important as territory itself is its boundedness in space. In other words, territory is defined and delimited - both customarily and statutorily - by means of identifiable and defensible boundaries. Maps provide a key instrument for representing and legitimising them, together with any claims on additional territory beyond current borders. A dramatic change to the political order within a country is therefore likely to be reflected in a new name, a restructuring of the apparatus of state, legislation and perhaps a re-mapping of its internal political geography to accord with the needs and priorities of that new order.

Such has been the case in Namibia (formerly South West Africa), which finally gained independence from its powerful neighbour and de facto coloniser, South Africa, in 1990. Since South African forces ended German colonial rule in 1915 and South Africa subsequently took over civil administration under a League of Nations Mandate, that country's domestic policies of racial segregation and apartheid had been imposed in Namibia despite opposition and growing resistance from the majority of the local population. One of the comerstones of apartheid was the balkanisation of territory along officially defined racial and supposed ethnic affiliations, creating a network of bantustans within which members of designated African tribal/ethnic groups would be forced to live or at least to exercise their political rights. Eventually these bantustans were intended by the architects of apartheid to become politically independent of the rump white state. Technically, the bantustans, illustrated in figure 1, were abolished as political entities in 1980, ten years before independence. However, administration was still predicated on race and ethnic affiliation through the so-called Representative Authorities, many of which retained a strong territorial identification with particular bantustans.

It naturally followed that the new SWAPO-led government which took power at independence on an explicitly non-racial and anti-apartheid ticket, moved rapidly to abolish remaining apartheid laws and structures and to promote national reconciliation and more equitable development. A more appropriate sub-national structure was therefore required. Following a brief outline of the redrawing of the map to institute a system of thirteen regions, this paper focuses on the process of filling that map with meaning through the establishment of regional councils and efforts to promote new regional identities. This process and the record of regional councils over their first two to three years are documented and evaluated. Finally, experience in other countries undertaking comparable exercises is drawn upon in formulating recommendations for the strengthening of regional performance and legitimacy.

STATE RESTRUCTURING AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

The ethnically based, second tier Representative Authorities were abolished and other remaining apartheid laws repealed by Namibia's independence constitution, which had been formulated through a remarkable inter-party process of give-and-take negotiations within the Constitutional Assembly and especially within its committees in the months following the UN-supervised elections of November 1989. The staff of former apartheid state structures, as existing civil servants, benefited from a constitutional prohibition against dismissal except for professional misconduct. Representative authority staff[1] and others were therefore absorbed into the most appropriate ministries as an interim measure, pending an envisaged reorganisation and rationalisation of the civil service and the establishment of new regional councils.

The new constitution instituted a three tier government structure headed by an executive president and bicameral parliament, comprising the directly elected National Assembly and indirectly elected National Council. The former is the principal legislative chamber while the latter exercises a watchdog role with powers to request amendments to draft legislation. It is designed to give regional representatives a direct say in the national lawmaking process. At the intermediate level, a new system of regional councils was to be established, while the third tier would comprise local authorities. Terms of office and the basis of representation in each case were specified, but the precise nature of both regional councils and local authorities were to be finalised subsequently. The outcome of these exercises produced the institutional structure shown in table 1. Nevertheless, until February 1993, the country functioned with a de facto unicameral parliament, since the National Council is indirectly elected, its membership comprising two representatives from each regional council. This body could, by definition, therefore not be constituted until the regional councils were in place; the constitution required this to occur within two years of independence (see below).

As provided for in the constitution, President Sam Nujoma appointed the First Delimitation Commission in September 1990 to initiate the politically vital and sensitive task of restructuring the inherited regional and local apartheid geographies. Its three members[2] were required to determine the number and boundaries of new regions, to divide each of these into a minimum of six and maximum of twelve constituencies containing approximately equal population numbers, and to determine the boundaries of local authorities. The only criterion laid down was that no account was to be taken of race or ethnicity.

The regional question presented the most difficult and complex task, absorbing most of the commission's time. Not only had apartheid and the bantustan experience given regional 'development' a justifiably bad name among black Namibians, but it was clear from the outset that the radically different aims and objectives of the constitution could only be given effect

through an altogether different approach. Much was at stake, not least in view of the conflicting political, sectional and regional interests being articulated to the commission.

At this point it is appropriate to consider why provision was made for regional councils at all. The importance of having an intermediate level or tier of government between the central state and municipalities is widely accepted and almost universally applied in the name of greater local appropriateness and responsiveness through some form of decentralised representation and service delivery. These entities vary greatly in terms of physical size (both absolute and relative to the state), number, population, economic and other resource base, the scope of their powers and functions, their level of resourcing from locally derived sources and/or central allocation, and elected versus appointed membership. Efforts to formulate general 'rules' or procedures for determining optimal numbers, sizes and so forth have proved fruitless; it is now generally recognised that the principal requirements are local appropriateness and sustainability in terms of resourcing, political considerations and the range of functions they are to perform[3].

While it would arguably be cheaper not to have a second tier of government, the great size of Namibia (approximately 825,000 km^2), very uneven and often sparse population distribution, cultural diversity, and wide range of physiographic and environmental conditions means that central government in Windhoek is remote from most Namibians, while regional needs and priorities differ substantially. Conceptually, the case for regional councils is strong; however, the very sparseness of population, widespread poverty and limited infrastructure in some regions pose severe problems for establishing bodies which are both viable and still sufficiently accessible to their populations in both physical and political terms. The commission was quickly convinced that, under such conditions, regional structures could best be justified and could maximise their contribution if they were geared to the active promotion of development within their boundaries rather than serving primarily an electoral function, as some senior government figures originally envisaged.

The number and boundaries of the new regions therefore had to be determined in a manner that enhanced developmental potential rather than impeding it by cutting across already integrated systems or activity fields. However, boundary delimitation cannot be undertaken in the abstract, since, as with the cartographic representations discussed above, there is no uniquely 'right' or 'best' boundary; appropriateness is determined by the intended purpose and envisaged functions. The commission's work was impeded by long delays in the drafting and promulgation of legislation to establish regional councils and local authorities. These had been due during the commission's lifetime but eventually appeared in final form almost a year after the commission's report had been submitted. Efforts to obtain even an approximate idea of government thinking proved difficult, as successive drafts of the laws reflected substantial changes, not least to powers and responsibilities. It became clear that there was a high level tussle behind the scenes between centralists who sought to retain effective power and resources in the line ministries and others prepared to promote genuine decentralisation of

functions and powers. Even a one-month extension of the commission's reporting deadline from June to July 1991 failed to provide clarity in this respect.

Nevertheless, after an exhaustive study of available international literature, southern African and other experience, an international tour, public hearings and an extensive countrywide tour to consult with local communities and to inspect conditions on the ground, thirteen regions were proposed as representing the most appropriate 'fit' of a wide set of criteria and in line with the intended objectives[4]. Among the most important criteria were infrastructure and accessibility, senses of community and regional identities, the linking of commercial and communal areas, territorial coherence and development potential. Although the boundaries then had to be formally delimited, the commission's own work was decidedly not a technicist exercise, but one taking a broader, 'soft' approach informed by all available data and views. It is evident from figure 2 that the largest number of - and generally smallest - regions are in the north, where population densities are highest and underdevelopment most marked. In line with the definition of the country's borders in the constitution, the enclave of Walvis Bay (at that time still claimed and occupied by South Africa) was included as a separate constituency within Erongo Region, so as to facilitate its integration into Namibia's regional and local government structures as soon as practicable.

In the event, the government accepted the commission's report in its entirety, although the proposed names of four regions were changed following local representations[5]. Names aside, public, media and political comment was limited but generally appreciative of the rationale and the fact that bantustans as distinct territorial entities were finally to disappear from the map. Despite the fact that the regional boundaries and number of regions did not correspond to the proposals of any political party, all seemed willing to accept the outcome. In short, the legitimacy of the proposals seemed to have been established. The respective regional and local authority boundaries were subsequently given legal force and gazetted in March 1992[6]. This concluded the initial process of redrawing Namibia's internal political map[7]. Naturally, it would take time for the new entities to become widely known and to be adopted by official and non-governmental bodies and individuals. The real test would, of course, be the extent to which and speed with which the new regions would be assimilated into popular culture in the sense not just of spatial referents but, more fundamentally, of fostering distinctive regional identities. This, in turn, would depend largely on what institutional structures with what powers were put into the new geographical 'containers' and how effective they would prove administratively and in addressing the development priorities of their inhabitants.

Another five months elapsed before the Regional Councils Act and Local Authorities Act were eventually promulgated[8]. The provisions of the latter, the results of the local government elections and subsequent performance of the three categories of local authority have been discussed in detail elsewhere[9] and will not be repeated here. The Regional Councils Act makes provision for regional boundaries to be changed at any time, and constituency boundaries within each district to be altered at intervals of six to twelve years, following the recommendations of a

new delimitation commission appointed for the purpose. The specific period for review of constituency boundaries was stipulated to ensure that approximate parity of population is maintained across the constituencies within a region, with adjustments as appropriate being made after no more than two six-year terms of office. The principal powers conferred upon regional councils by Section 28 of the act are:

1. development planning, with due regard to the role of the National Planning Commission, in relation to:

    - the physical, social and economic characteristics of the region (and where relevant, also of neighbouring regions);
    - the distribution, increase and movement and the urbanisation of the population;
    - natural and other resources and economic development potential;
    - existing and planned infrastructure, such as water, electricity, communication networks and transport systems;
    - general land utilisation patterns;
    - the sensitivity of the natural environment;

2. the exercise of duties and functions which may be delegated by the President;
3. to establish, manage and control 'settlement areas' (which are defined in the Local Authorities Act as human settlements too small to qualify for a village council, the most basic form of local authority);
4. to make recommendations to the Minister of Regional and Local Government and Housing regarding any local authority in the region;
5. to advise the President or any minister on any matter referred by them to the regional council;
6. to assist any local authority within the region in the exercise of its powers, functions and duties;
7. to make recommendations to the Minister of Finance in relation to the region for purposes of preparing the government's annual budget[10].

While some of these are purely advisory, in either proactive or response mode, the roles of development planning and creating settlement areas are extremely important and wide ranging. At least in theory, therefore, regional councils have been given the powers to become proactive in influencing and shaping development within their regions. This is entirely consistent with what the First Delimitation Commission had envisaged in the execution of its task. What this has meant in practice so far, will be analysed below. In order to assist the new councils in this task, at least three major studies have been completed: a strategic overview of regional development problems and potentials and the need for integrated, territorially focused, planning in the four northern regions comprising the former Owambo bantustan; a manual providing a national overview of regional data and official structures; and a national overview comprising a regional

data inventory, study of state institutional structures in relation to regional councils, and perceptions in and of each region[11].

Section 33 of the Act is very vague in relation to sources of income for regional councils. However, in practice, their principal direct source of dedicated income is a five per cent levy on local authorities' property rates. This was specified by Section 77(1) of the Local Authorities Act. Apart from miscellaneous fees and user charges, regional councils derive the bulk of their current, and all their capital, resources from the MRLGH. As a result, regional councils are heavily - and, in the case of those lacking any sizeable urban centres to generate income from a rates levy, totally - dependent on the central state. The implications of this are problematic in both theory and practice, as will become clear below.

Each council is required to elect a management committee of three or four members, depending on the number of councillors; the chair of the management committee is known as the regional governor. This is a rather unfortunate term, since it erroneously suggests a strong, executive leader with rather greater authority and power than is the case with a councillor elected as the representative of a single constituency within each region. Moreover, the Regional Councils Act does not clearly define the rights and powers of governors, nor does it specify that they do (or should) represent their entire regions[12]. This point will be discussed further below in the light of experience to date.

The long delays in promulgating the Regional Councils and Local Authorities Acts also perforce necessitated the granting of a special constitutional dispensation to hold the regional and local elections more than the stipulated maximum of two years from the date of Namibian independence. Following promulgation of the required electoral legislation and the holding of a voters' registration period, the elections were ultimately held from 30 November to 2 December 1992. Notwithstanding a few minor incidents, these were generally conducted in a relaxed and enthusiastic atmosphere, with high turnouts. Together with a couple of immediate by-elections, they produced the situation shown in table 2. SWAPO, the governing party at national level, obtained a majority of seats in nine regions, with a clean sweep in four, namely Omusati, Oshana, Omusati and Ohangwena. Together, these correspond quite closely to the former Ovamboland bantustan, the demographic heart of Namibia and SWAPO's safest stronghold. The main opposition Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) gained control of Caprivi, Omaheke and Hardap, while Kunene Region returned a 'hung' council with no party in overall control. Walvis Bay constituency was included in the election, despite its disputed status, although voters had to cross the enclave's border to vote in Swakopmund as South Africa refused to permit this to take place in the area under its jurisdiction. In practice, however, the enclave could become a full part of Erongo Region only upon the enclave's eventual reintegration into Namibia on 1 March 1994[13]. At least two detailed election studies analysing voter behaviour countrywide and assessing the implications of the results have been published[14].

The councils met initially later that month but commenced serious work in January 1993, while the newly constituted National Council was inaugurated on 23 February 1993. It is to a discussion and evaluation of the initial performance records of regional councils and - to the extent that it is relevant, also the National Council - that this paper now turns.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Conduct of this research was greatly facilitated by long experience in the country and contacts with previously exiled Namibians. Direct involvement with the First Delimitation Commission's work naturally proved particularly valuable. The contemporary and topical nature of this project, addressing politically contested agendas, necessitated care, sensitivity and the use of the widest possible range of contacts and primary and secondary sources. Formal records, such as parliamentary debates and council debates, annual reports, audited budgets and expenditure accounts appear with some delay, so were not always available for the most recent period covered by the research. In addition, some variation was detected in the comprehensiveness of regional council reports and the regularity with which they were submitted to the MRLGH as required by law. A key reason for this is staff shortages and lack of experience, an issue that will be discussed further below. Press reports, articles in popular magazines and journals, govemment gazettes and other published and unpublished secondary materials were collected systematically.

Extensive primary research was also undertaken. This involved detailed face-to-face interviews with key personnel in the MRLGH, including the Minister, the National Planning Commission (NPC), the Director of Elections, local authorities, non-governmental organisations, and donor agencies; a semi-structured questionnaire survey of all thirteen regional councils, and follow-up interviews with a representative sample of town clerks (and a few regional govemors) drawn from those who responded to the questionnaire.

A high level of interest and co-operation was experienced from all quarters. This is almost certainly attributable to the perceived relevance and timeliness of the project, providing a form of evaluation and feedback to officials and councillors. They often feel isolated and were invariably keen to learn how other regions were addressing similar problems and issues, what the MRLGH's views were on regional council performance, and so forth. On several occasions, officials remarked that they had been prompted to think about new issues or had gained new perspectives and ideas from our interviews. Responses were eventually received from ten of the thirteen regions, providing a firm basis for the analysis which follows.

Apart from the problem of incomplete availability of reports and recent data referred to above, the principal difficulties related to logistics: the vast distances to be covered between regional headquarters for these interviews (although local authorities were being interviewed simultaneously) and occasional unavailability of key staff when we were in the region. This reflects both the extreme shortage of staff in regional council offices and the pressures of time on regional governors and councillors, some of whom also serve in the National Council. Nevertheless, we were usually made welcome and even invited to sit in on a meeting of Erongo Regional Council, which took place during our visit to Swakopmund.

THE EARLY RECORD: REGIONAL COUNCILS, 1993-5

The first part of this section provides basic information on the regional councils; thereafter their performance is examined, highlighting particular achievements and problems, relations with local authorities and with the MRLGH, and other issues raised by respondents.

The new regional councils have clearly faced tremendous challenges. First, they have all been established from scratch, with no appropriate predecessor bodies on which to draw. Second, the vast majority of staff and councillors (as with virtually all black Namibians) have had no prior experience of formal, representative, democratic institutions. Third, resources have been very limited. Fourth, the range, nature and extent of problems in each region are vast; some are shared but others specific to one or two. Fifth, as indicated in table 3, there are substantial inter-regional disparities in terms of physical area (see also figure 2), population, population density and urbanisation.

At one extreme, three regions in the north comprising entirely communal lands, namely Omusati, Oshana and Ohangwena, are small and densely populated with poor infrastructure and largely subsistence economies. By contrast, Oshikoto includes Tsumeb town and magisterial district, with its important economic base of mining, some industry and commercial agriculture. Khomas, the other populous region, comprises commercial farmland and is centred on Windhoek, the national capital city, which accounts for the vast majority of the 167,000 population recorded in 1991. Hence the average regional population density is comparable to that of Oshikoto and only a quarter or less of that in the three densest regions. With the exception of the Caprivi, all other regions have average densities of less than one per square kilometre. At the other extreme from the far north is the deep south, where Hardap and Karas regions are geographically vast, together covering one-third of the country's surface area, but are home to only 66,500 and 61,000 people each. These are arid and particularly drought-prone areas of extensive commercial and communal livestock farming.

Staffing, Financial Resources and Functions

Resourcing, in the broadest sense, has been a particularly problematic and sensitive issue for regional councils: problematic in that it has circumscribed their ability to operate, and sensitive in that it reflects underlying tensions at central government level regarding the extent to which executive power and commensurate resources should be devolved to the regions.

Personnel: The MRLGH granted most regional councils an initial staff establishment of six, comprising two skilled, two semi-skilled and two unskilled posts. More specifically, these are a regional officer (who is the chief executive officer), chief control officer, secretary, clerk, driver and cleaner. These six personnel have responsibility for all regional council operations within

the often vast geographical areas, and serving the substantial populations, shown in table 3; little account was taken of inter-regional differences on these or other variables in the allocation of staff complements or of initial budgets to cover recurrent expenditure in 1993/4 (table 4). However, both Hardap and Okavango regional councils reported having ten established posts each, four and seven of these respectively being skilled. Nevertheless, only five posts in Hardap and one in Okavango were apparently filled at the time of the survey. The latter seems erroneous.

In practice, the regional officers, in particular, are required to service their councils; to liaise with the MRLGH, NPC, other ministries, local authorities and the public; to formulate and operationalise policies through the council; to travel within their regions; and to supervise the other staff. This is clearly unrealistic and forms one of the most binding constraints on regional council activity and performance. There are no planners, engineers, technicians, social researchers, legal officers or any other professional and artisanal staff who would be essential to the carrying out of the responsibilities relating to development planning, settlement areas and local authorities. In addition to these, several councils expressed the need for an accountant, permanent secretary, additional clerks and eventually a personnel officer. By the time of the survey reported here, no council had been authorised or able to employ any additional staff. Moreover, it quickly became evident during this research project that the early record of each council has depended to a great extent on the calibre and motivation of its regional officer and the councillors themselves, especially the governor.

Offices: A related problem has been the lack of adequate or appropriate office premises for the new regional councils. Sometimes, e.g. in Khomas Region, the council has rented reasonably convenient privately owned offices, in this case close to Windhoek's central business district. Occasionally, councils have inherited premises from former bantustan or representative authority administrations. In most cases, however, especially in the former Owambo, the councils have had to make do with a handful of rooms in a government-owned building housing the regional offices of one or more ministries and perhaps also a local authority. Ohangwena and Omusati were in the invidious position of lacking any appropriate premises, even on a temporary basis, within their boundaries, and therefore had to operate initially out of offices in Ondangwa and Oshakati respectively. This is clearly most unfortunate, making the councils inaccessible to their populations, hampering their efforts to become established, and raising questions about their relevance and importance. More generally, too, the councils' offices are often not centrally located within the towns concerned, are inconspicuous and poorly labelled and sign-posted. This also creates a poor impression and has done nothing to help the new councils establish a distinct identity, prominent profile or substantive presence. The often basic nature of, and lack of fittings and facilities within, most councils' offices merely serve to underline this problem in the eyes of any visitor. This concern should not be misinterpreted as an argument for costly prestige premises designed primarily for conspicuousness; unnecessary waste of scarce capital resources should certainly be avoided, but there is a strong case for

some improvement and upgrading more in keeping with regional council responsibilities. To date, office rents have been covered by the MRLGH as part of its funding to councils.

Financial Resources: This research has shown the lack of adequate funding to be one of the two principal constraints on regional councils. It has greatly restricted their ability to become established, to perform even remotely effectively and to carry out the substantial range of powers and functions accorded them in the Regional Councils Act. The amount initially allocated by the MRLGH to cover recurrent expenditure during 1993/4 was not only low but also identical for each region (table 4). This was clearly arrived at by dividing a global budget equally into thirteen, presumably on the assumption that each council would face the same start-up costs in view of having basically the same functions and staff complements. No satisfactory explanation could be obtained as to why these allocations were not related in any way to population per region (especially bearing in mind that preliminary 1991 census data were available at that stage) or the physical size of each region and thus the differing costs of travel and subsistence required to perform the same tasks. The 1994/5 allocations, however, do show some variation, seemingly in an effort to take account of these factors as well as of inputs from the councils regarding their respective requirements. Hence, for example, the large but sparsely populated regions of Kunene, Hardap and Karas were allocated relatively larger grants than could be explained on the basis of population. Conversely, Omusati, Oshana, Ohangwena, Oshikoto and Khomas, all geographically small but containing the largest populations, received the largest allocations.

These allocations do not, however, appear to take into account the levels of, and variations in, revenue accruing to regional councils from the only direct or 'own' source of income, namely the five per cent local authority rate levy. Provisional figures for the latter, where available, are given in table 4. As already pointed out, five regional councils comprising communal lands in the former bantustans currently have no possibility of any such income, since there are not yet any freehold properties there, within the newly proclaimed towns, on which rates can be levied by the respective local authorities. These regional councils (Omusati, Ohangwena, Oshana, Okavango and Caprivi) will therefore remain entirely dependent on MRLGH funding for the foreseeable future. Although the others do gain some revenue from the rates levy, the only ones where this is significant are Khomas (from Windhoek), Erongo (from Walvis Bay, Swakopmund, Usakos and Karibib), Oshikoto (from Tsumeb), Otjozondjupa (from Otjiwarongo, Okahandja and several smaller centres), Omaheke (from Gobabis) and Karas (from Keetmanshoop).

On this basis, it is only really Khomas, and arguably also Erongo, which can expect to derive some financial autonomy from the MRLGH under present arrangements. Given that regional councils are directly elected, represent geographically defined constituencies, form a distinct second tier of government and have wide powers to shape development, promote settlement areas and assist local authorities, it seems vitally important that they have both a level of resourcing commensurate with their responsibilities and a high degree of autonomy. So long as

the MRLGH or any other ministry provides a subsidy to cover most or all of their budgets, regional councils will not feel free to act independently, and will be vulnerable to pressure or directives to implement MRLGH policy. At present, regional council staff are, in effect at least, employees of the MRLGH rather than of a distinct regional council. Equally importantly, it will be very difficult for regional councils to convince the public that they are sensitive to local needs and aspirations or are able to respond to them directly. In short, they need to be able to demonstrate that they have clout and are more than symbolic debating and advisory bodies. This brings the discussion round to the question of functions and effective power.

The first point to be emphasised in this connection is that the substantial sums listed under 'regional development expenditure' in table 4 do not pass through or even relate directly to regional councils. These data reflect allocated expenditure on ongoing programmes and one-off projects by the various line ministries in accordance with their respective investment and budgetary processes within overall national development priorities. The regional councils may have influenced expenditure to some extent through their inputs into budget setting and advice to ministries, but, especially in 1993/4, this impact is likely to have been negligible as they were not fully operational in time. Nevertheless, it is salutary to compare the levels of such 'development' expenditures by national ministries with the paltry resources available to regional councils, which are charged with important regional development functions. Let us now explore their track record in more detail.

Functions and Powers: Despite their very similar problems, individual regional councils have shown different levels of initiative and activity from the outset. This is clear both from the survey results and from public and MRLGH perceptions. While no council was yet fulfilling all seven of its main functions, as listed in section 2 of this paper, all claimed to be active to some extent in development planning, designating and seeking proclamation of settlement areas, making recommendations for inclusion in the line ministries' budgets, and responding to any approaches from the President, ministers or local authorities. For example, most councils had commenced consultations with communities and had identified potential settlement areas. Some had long since made formal requests to the MRLGH for these to be proclaimed, although no new proclamations have yet materialised. Long delays in this process were remarked on as a source of some concern by some regional officers. All the five settlement areas in existence at the end of 1995 were originally established as village councils in 1992 under the Local Authorities Act but de-proclaimed in 1993 as a result of perceived non-viability as separate local authorities[15]. The same is currently happening to five more village councils. However, it is anticipated that nineteen new settlement areas will be proclaimed before the end of 1996[16].

Of course, it is only the smaller local authorities, especially newly established town councils in the communal areas and some village councils, that are likely to seek advice or assistance in this way; existing municipalities and other long-standing local authorities possess their own professional staff and are in a position to offer advice and assistance to the regional councils rather than the other way round. For reasons mentioned above, regional councils are not able

to undertake even their current functions unaided; reliance on professionals in the MRLGH, NPC and, where appropriate, other line ministries is heavy for anything requiring specialised inputs beyond the competence of the particular regional officer. This situation again undermines council autonomy, raises concerns about possible conflicts of interest facing ministry staff providing such assistance, and may incur delays through such staff not necessarily being available as and when required by a regional council.

Nevertheless, how might the observed differences among regional councils be explained? The more dynamic regional officers and governors have perhaps been better able and more willing to use their initiative in getting started, establishing relationships with local authorities and regional representatives of ministries, and raising awareness among the public and business community. Regional councillors also vary in their levels of activity and responsiveness. Given the skeleton staffs of officials, councillors themselves are very much in the front-line of contact with communities and individuals; much therefore depends on their accessibility, energy and diligence in following up representations made to them. Their status is, however, also greatly affected by their inability to offer direct action to meet grievances or requests, something frequently complained about in interview and also in the National Council (see below).

Undoubtedly, too, councils based in large urban centres like Windhoek (Khomas Region) and Swakopmund (Erongo Region), and covering areas with relatively good and extensive infrastructure, have been at a great advantage relative to those based in smaller, more peripheral centres and in regions with poor infrastructural provision. Not only is the pool of skills and expertise upon which they have been able to draw for ideas or inputs greater, but they are readily able to reach senior officials in the respective ministries. Some regional centres still have few if any line ministry staff at a level authorised to provide liaison and take decisions. Those regional councils with significant rates revenue will also be better able to purchase professional services from the private sector to help, for example, with the surveying of settlement area boundaries.

Achievements

On the positive side, many councils have begun to establish a definite presence, raising awareness and promoting some sense of regional identities. Consultation and liaison within the regions form an extremely important part of the workload. These interactions provide information to people on their rights as citizens of Namibia as well as of the particular region, allow laws and directives to be explained to ordinary people on the ground, and enable in situ inspection of needs and encouragement of current projects. Common themes ran through the principal concerns addressed, such as drought relief and borehole drilling in 1993/4; more generally perceived actual or potential water shortages as consumption is outstripping surface supplies and subterranean recharge rates in most areas; widespread poverty and some of its social consequences such as alcohol abuse; requests for the construction of primary health

care clinics; the erection or improvement of local schools; measures to combat rising crime levels in urban areas; and problematic relations between squatters and farmers in peri-urban areas.

Of course, as already emphasised, regional councils lack the authority, power and resources to address these issues directly; rather, their role to date has been restricted to lobbying and making representations to the appropriate body or ministry[17]. This situation not only creates a potential credibility problem for councillors - something of which they quickly became acutely aware in the course of their work - but also renders it extremely difficult to evaluate the 'development' achievements of regional councils in specific terms, since this would require a clear and direct relationship to exist between council decisions and representations, and any subsequent concrete actions by line ministries.

There is clearly some confusion on this score in the mind of many members of the public, some regional councillors and even journalists and other observers. So, for example, while it is both valid and important to ascertain people' perceptions of trends in their regions since 1992 regarding infrastructure and service provision and quality, as reported in the 1994 National Planning Commission study[18], such findings do not actually reflect the effectiveness or otherwise of the respective regional councils over their first eighteen months of existence. They relate much more directly to the performance of central government. Similarly, under the present arrangements, the views collected on future development priorities and problems should inform the work of the regional councils but they relate to interventions which will have to be taken by the respective ministries.

Several councils regarded the promotion of co-operation across party political lines among councillors and their constituents, and the availability of staff and councillors as a conduit for opinions, feedback and liaison as their major achievements. In some cases, proper committees have been established for consultations with communities. These are commendable in themselves but implicitly reflect the councils' lack of executive or implementing authority and resources. This was underlined further by the fact that several councils had identified and prepared briefs for one or more specific priority projects but lacked the capital to proceed with implementation.

Otjzondjupa, widely regarded as one of the most proactive councils, launched its *Do Initiative* in 1994 in an effort simultaneously to raise awareness of the role of the council, to promote community level discussion of local priorities and to engender a sense of active involvement in development efforts through fund-raising and project participation. This has received the blessing of the Minister of Regional and Local Government and Housing, who held it up as a model for other councils to emulate. Even so, however, the council claims to have been hamstrung through a lack of resources to facilitate and kick-start the initiative.

Progress towards the identification of settlement areas was also felt to be important by all councils, although the delays in having them proclaimed were proving frustrating. A few councils reported having undertaken research on local conditions, with at least one producing a regional plan as a specific output. Some councils which have both commercial and communal lands within their boundaries have, together with the relevant agricultural associations, sought to promote interaction and co-operation between the respective groups of farmers. This is potentially very important in bridging historical and institutional gulfs, as well as legacies of mutual suspicion. However, problems of land tenure and access, and the role of traditional leaders and authorities within communal areas remain severe. Some of these authorities have sought to buttress themselves against state institutions which might threaten their power and control over land. This is another area in which the regional councils have been unable to intervene; national legislation and action were keenly awaited, e.g. in having the long-heralded laws on traditional leaders and on land reform promulgated. Those councils containing more than one previous bantustan, e.g. Kunene Region in respect of Damaraland and Kaokoveld, felt that important progress had been made in forging a new sense of regional identity that cut across the divisive politics of the past. However, the attitudes of commercial (almost exclusively white) farmers in the respective regions was not always seen so positively, especially regarding labour relations, for example.

Finally, a recent but potentially significant development deserves mention. In order better to promote their mutual interests, to raise the profile of regional councils and to facilitate communication among them, the regional councils rapidly felt the need to form an association. Following discussions and formal approval from each council of a declaration of intent issued in Windhoek on 15 July 1994, the Association of Regional Councils in Namibia was formally launched at a special congress in Tsumeb exactly one year later. In his opening address, President Nujoma welcomed this development, suggesting that it should go hand in hand with the work of regional councils. Although the Association must operate as a watchdog over the conduct of central government, the relationship between them should not necessarily become confrontational, as "The central government and the regional councils are in the business of promoting democracy". If well managed, the Association would become a positive and productive force but, significantly, he did warn that, if mismanaged, it could become a platform for the interests of a small minority[19]. This was a veiled reference to the calls from certain influential quarters within the SWAPO-Party for the National Council and regional councils to be scrapped as ineffectual.

The Role and Profile of Councillors

The principal roles of regional councillors are to participate in the working of the council through attending monthly meetings and related activities, to serve their constituents, and act as go-betweens on personal and community problems and needs. Regional councillors have the great advantage of being the only political representatives elected by, and to represent, a

specific geographical constituency. Their role is thus not purely parochial but has wider importance. Representations have been made by individual councillors (and officers) to ministries on behalf of members of the public with specific problems or communities expressing particular 'development needs'. Where appropriate, such matters are debated at a monthly council meeting, with decision-making by consensus where possible or by a formal vote in the event of divided opinions and/or politically contentious issues. The precise format and tenor of meetings varies among regions, not least as a reflection on the personality of the governor.

Observation, discussion with regional officers and MRLGH staff all suggest that there is often wide diversity on any one council in terms of the energy and application of individual councillors. Some are extremely conscientious, and have been able to bring their influence to bear successfully; others seem rather aloof and preoccupied, spending little time liaising within their constituencies. A few individuals, usually members of opposition parties who also form a minority on the particular council, have acquired reputations among their colleagues and officers of being obstructionist and/or pursuing narrow party political interests at all costs. Relations between officers and councillors were generally reported to be cordial and supportive.

One important contributor to differential performance is clearly the background and experience of councillors. Some have high levels of formal education and professional experience; others were previously workers and trade union officials, while still others lack significant formal education and/or experienced exile and direct involvement in the liberation struggle from beyond Namibia's borders. A few training days and workshops were organised for regional councillors and staff during 1993 and 1994 by the MRLGH, the Director of Elections and relevant University of Namibia staff with financial support from the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung in particular. However, feedback to the organisers[20] and in the research reported here suggests that, while relevant and useful, these were rather general and thus neither wholly adequate in themselves nor specific enough for the various roles and functions which the councillors and officers would have to fulfil. The workshops were most appreciated for the opportunity to discuss and clarify ideas about the new institutions and structures of the state, where and how regional councils fitted into the system and what roles councillors would be expected to play[21].

The two councillors from each region who constitute the National Council clearly have greater commitments and responsibilities in combining these two roles, especially as National Council sittings take place in Windhoek. On the other hand, they have used the national forum increasingly well to articulate the concerns and issues of their respective regions, and also the problems and frustrations confronting regional councils in general. This has been most clearly and consistently expressed in the summary annual reports which the representatives from each region table in the National Council and then discuss in committee prior to their submission to the Cabinet. Almost without exception the first crop of these reports complained directly about the lack of staff and resources, the need for specific powers and functions to be decentralised to the regions, and the need for line ministries to take fuller account of regional priorities and aspirations through a process of consultation and negotiation. Ministry staff were alleged to be

high-handed and to regard approaches from regional councillors as unwarranted interference beyond the councillors' powers[22]. These frustrations are shared across political party lines, to the extent that Mr. Hishikushitja, a SWAPO-Party member representing Ohangwena Region, received unanimous support for his motion

> That this Council -
>
> *requests the different Ministries to decentralise some of their essential services to regions in order to adhere to the government's theme, "bringing government closer to the people" on which the Regional Election of 1992 campaign was based to be realised through the regional governments*[23].

Councillors from distant regions incur substantial travel expenses and time costs. Some complain that the MRLGH has been unwilling to reimburse these or to provide a vehicle for their use, thus in effect reducing the regularity with which they are able to travel between the two in order to carry out their duties in both. On the other hand, there has been some press criticism of councillors spending much of their time in Windhoek and claiming allowances from the regional council. At least one of these people has reportedly taken up full-time residence in Windhoek and rarely participates in regional council meetings or visits constituents. This issue has been linked to wider concerns about the extent of public accountability and the culture of transparency in Namibia[24].

Views from the Regions Versus the View from Windhoek

This subsection addresses relations between regional councils and the MRLGH and local authorities, and their respective perceptions of one another.

Regional Council Perspectives: The regional councils which responded to this survey generally felt that relations with the MRLGH were good or average. The following comment was typical: "Our relationship with the MRLGH is good and they are rendering all the services on our behalf on our agency agreement", although the one council which reported poor relations was controlled by the DTA. This may be significant, although a second DTA-dominated region was happy with its relations, while the third failed to respond to the survey.

All councils expressed grave concern regarding the lack of effective powers and resources allocated to the councils. Action to remedy this situation was urgently sought. Specific suggestions to provide regional council revenue were a tax on water and livestock auctions (Otjozondjupa), while Erongo mooted levies on forest products and on road traffic tolls, as well as business turnover and payroll taxes. As mentioned under 'achievements' above, problems with respect to traditional leaders and access to and use of communal land persisted and required action by the central state, through legislation and its subsequent enforcement. The

urgency of such interventions was stressed by those regional councils where communal lands are important.

Relations with local authorities were generally reported to be good and, if anything, better than with the MRLGH overall. Particularly pleasing aspects referred to were regular consultations and meetings; the ability of some regional councils to advise smaller local authorities on budgetary allocations and the rendering of services to them, especially those newly proclaimed in the communal areas. Local authorities were submitting copies of their monthly council meeting agendas and minutes as required; where appropriate, matters arising are then discussed.

These perspectives correspond to the view of regional councils expressed by most local authorities, except that many of the latter apparently did not receive specific assistance from their regional councils; indeed, some of the larger ones provided advice and assistance to the regional council. Local authorities also felt that regional councils needed to become more effective and have greater clout. Significantly, those local authorities which felt relations with their regional council to be only adequate or poor were almost invariably controlled by a political party other than that which held power in the regional council[25]. It was impossible to check whether such perceptions were reciprocated, since the survey questions concerned related to relations with local authorities in general, not individually named ones; none of the responses mentioned any particular local authority by name.

The Chair of the National Council, Mr. Kandy Nehova, who represents Oshana Region, has emerged as an energetic and vocal campaigner for greater regional empowerment and also for due status and recognition to be accorded to the National Council as the fully fledged second chamber of parliament. With some evident justification, he argues that the many National Assembly members see the National Council as a poor relation, and have frequently sought to circumscribe its influence through minimising the time available to the National Council for scrutiny of new bills, and by uniting across party lines to reject most amendments proposed by the National Council. He is also keenly aware of the tensions surrounding the decentralisation of powers to regional councils. Although the intention is good, the regional council system is not yet working well, because of the lack of devolution of power. In his view, regional councils *cannot* succeed under the present arrangements: "We need to do the thing wholeheartedly, not half-heartedly, if we are to have democracy". He sees education, health and water, in particular, as essentially regional issues, and want to see regional councils having a co-ordinating role across the activities of line ministries in each region[26].

The Ministry's View: Perhaps unsurprisingly, the view from the top of the MRLGH has been more critical. There is a sense of disappointment verging on frustration at what is seen to be hesitancy and under-achievement on the part of most, if not all, regional councils. The Minister, the Hon. Dr. Libertine Amathila, has frequently chided them publicly and expressed similar sentiments in relation to this project. Her view is that the functions allocated to them are

appropriate - and intentionally modest to start with. Their resources are also broadly adequate for their present functions, although the situation will improve once property rates start to flow from new towns being proclaimed in the communal areas; completion of this process was an urgent priority. In mid-1994 she was concerned at the low levels of activity in most regional councils, which "we are still baby-sitting", and contrasted them unfavourably with the new town councils in communal areas which were already seen to be doing far more. She was aware of criticisms about the Ministry by the regional councils but dismissed these as misplaced until the councils had some achievements to show. Moreover, the Ministry was ready to assist with planning and other specialist tasks upon request but none had been received as of then[27].

In common with many regional officers and councillors, the Deputy Director: Regional Government felt that the Regional Councils Act lay at the heart of some of the problems. In particular, Section 28 specifies regional council powers in broad terms while Section 29 gives the President discretionary power to delegate powers held by the President, Prime Minister or another Minister to a regional council "with a view to the effective administration of any law in a region or promoting the moral and social welfare of the residents of a region"[28]. This amounted to rather less than a statutory decentralisation of powers. In addition, Article 108 of the Constitution accords regional councils revenue raising powers and the right to share revenues with central government - something to which no real effect had been given. This was clearly problematic in his view. Nevertheless, regional councils were "just sitting, waiting for central government to delegate functions". In his view, their major role should be advisory rather than executive[29].

He also expressed concern that some regional councillors quickly began to seek high profile prominence, wanting "a direct line to central government" and even creating tensions at times by trying to bypass their regional officer. Some regional governors actually considered themselves to be representatives of central government rather than of local people. This, he felt, was partly attributable to the legacy of the interim system of appointed regional commissioners established by the President shortly after independence to act as a channel of liaison and communication between central government and communities in different parts of the country until the regional councils were inaugurated. Since they were centrally appointed, many of the commissioners had apparently felt themselves to be superior to local civil servants. He reported divergent views within the country on the extent to which regional governors now had constitutionally derived executive power or were merely the representative of their councils as chairs of their respective management committees. The Attorney-General was expected to give an advisory opinion on such matters in due course[30].

The Deputy Director receives unconfirmed minutes of all regional council meetings; he and his small staff try to give feedback within seven days, while also channelling requests to the relevant ministries. In other words, he regards his role as essentially advisory and to act as a pivot of contact between regional councils and central government. Performance and reliability of submission of documentation differed significantly among the councils. Kunene and Caprivi

appeared the least promising thus far, having met irregularly, communicated poorly and, in the case of Caprivi having failed to transcend local ethnic politics. By February 1995 he still felt that regional councils had been very slow off the mark overall, and were not always meeting their formal reporting requirements fully or punctually. Such perceptions in the country at large were giving rise to a vocal lobby arguing that regional councils should be abolished[31]. This point will be returned to in the following section.

EVALUATION AND COMPARISONS WITH RECENT INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

In weighing the available evidence and divergent views expressed, it has to be borne in mind that we are considering only the first two to three years' experience of entirely new institutions and the record of often inexperienced actors against a background of the apartheid legacy and Namibia as a newly independent state and an emergent non-racial democracy. Nevertheless, several clear conclusions emerge. These will be discussed in turn.

Democratic Centralism Versus Decentralised Democracy

The first and most general conclusion is that clear tensions between central government and regional councils are evident. To some extent, these have been played out in terms of personalities and specific behavioural criticisms. However, these are merely the more superficial manifestations of a profound struggle over executive power and resources. Such struggles are far from unique. They have characterised virtually all post-colonial states, irrespective of official ideological posture or actual development trajectory. At the heart of such struggles has been the very nature of the state, namely the extent to which effective power and the resources which the state controls are to be centralised in the hands of the executive and the headquarters of the line ministries, or decentralised to sub-national structures. Since three-tiered government structures are the norm, such sub-national structures generally comprise provinces, regions, districts or equivalent at the second tier level and local authorities (e.g. municipalities, urban councils, rural councils, communes) at the third tier level.

In most newly-independent countries of the South since World War II, small elites have succeeded in exercising a virtual monopoly over political power and the resources of the state through highly centralised institutions in a unitary state. Even where formal sub-national bodies have existed with nominally important functions, they have generally faced usurpation of some or all of those powers and have seldom been resourced adequately to perform their given functions. This is true of both second and third tier authorities[32]. Such centralisation has generally been justified on grounds of the need for strong government in the face of both internal and external threats to the integrity of the new states, the paucity of resources which can be most effectively controlled and disbursed from the centre in order to maximise national benefits, and claims that regional or local governments are themselves expensive luxuries in terms of skilled personnel and operating costs which poor countries cannot afford. Democratic centralism has therefore been espoused by a wide variety of regimes, with the emphasis generally far more on centralism than on substantive democracy. Very importantly, too, centralisation appeared a necessary and desirable strategy for those countries modelling themselves on the Soviet or Chinese prototypes for a supposed socialist transition. Despite the radical rhetoric, their record in addressing regional inequality was - with the exception of a

handful of overtly Marxist-Leninst regimes in Cuba and North Vietnam, for example - generally little better than in non-socialist countries in the South[33].

Although Namibia gained independence after the end of the Cold War and as the Soviet Union was disintegrating and socialist state forms were being abandoned across the South, many prominent Namibians, especially exiled SWAPO leaders, had enjoyed long and close associations with these ideologies and other liberation movements embracing them. Authoritarianism, secrecy and 'need to know' politics came to characterise the conduct of SWAPO affairs in exile, through a combination of ideological commitment, personal ambition, and necessity in the face of concerted South African efforts to infiltrate and subvert the guerrilla war and political resistance to its occupation of Namibia[34]. Officially, state or other socialism has not been part of SWAPO-Party's agenda since 1989, when it was conspicuously omitted from the election manifesto. There has certainly been little evidence of socialist inclinations in the govemment's record since independence. However, there are undoubtedly still strong centralising tendencies among the leadership, including some powerful cabinet ministers.

The establishment of the regional councils in their present form and with their functions and resourcing as set out in the Regional Councils Act represented a political compromise both between SWAPO and opposition demands during the drafting of the constitution, and also between the different tendencies within SWAPO on devolution and the effective empowerment of local communities. The centralists remain ultimately unwilling to cede greater power or resources to sub-national structures. Importantly, however, many of the most vocal critics of this position, both in central government and in the regional councils, are themselves prominent and loyal SWAPO-Party members. This indicates the inadequacy of any analysis based purely on party political affiliation: the conflict runs far deeper.

Regional Council Performance

The introduction of regional political for a comprising directly elected representatives within specific geographical constituencies has been a very positive development in itself, providing more accessible and accountable channels for communication and development promotion. However, notwithstanding a significant degree of variation in the performance of individual regional councils, there is universal disappointment in their early achievements. Councillors and officers are undoubtedly still on a learning curve, and some have certainly not always acted with mature judgement, but it would not seem realistic at this stage to anticipate radical increases in their activities and achievements if the status quo persists.

As councillors represent constituencies, they are far more directly accountable to their electorates than National Assembly members and are only too well aware of the precariousness of their positions if they consistently fail to deliver tangible results. They feel vulnerable on account of having no direct access to the sources of intervention or resources with which to act

in response to requests and more generalised demands from constituents. In most cases, they can but make representations to central govemment. Hence their political fate ultimately rests rather more in the hands of ministers, National Assembly members and civil servants in the line ministries than in their own performance as such.

While some criticisms of regional councils and councillors are valid, many of the most scathing are actually somewhat misplaced, reflecting the hamstrung position of these bodies. The broad powers accorded to them with respect to development promotion by the constitution and Regional Councils Act have created expectations which they are currently not equipped to fulfil. In essence, they have not been given the personnel or other resources commensurate with these powers, while the authority to perform specific functions within these powers has not been ceded by the executive or line ministries. I therefore conclude that they are not really capable of becoming much more than rather toothless advisory bodies under current circumstances, no matter how much the performance and efficiency of individuals might still improve. They should not be abolished on grounds of ineffectiveness but given the means to play a more proactive role. Of course, powerful interests in central govemment regard the most appropriate role of regional councils as essentially advisory - and it is only in this very narrow sense that the Minister of Regional and Local Govemment and Housing's claim that their resourcing is appropriate to their present functions may have some validity.

Recent intemational experience reveals clearly that a mismatch between functions and resourcing is one of the principal reasons for the failure of regional or decentralised institutions and government structures. It is certainly also true that new decentralised authorities have failed through the immediate allocation of excessively broad and demanding functions without adequate resourcing or allowing time for the system to bed down[35]. In this respect, there is a defensible case for gradually ceding additional responsibilities and resources over a specified time period.

However, to date there is no tangible sign in Namibia of any actual or intended transfer of effective powers, additional sources of funds or the establishing of even a vague timetable for such actions. Nevertheless, one important recent development is that the problems have at least been officially recognised. In mid-1995, a working party of the National Assembly and National Council undertook intemational study tours and presented a report to parliament on measures to consolidate parliamentary democracy. In respect of regional development, the report states that:

- The existing regional structure is too weak and under-resourced to provide a meaningful layer of govemment ... there has been no devolution of powers to Regional Councils although some ministries have decentralised their activities and appointed regional officers. These regional officers are directly responsible to their line ministries in Windhoek and have no accountability to the Regional Governors.

- The creation, in any country, of a regional level of government with true executive autonomy inevitably creates tensions. ... Such devolution can achieve greater sensitivity to local needs but result[s] in some inconsistency across the nation. The priority afforded to national unity and the limited resources available, particularly the resource of suitably qualified staff, suggests that it will be some time before Namibia can devolve significant executive powers, with revenue raising autonomy, to its Regional Councils.
- However, if these Councils appear to the public to have no realistic function they will rapidly lose credibility and risk disenchantment with the democratic process. It is thus important that a role for the Regional Councils is defined[36].

The role then advocated is purely consultative:

- ministries and the Cabinet on the needs and priorities of the individual regions. The Regional Council Officers should have the right to obtain information from ministries and should have the power to convene meetings of the ministries' regional officers. These meetings would not have executive authority to modify programmes, but would share information between ministries and the region[37].

The possibility of future devolution of service provision and revenue raising power "in the fullness of time" is raised, together with the allocation of token regional development funds of up to N$100,000 per region as an interim concession.

Although the explicit identification and discussion of the current problems and the suggestion that regional councils have a definite and clear consultative role are welcome and represent a considerable advance in the debate, this report has no statutory authority and it is by no means clear that the recommendations will be partially or fully implemented. Moreover, as explained below, these proposals do not go far enough. Regional councils can be given stronger teeth with very small additional net resource implications for the public purse.

Recommended Changes

It is clear that, in order for regional councils to become more effective and to perform any meaningful development role for their regions as a whole, to take responsibility for settlement areas or to provide practical assistance to local authorities as envisaged by the Regional Councils Act, specific delegation of powers currently vested in central government will be necessary, together with a commensurate increase in appropriate staff and other resources. Otherwise, decentralisation and regional democratisation will exist in name only and communities remote from the centre of power will become progressively more indifferent and disillusioned.

Many other African governments are having to institute multi-party political systems, to hold regular elections and to accord some greater powers to decentralised assemblies and other institutions as a result of concerted external donor pressure - through so-called political conditionalities imposed in structural adjustment and economic recovery programmes - as well as domestic political demands. Such measures are often incomplete, flawed, of very limited substance and open to circumvention[38]. However, Namibia is fortunate in having a model constitution with appropriate formal decentralised structures and supporting legislation, a fund of international goodwill by virtue of its tortured past and recent independence, and a relatively healthy economy. The opportunity to meet popular aspirations and achieve more locally appropriate development through the purpose-designed regional councils should not be missed.

The rationale behind the particular regional delimitations and establishment of regional councils in Namibia is that they should be appropriate for the promotion of territorial (or area based) regional development planning. This means that it should be performed on an integrated, locally appropriate basis that starts from the articulated priorities and needs of local communities and applies and co-ordinates the resources of the different ministries and other institutions to meet them. This is very different from the more common functional regional development planning approach, in which priorities are set centrally and separately within each sectoral (line) ministry for the entire country and its constituent regions. This latter approach - which characterises Namibia at present - has been shown to lack inter-sectoral co-ordination and frequently does not yield results which accord with local priorities or maximise local impacts. It is also not necessarily more efficient in overall resource or personnel terms, as frequently claimed by its supporters[39].

The first and in some ways most important development role that regional councils should perform has minimal resource implications and would require few additional skilled staff. This is the empowerment of each regional council to establish a regional development committee, which would act as the principal forum for exchanges of ideas and co-ordination between the regional council and different ministries, parastatal corporations and other institutions at the regional level. The committee would also have responsibility for drawing up strategic regional development plans on the basis of wide ranging public consultations and inputs. Importantly, for this system to work effectively, the committee would need to be chaired by the regional officer or regional governor. In addition, the regional representatives of each body should discuss how best to use their respective resources (in the context of overall ministerial or institutional budgets and investment programmes) to help meet regional development priorities and plans. The chair therefore would require some effective sanction to prevent the committee simply serving as a venue for each ministry to report on its programme over the next budget cycle once all key decisions have already been made in its head office[40]. This last - but vitally important - provision distinguishes the proposal from that advocated by the Namibian parliamentary working party.

Several parallel changes to the status quo would also be required for full effectiveness:

(1) The most basic change is that ministries would have to increase their levels of information exchange and co-operation with regional councils. Hitherto, some have singularly failed to provide any information and regional councillors or officers seeking information or to make a case have been rebuffed for interfering beyond their remits. A cabinet decision in late 1994 did actually require ministries to co-operate with regional councils in an attempt to overcome these problems. Communications channels must also be opened and made as direct as possible: current formal procedures appear convoluted and highly inefficient[41].

(2) The task of regional development planning - from the perspectives of the National Planning Commission, the ministries and regional councils - would be greatly enhanced if all ministries adopted the thirteen official regions as the basis for their activities around the country. Currently almost every ministry utilises a different set of regions. These vary greatly in number, size and boundaries. The origin of this patently unsatisfactory situation lies in the necessity for ministries to organise their activities on a sub-national basis immediately after independence. They could not or did not wish to await the report of the First Delimitation Commission. Some created their own new regions on the basis of perceived appropriateness while others continued using pre-independence regions. With the exception of Trade and Industry and the MRLGH, they have been reluctant to change their practice to accord with the thirteen new regions. This reflects inertia and, in some cases, concern that their existing regionalisation is more appropriate to their operations. It is understandable that different functions might optimally be provided through different regional patterns, but this really precludes effective inter-ministerial co-ordination and the formulation of regional development plans through the regional councils. It is therefore important that all ministries adopt the new regions; if fewer and larger regions are required then groupings of the thirteen official regions should be used in order to retain a basis of comparability.

(3) It would also be highly desirable for each ministry and parastatal to have at least a representative or small office based in each region, responsible for liaison with the regional council and other ministries. For the system to work well, these personnel would need to have appropriate decision-making authority to resolve most issues locally and not have to refer even the most basic questions to head office. Under these circumstances, continuity of contact and collaboration between officials of the various ministries, parastatals and regional councils should contribute to a different ethos based upon mutual respect, interchange of information and joint problem resolution.

Beyond these straightforward measures which have modest resource and staffing implications, but will greatly enhance the public status and practical role of regional councils, there is scope for debate and the gradual enhancement of their functions and resources to enable them to fulfil their potential and powers as meaningfully as possible. One likely constraint is the countrywide shortage of skilled technical and professional staff, such as planners of all specialisations. It

may therefore not be realistic for each regional council to employ a full complement of its own staff, but one helpful way forward would be for two or three regional councils, or perhaps a regional council and some of the local authorities within its borders to pool resources on a pro rata basis to employ such staff. Other pooling and agency arrangements might also be appropriate to maximise the efficient use of such personnel.

Senses of Regional Identity

Finally, it is worth reflecting that it is probably still too early for the new regions and regional councils to have contributed to new senses of regional identity. Many Namibians have strong ethnic and other affiliations which can be harnessed positively - as has been the case with efforts to forge a new Namibian national identity since independence - or exploited divisively. One example of the latter has been the ongoing feuding between Mafwe and Masubia tribal groups in the Caprivi Region. New identities or components of an identity cannot be 'manufactured' synthetically overnight; they must develop organically through acceptance and a sense of wanting to belong. It is therefore encouraging that news media and the public at large are now increasingly using the regions to describe where particular events occur, even when these have nothing specifically to do with regional councils. Similarly, professional and youth groups are forming regional associations on the basis of the new regional boundaries and names[42].

By and large, the regional boundaries have been accepted; a few specific concerns, such as the inclusion of Mukwe constituency (which lies west of the Okavango River) in Caprivi whereas it had previously formed part of the Kavango bantustan, can still be discussed and if deemed appropriate, altered through a future boundary delimitation.

The election of constituency representatives to regional councils has certainly proved important in initiating this process of regional identification among the population. However, if the regional councils remain in their present limbo, the initial electoral enthusiasm and associated expectations will soon give way to disillusionment and indifference. Measures along the lines recommended above will go far to remedying the situation and providing tangible reasons for - and benefits from - promoting regional coherence in a non-sectarian and inclusive rather than exclusive manner. Returning to the cartographic analogy in the Introduction, these would put Namibian regions on the map and give them substantive meaning rather than merely serving as lines delimiting boundaries. As Richard Crook's analysis of a comparable decentralisation programme in Ghana shows all too clearly, the price of not addressing the problems identified here will be high for Namibia:

- Democratisation of district government in Ghana between 1989 and 1992 did therefore achieve some success in political terms - as might have been predicted given the vigour of Ghanaian civil society. But the very success of this democratisation process

produced deep frustrations at the institutional level, frustrations which were reflected in the only marginal improvements in development performance. As the government of Ghana was fully aware, lack of tangible development outputs in turn undermined the other mission of the assemblies, which was to create a more legitimate and responsive form of government at the local level. A common explanation of these difficulties, in Ghana as elsewhere, was to invoke the 'lack of resources'. While it is true that the assemblies did lack both the personnel and the financial resources to fulfil adequately all of their very broad functions, this was by no means the whole story. The assemblies themselves failed to maximise the revenue sources available to them, and their actual expenditure frequently demonstrated a poor and erratic commitment to development and services. The main cause of the budgetary control difficulties lay in the weakness of the accountability structures[43].

NOTES

* The research reported here comprised part of a project on 'The restructuring of the post-colonial state in Namibia: regional councils and local authorities' funded by the British Academy and Nuffield Foundation. Professor Chris Tapscott, then director of the Social Sciences Division, Multidisciplinary Research Centre, University of Namibia, kindly provided an academic base for me as a Visiting Research Fellow during August-September 1994, while Marjorie van Wyk acted as an enthusiastic and able research assistant. A second spell of fieldwork was conducted in February 1995. The co-operation of the Honourable Dr. Libertine Amathila, Minister of Regional and Local Government and Housing, and her staff is gratefully acknowledged, as is the interest and responsiveness of regional council officers and councillors around the country. The paper also benefits from my experience as advisor, funded by the British government's Overseas Development Administration, to the Namibian government's First Delimitation Commission during 1990-1.

1. For most non-technical staff, this was the Ministry of Local Government and Housing (later renamed the Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Housing (MRLGH)).

2. They were Judge Johan Strydom (Chair), Professor Gerhard Tötemeyer (University of Namibia) and Martin Shipanga (prominent businessman and former inspector of schools). They were able to draw extensively on civil servants in relevant ministries and were served by a professional secretary and two expatriate expert advisors, including the present author.

3. See, for example, Walter B. Stöhr and Derek R. F. Taylor (eds), *Development from Above or Below? The Dialectics of Regional Planning in Developing Countries* (Chichester, Wiley, 1981); J. L. Coraggio, "Social spaceness and the concept of region", in F. Moulaert and P. W. Salinas (eds) *Regional Development and the New International Division of Labour* (Boston: Kluwer-Nijhoff, 1983); David Dewar, Alison Todes and Vanessa Watson, *Regional Development and Settlement Policy* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986); D. A. Rondinelli, A. Dennis, J. S. McCullough and R. W. Johnson, "Analysing decentralization policies in developing countries: a political economy framework", *Development and Change*, 20,1 (1989): 57-87; David Slater, "Territorial power and the peripheral state: the issue of decentralization", *Development and Change*, 20, 3 (1989): 501-531; David Simon, "The question of regions", in David Simon (ed) *Third World Regional Development: a reappraisal* (London: Paul Chapman, 1990).

4. Republic of Namibia, *Report by the First Delimitation Commission of Namibia on the Determination of Regions, Constituencies and Local Authorities* (Windhoek, 1991); Gerhard Tötemeyer, *The Reconstruction of the Namibian National, Regional and Local State* (Windhoek: Research Report 7, Namibian Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Namibia); James D. Sidaway and David Simon, "Geopolitical transition and state formation: the changing political geographies of Angola, Mozambique and Namibia",

Journal of Southern African Studies, 19,1 (1993): 6-28; D. Simon, "Namibia's new geopolitics: lessons for South Africa," *Indicator South Africa*, 10,4 (1993): 73-6.

5. Liambezi, the northeastemmost region, was changed to Caprivi; Mopani and Marula, the two northemmost regions, became Omusati and Ohangwena respectively, while Waterberg in the east became Otjozondjupa.

6. Republic of Namibia, *Government Gazette* 368 (Windhoek, 3 March).

7. It is noteworthy that the process subsequently followed in South Africa during the multi-party negotiating conference which drew up the interim constitution on which the first non-racial elections were fought, was very different. Various regional/provincial boundary proposals were submitted by the participating parties alongside their campaigns for a unitary or federal state structure. This was therefore highly politicized and contested in a way not seen in Namibia, where the political system is still in its infancy and the social scale is far smaller. However, in the end, South Africa's formal boundary demarcation process was conducted far too rapidly to enable the in-depth investigations carried out in Namibia. See Richard Humphries, Thabo Rapoo and Steven Friedman, "The shape of the country: negotiating regional government", in Steven Friedman and Doreen Atkinson (eds), *South African Review 7: the Small Miracle; South Africa's negotiated settlement* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1994); Richard Humphries and Thabo Rapoo (eds), *Governing the Provinces* (Johannesburg: Centre for Policy Studies in association with the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 1994); Yvonne G. Muthien and Meshack M. Khosa, " 'The kingdom, the volkstaat and the new South Africa: drawing South Africa's new regional boundaries", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 21, 2, (1995): 303-322; Roddy Fox, "Regional proposals: their constitutional and geographical significance", in Anthony Lemon (ed) *The Geography of Change in South Africa* (Chichester: Wiley, 1995).

8. Republic of Namibia, "Regional Councils Act", *Government Gazette* 469 (Windhoek, 31 August 1992); "Local Authorities Act", *Government Gazette* 470 (Windhoek, 31 August 1992).

9. David Simon, "Non-racial local authorities in independent Namibia: an evaluation of the first two years; summary report" (Egham, Surrey: unpublished report circulated to local authorities, the Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Housing, and other interested parties, October 1995); David Simon, "Restructuring the state in post apartheid cities: Namibian experience and lessons for South Africa", *African Affairs*, 95, 378 (January 1996): 51-84.

10. Republic of Namibia,"Regional Councils Act", pp. 36-7.

11. Bruce Frayne, Andrew du Plessis, Rodney Hopson, Martin Scharbler, David Simon and Chris Tapscott, Regional Development Strategy for Oshana, Omusati, Ohangwena and Oshikoto (Northern Namibia) (Windhoek: Social Sciences Division, Multi-disciplinary Research Centre, University of Namibia, Research Report 13, 1993); Gerhard Tötemeyer, André du Pisani and Victor Tonchi, *Namibia Regional Resources Manual* (Windhoek: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 1994); National Planning Commission, *National Development*

Planning and the Regions of Namibia (Windhoek: National Planning Commission and Social Sciences Division, Multi-disciplinary Research Centre, University of Namibia, 1994).

12. Gerhard Tötemeyer, "Government by the People; Regional Councils in Namibia - an Appraisal" (address delivered at the Lauching Congress of the Association of Regional Councils in Namibia,Tsumeb, 15 July, 1995).

13. David Simon, "Strategic territory and territorial strategy: the geopolitics of Walvis Bay's reintegration into Namibia", *Political Geography*, 15, 2 (1996): 193-219.

14. Reinhard Kössler, *Towards greater participation and equality? Some findings in the 1992 regional and local elections in Namibia* (Windhoek: Working Paper 27, Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit, 1993); Wade C. Pendleton et al., *A study of voting behaviour in the 1992 Namibian regional and local government elections, plus election statistics* (Windhoek: University of Namibia, 1993).

15. This refers to Aris and Kappsfarm (both Khomas Region), Omitara and Summerdown (both Omaheke) and Wlotzkasbaken (Erongo) (Republic of Namibia, *Government Gazette* 718, 8 September 1993; David Simon, "Non-racial local authorities in independent Namibia"; David Simon, "Restructuring the local state in post-apartheid cities").

16. These are Noordoewer, Warmbad, Ariamsvlei and Grünau (Karas Region), and Kalkfeld (Otjozondjupa) (Gerhard Tötemeyer, Director of Elections, personal comment, 3 November 1995; 14 March 1996).

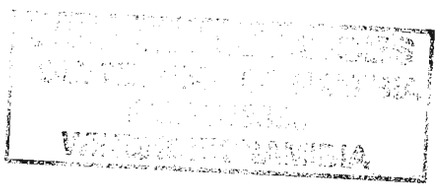
17. Survey results; see also *The Namibian* 18 March, 1994 (Windhoek); *New Era* 4-10 and 11-17 August 1994 (Windhoek); unpublished annual reports of regional councils; the somewhat different annual reports of regional councils tabled in the National Council - see Republic of Namibia, *Debates of the National Council 1993 Seventh Session, First Parliament, 12 October - 30 November 1993, Volume 4* (Windhoek).

18. National Planning Commission, *National Development Planning and the Regions of Namibia.*

19. *New Era*, 20-26 July 1995 (Windhoek). See also Gerhard Tötemeyer, "Government by the People"; *The Namibian* 18 July 1994 (Windhoek); "Declaration of Intent to Form an Association for Regional Councils in the Republic of Namibia" (Windhoek: press release by regional councils, 15 July 1994).

20. Gerhard Tötemeyer, André du Pisani and Victor Tonchi, "Regional councils workshop, September 1993 - February 1994: Report" (Windhoek: unpublished report to Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and MRLGH).

21. Interestingly, very similar feedback was obtained from general training programmes provided to office bearers of township civic associations and advice offices in South Africa to assist them adapt from a culture of resistance to apartheid to one of more conventional development activism in the rapidly changing political situation there in the early 1990s (Jeremy Seekings, Khehla Shubane and David Simon, "An Evaluation of the European



Community/Kagiso Trust Civic and Advice Centre Programme", Final Report, Pretoria/Johannesburg, March 1993).

22. Republic of Namibia, *Debates of the National Council 1993.* Interestingly, at the same time, most National Council members strongly criticised the Caprivi Region report as being too negative and for concentrating on the divisive ethnic feuding there, while omitting any reference to positive developments like govemment infrastructural projects in the region.

23. Republic of Namibia, *Debates of the National Council 1993*, pp.86, 128-131.

24. See, for example, *The Namibian*, 21 October 1994 (Windhoek); Gerhard Tötemeyer, "Govemment by the People", p. 9. The latter argues that this situation clearly violates the Regional Councils Act and the offender's resignation should be sought and required by law.

25. David Simon, "Non-racial local authorities in independent Namibia"; David Simon, "Restructuring the local state in post-apartheid cities".

26. Interview with Mr. Kandy Nehova, Windhoek, 21 February 1995.

27. Interview with the Hon. Dr. Libertine Amathila, Windhoek, 28 July 1994.

28. Republic of Namibia, *Regional Councils Act*, p. 39.

29. Interview with Mr. Titus Mbaeva, Windhoek, 28 July 1994.

30. *ibid.*

31. Interview with Mr. Titus Mbaeva, Windhoek, 16 February 1995.

32. William Tordoff (ed) *Administration in Zambia* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980); Jean-François Bayart, *The State in Africa; the Politics of the Belly* (Harlow: Longman, 1993); Philip Mawhood (ed) *Local Government in the Third World; experience of decentralization in tropical Africa*, (second edn) (Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, 1993); Peter Gibbon (ed) *The New Local Level Politics in East Africa* (Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, Research Report 95, 1994).

33. James Sidaway and David Simon, "Spatial policies and uneven development in the 'Marxist-Leninist' states of the Third World", in David Simon (ed) *Third World Regional Development*; James Sidaway and David Simon, "Geopolitical transition and state formation: the changing political geographies of Angola, Mozambique and Namibia"; David Simon, "The demise of 'socialist' state forms in Africa: an overview", *Journal of International Development*, 7, 5 (1995): 707-739.

34. See Colin Leys and John S. Saul (eds) *Namibia's Liberation Struggle: the Two-Edged Sword* (London: James Currey, and Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1995).

35. S. Cheema and Denis Rondinelli (eds) *Decentralization and Development: Policy Implementation in Developing Countries* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1983); David Simon, *Third*

World Regional Development; Peter Gibbon, *The New Local Level Politics in East Africa*; Philip Mawhood, *Local Government in the Third World*; William Tordoff and Ralph Young, "Decentralization and public sector reform in Zambia, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 20, 2 (1994): 285-299; Richard C. Crook, "Four Years of the Ghana District Assemblies in operation: decentralization, democratization and administrative performance", *Public Administration and Development*, 14, 4 (1994): 339-364; Joseph R.A. Ayee, "The measurement of decentralization: the Ghanaian experience, 1988-92", *African Affairs*, 95, 378 (1996): 31-50.

36. Republic of Namibia, *Agenda for Change: Consolidating Parliamentary Democracy in Namibia*. A report to parliament by a working group of the National Assembly and the National Council, July 1995, pp.15-16.

37. *ibid*, p. 16.

38. See for example, Peter Gibbon, *The New Local Level Politics in East Africa*; Samir Amin, "The issue of democracy in the contemporary Third World", in Ulf Himmelstrand, Kabiru Kinyanjui and Edward Mburugu (eds) *African Perspectives on Development* (Nairobi: E.A.E.P; Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota; Harare: Baobab; Kampala: Fountain; New York: St. Martin's Press; London: James Currey, 1994); John Mukum Mbaku and Mwangi S. Kimenyi, "Democratization in Africa: the continuing struggle", *Coexistence* 32, 2 (1995): 119-136; David Simon, "Debt, democracy and development: sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s", in David Simon, Wim van Spengen, Chris Dixon and Anders Närman (eds) *Structurally Adjusted Africa; poverty, debt and basic needs* (London: Pluto, 1995).

39. David Dewar, Alison Todes and Vanessa Watson, *Regional Development and Settlement Policy*; David Simon, "The question of regions"; John Friedmann, *Empowerment; the Politics of Basic Needs* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992).

40. Compare for example Marcel M. E. M. Rutten, "The district focus policy for rural development in Kenya: the decentralization of planning and implementation, 1983-9"; Ruud H. F. Jansen and Paul J. M. van Hoof, "Regional development planning for rural development in Botswana"; and Allert van den Ham and Ton van Naerssen, "System, structure and participatory development planning in Indonesia", all in David Simon (ed) *Third World Regional Development*.

41. Many regional officers told me that in order to liaise officially with a local representative of a line ministry they had to write to the MRLGH head office, which then contacted the relevant ministry, which then passed on the request to their local representative. The information would then flow back in the reverse direction, usually taking weeks if not months, despite the fact that the regional council and ministry representatives would often have offices in the same or adjacent buildings. This procedure was also reported in National Planning Commission, *National Development Planning and the Regions of Namibia*, pp. 14-15, although the MRLGH denied the existence of such bureaucratic procedures and claimed that direct communication was permitted. Either way, there is clearly unhelpful confusion which needs remedying.

42. *Namib Times* 2 August 1994 (Walvis Bay).

43. Richard Crook, "Four years of the Ghana district assemblies in operation", p. 361.

TABLE 1. GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE: THE POSTCOLONIAL NAMIBIAN STATE

BODY	MEMBERSHIP	ELECTORAL SYSTEM	TERM OF OFFICE
Presidency	1	Proportional (50% plus)	5 years (Max. 2 terms)
National Assembly	72 elected. In addition not more than 6 appointed by President	Proportional Representation: Party list system	5 years
National Council	26 (2 from each region)	Elected by each Regional Council from amongst its members	6 years
Regional Council	6-10 councillors per region (maximum 12)	'Winner takes all' per constituency	6 years
Local authorities (Municipalities, towns, villages)	Municipalities: 7-12 Villages: 7	First election (1992): proportional - party list system. Thereafter 'Winner takes all' per ward	5 years
Settlement areas	Determined by Regional Councils	Elected or designated by Regional Councils in such a manner as prescribed by the Minister of Regional and Local Government and Housing	No time limit determined

TABLE 2. POLITICAL COMPOSITION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS (1992 elections)

Region	No. of Constituencies/ Councillors	Party Affiliation	
Kunene	6	SWAPO	3
		DTA	1
		UDF	2
Omusati	9	SWAPO	9
Oshana	9	SWAPO	9
Ohangwena	10	SWAPO	10
Oshikoto	10	SWAPO	10
Okavango	6	SWAPO	6
Caprivi	6	SWAPO	2
		DTA	4
Erongo	6	SWAPO	4
		DTA	1
		UDF	1
Otjozondjupa	6	SWAPO	4
		DTA	2
Omaheke	6	SWAPO	1
		DTA	5
Khomas	9	SWAPO	6
		DTA	3
Hardap	6	SWAPO	2
		DTA	4
Karas	6	SWAPO	5
		DTA	1
TOTAL	95	SWAPO	71
		DTA	21
		UDF	3

Source: Republic of Namibia. *Government Gazette* 545 (Windhoek, 7 December 1992); Gerhard Tötemeyer, Victor Tonchi and André du Pisani. *Namibia Regional Resources Manual* (Windhoek: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 1994).

TABLE 3. BASIC REGIONAL INDICATORS

	Area (km^2)	% of National Area	Population (1991)	% of National Population	Average Population Density	% of Population Urban
Kunene	144,255	17.5	64,017	4.5	0.44	14
Omusati	13,638	1.7	189,919	13.5	13.93	0
Oshana	5,291	0.6	134,884	9.6	25.49	26
Ohangwena	10,582	1.3	179,634	12.7	16.98	0
Oshikoto	26,607	3.2	128,745	9.1	4.84	13
Okavango	43,418	5.3	116,830	8.3	2.69	17
Caprivi	19,532	2.4	90,422	6.4	4.63	15
Erongo	63,720	7.7	55,470	3.9	0.87	63
Otjozondjupa	105,328	12.7	102,536	7.3	0.97	46
Omaheke	84,732	10.3	52,735	3.7	0.62	16
Khomas	36,805	4.5	167,071	11.8	4.54	88
Hardap	109,888	13.3	66,495	4.7	0.61	44
Karas	161,325	19.6	61,162	4.3	0.38	37

Sources: Tötemeyer *et al.* (1993); National Planning Commission (1994); population data from 1991 census

Notes:

1. 'urban' defined in 1991 census as comprising all municipalities, towns and settlements with some 'basic social facilities'. This includes some, but not all, sizeable settlements in the communal areas
2. data have been rounded to the nearest whole number or decimal place, as appropriate

TABLE 4. REGIONAL COUNCIL FINANCES AND ALLOCATED REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPENDITURES

Region	1993/94			1994/95		
	Recurrent Expenditure N$	Current Income N$	Allocated Regional Development Expenditure N$, 000	Allocated Recurrent Expenditure N$	Estimated Current Income N$	Allocated Regional Development Expenditure N$, 000
Kunene	316,000	-	11,708	535,104	?	23,882
Omusati	316,000	-	59,024	645,922	-	42,419
Oshana	316,000	-	34,544	625,540	?	31,602
Ohangwena	316,000	-	3,994	734,596	-	11,267
Oshikoto	316,000	70,000	12,405	675,564	?	7,449
Okavango	316,000	-	52,189	465,922		28,256
Caprivi	316,000	?	6,500	513,269	?	17,885
Erongo	316,000	120,000(R)	18,735	439,564	?	10,785
Otjozondjupa	316,000	65,000(R)	26,664	439,564	?	51,302
Omaheke	316,000	40,000(R)	22,258	445,540	?	32,616
Khomas	316,000	2,432,000	41,610	663,286	2,600,000(R)	51,683
Hardap	316,000	13,464(R)	20,970	472,201	18,000(R)	10,921
Karas	316,000	58,145(R)	36,009	456,928	?	28,668

Sources: Expenditures - National Planning Commission (1994); Incomes - survey questionnaires and related data

Notes:

1. Current income data are provisional and may be incomplete
2. Regional development expenditures are calculated from the respective ministries' budget votes
3. R = local authority rates levy
4. Kunene RC reported that MRLGH compile and handle their budget
5. Oshikoto RC income calculated pro rata from actual income of N$104,478 (January 1993 - June 1994)
6. Khomas 1993/4 income apparently comprised the rates levy plus N$32,000 rental from farm land. By contrast, the estimates prepared early in 1994 comprised N$1,950,000 from the rates levy and N$73,500 interest on investments

FIGURE 1: THE POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY OF PRE-INDEPENDENCE NAMIBIA

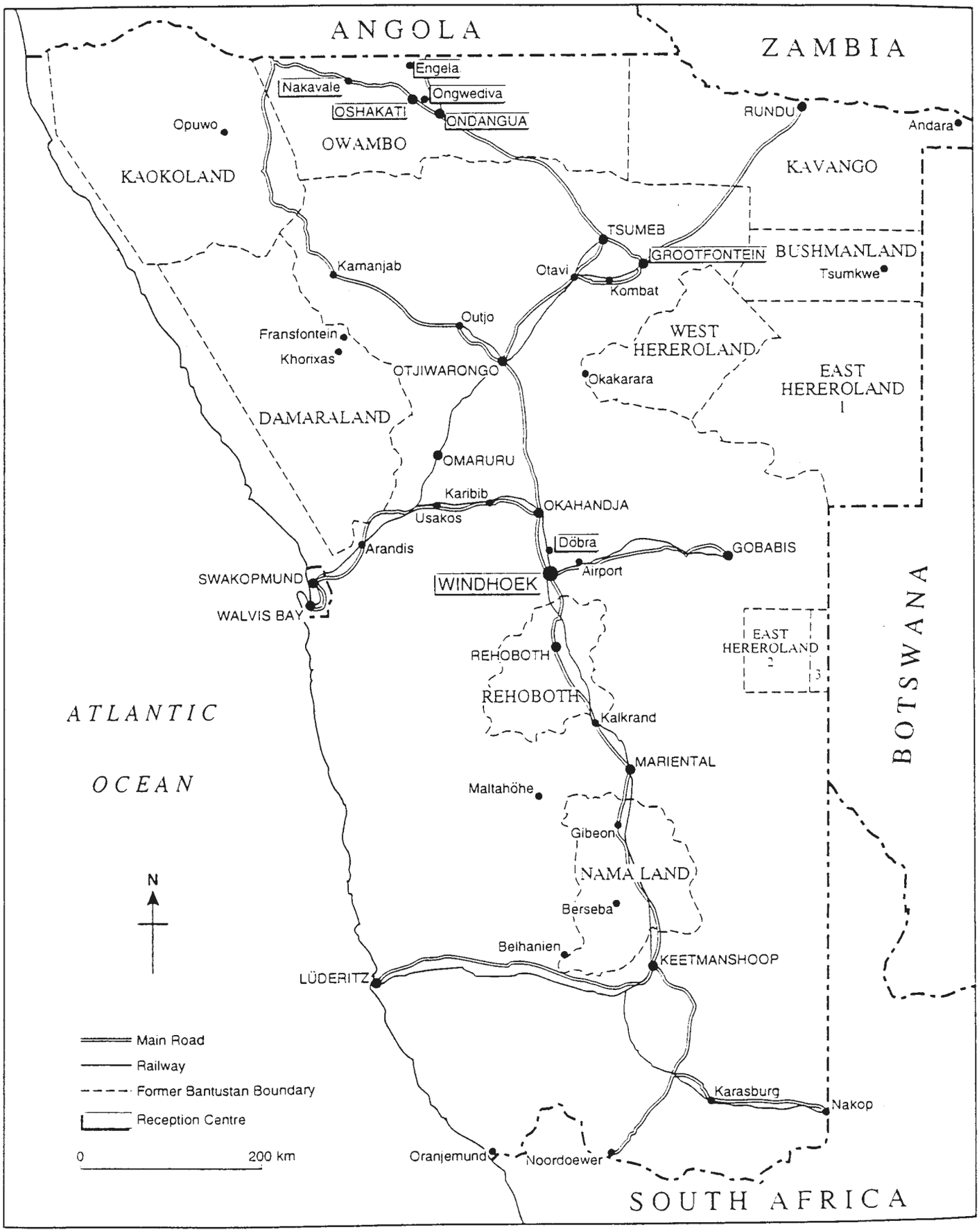
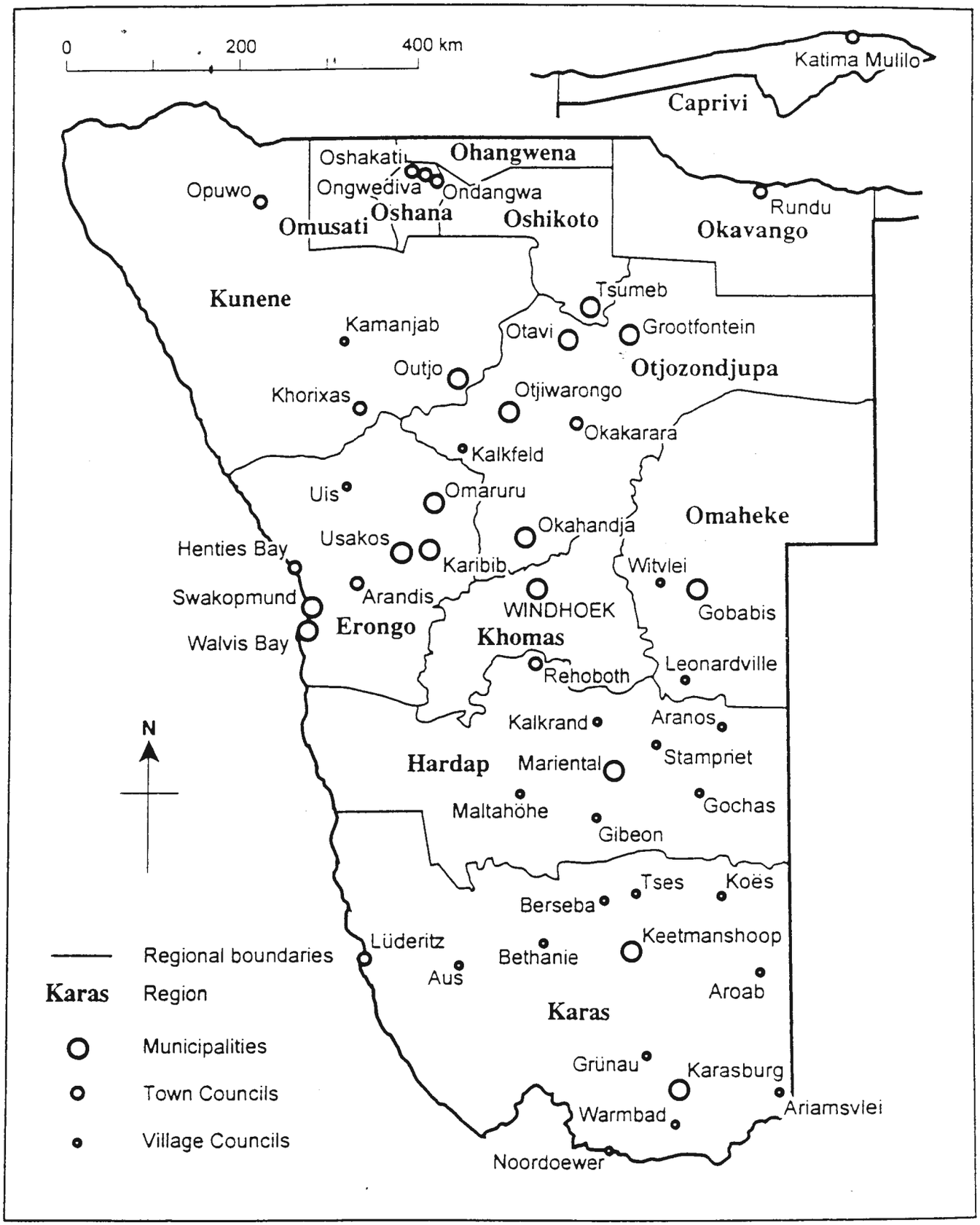


FIGURE 2: NAMIBIA'S NEW REGIONS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES



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