

**THE FAILURE TO REALISE "HUMAN CAPITAL":
OVAMBO MIGRANT LABOUR AND THE EARLY SOUTH AFRICAN STATE,
1915-1930**

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Northern labour migration in Namibia became large-scale and systematized under colonialism, leading Ruth First to argue in the early 1960s that "In Ovamboland ... government is of the people, by government officials, for the labour recruiter". [1] But, in the first fifteen years of colonial occupation, at least, it was quite the opposite. Prior to the decolonization process in Namibia, when access to archives was limited, detailed scrutiny of the immediate period after South African occupation of Ovamboland in 1915 was difficult. This paper discusses two dimensions of northern labour migration between 1915 and 1930: firstly its causes, and secondly migrants' room for manoeuvre within the fledgling contract labour system. For the South African state, these translated into problems of recruitment and control.

Between 1916 and 1929 there was less migrant labour than in earlier and later periods. Previously unused figures from the Ovamboland administration suggest the following trends. Firstly, very large numbers sought work in the south during the 1915-16 famine. In Karibib alone in early 1916 there were over 5,000 surplus Ovambo workers, causing the local magistrate to forward instructions to officials in Ovamboland not to allow any further migrants to come south. [2] But the migration rate after the famine dropped, settling into a rate well below pre-1915 levels. Between October 1916 and November 1917 the Resident Commissioner (RC) registered 3,168 workers to the south [3]; but from this point on they fluctuated between approximately 4,000 and 5,000, except for 1920 when the numbers topped 7,000 [4], and 1931 when they dropped below 1,500. [5] These rates nowhere returned to their pre-war average level of roughly 10,000 per annum. Except in 1930 when depression began, they remained insufficient to meet the needs of the South West Africa (SWA) economy.

Labour supply here ... fluctuates considerably according to the season of year, crops, native inclination, etc. and is hardly affected by the question as to whether there is a shortage or surplus at labour centres. [6]

Underlying socio-economic relations between migrants, lineage seniors and political rulers, intersecting with periodic environmental pressures, induced increases in labour migration or its contraction. These were areas over which the South African state, like the German administration before it, had very little control. [7]

The Dynamics of Migrant Labour

Migrant labour and its origins are among the few areas of debate in Namibia's sparse historiography. The fact that there was no taxation (until 1929) or land dispossession in Ovamboland has helped to avert cruder instrumentalist approaches. Historians have tackled structural conditions in Ovambo social formations themselves, especially under pre-colonial conditions. Migrant labour from Ovambo polities in southern Angola and northern Namibia predated colonial control by twenty-five years.

Clarence-Smith and Moorsom [8] attributed the pre-colonial origins of Ovambo labour migration to the aggravation of the processes of surplus appropriation by merchant capital. Involvement in long-distance trade led to debt, which caused kings and headmen (*omalenga*) to exploit internal cattle resources. In societies which were already highly differentiated, these extractions fell on the most vulnerable strata. One escape route from the ensuing "complex process of pauperization" was migrant labour. [9]

This approach has its critics. Gordon argues that variations in migration rates cannot be explained by "such catch-all and mechanistic explanations" as pauperization. [10] But variations are not the basic point. Clarence-Smith and Moorsom fix on one of the enduring sub-themes of labour migration prior to colonial occupation. Compared with central Angolan states which had experienced centuries of mercantilism and, over a long period, deflected their effects towards weaker zones, the relatively isolated Ovambo polities on the Cuvelai floodplain experienced merchant capital much later. Their economic reorientation occurred at a time of tightening colonial encirclement. They grew less and less able to project the impact externally; internal stress in Ovamboland brought the bigger eastern polities such as Oukwanyama close to fragmentation. Under new economic pressures and opportunities, *omalenga* tugged at the core of the centralized state and young men began to migrate to southern labour centres. [11] Thus merchant capital was an important backdrop to labour migration.

Emmett, on the other hand, has criticized Clarence-Smith and Moorsom for allegedly viewing ecological causation as only "contextual". [12] Emmett in turn slightly overstates his case: he neglects internal dynamics and treats the Ovambo sub-regional ecology and migration with too little specificity. Emmett bases his arguments on the work of Dias [13], but deploys no primary sources to substantiate his broad claim that the Ovambo floodplain experienced the same climatic trends as south-central Angola. Even when Ovambo migrated before 1880, they generally moved from one floodplain polity to another, except in years of exceptional drought which affected the entire eco-region. Only rarely did they leave the floodplain. Nor does "migration" automatically translate into wage-labour migration. Migrant labour was a new form of migration, which had more in common with raiding [14] or trading [15] parties than transhumance arising from a complex of environmental causes. Labour migration became part of famine behaviour in Ovamboland, but only after the structures of migration were established, and then it was only one of many "coping strategies". [16]

Climatic fluctuations and ecological crises [17] constituted one factor triggering labour migration. But the causes of labour migration cannot be reduced to an environmental squeeze. The crucial issue was its relationship with local mechanisms of control over labour, in conjunction with external factors. Nor was labour migration completely determined by the nature of internal controls: migrants exercised some autonomy over whether they would fall in with new methods of labour deployment by elders and political rulers, or whether they would evade mechanisms of control.

The paramountcy of areas of causation, whether ecological or socio-economic, is not the real issue: it is their interaction. A fruitful way of incorporating the historiographical approaches outlined above and assessing the evidence from 1915 to 1930 is to pose the question of causation around three axes: what caused whom to migrate when. Ecological factors are particularly helpful in answering the question of timing in upsurges of labour migration.

Those who took up early migrant labour were overwhelmingly young, unmarried men. The German missionary Wulffhorst stated in 1904 that, among the Kwanyama, migrants were the "sons of poor people". [18] At this period, and probably before, there existed a stratum of young men whose labour was increasingly mobilized by kings and headmen. The abolition of male circumcision in the initial phase of Kwanyama independence from Onkhumbi [19] in the 1850s implied increased royal power over labour at the expense of household and lineage heads. Though the missionary did not take this into account, it was against this backdrop that

Wulfhorst argued that kings had used young men's labour for their fighting and raiding bands. Wulfhorst believed that when external raiding declined due to the advances of Portuguese colonialism, cadets who earlier might have been "sent for war" became migrant labourers instead. [20]

What reasons did young men have for becoming migrant labourers? Here the question of impoverishment takes on importance. The eastern Ovambo kings' involvement in long-distance trade entailed an increase in internal cattle exactions. The shrinking of lineage herds had been exacerbated by the rinderpest epidemic of 1897. Labour earnings that went towards the acquisition of cattle were part of a longer-term reconstruction of lineage wealth, in constant tension with the centralizing kingships. It was ground constantly fought over, for both lineages and the tributary states sought shares of the labour migrant's earnings.

Numerous written sources, both primary and secondary, state that Ovambo kings transferred their interests in raiding and trade into labour migration, creaming off tribute from returning migrants. [21] But this may not always have been highly systematic. In most cases, social and ideological pressure rather than compulsion provided Ovambo kings with their "voluntary" gifts, called *pandulo* in Ondonga. [22] Oral historical sources suggest that informal presentations were the pattern.

The purchase of cattle was the main long-term aim of labour migrancy. While wages were used later in the colonial era to pay for stock [23], pre-colonial migrant labourers probably purchased materials in the south and exchanged them for cattle. It is not clear whether a single journey enabled a migrant to set up his own household. Probably any cattle would contribute towards his matriclan's herd, from which would eventually come the cattle necessary for his marriage, homestead and land usufruct costs. [24]

In this early period wages were also used to purchase clothing. These were not only exchange items [25] but signified status. [26] They were particularly important for the growing number of Christian migrants.

Up to 1907, there were probably never more than about 1,700 Ovambo migrant workers in the SWA Police Zone at any one time. [27] But from 1904, the demands of the German economy in the south were transformed. Urgent labour demands followed expansion in the mining and railway sectors. In 1904 the Germans did not renew the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association's right to recruit in SWA. [28] The obvious palliative after the 1904-07 Herero and Nama rebellions was to mobilize Ovambo labour. [29] Dorbritz, the German Consul in southern Angola, argued that while Ovamboland was not worth occupying, its "human material" was of "capital value". [30] German officers reached agreements with Ovambo rulers to allow labour recruiters access to these independent polities, and for the "protection" of Ovambo workers in the Protectorate proper.

During the phase between 1907 and 1916, labour migration reached a peak not achieved again until the 1930s. By 1910 the annual total of migrants reaching the south had risen to over 9,000. [31] Emmett rightly points to the correlations between the increase in migrant labour and drought, famine and flooding between 1907 and 1916. [32] German recruiting efforts were, in fact, peripheral to these increases and, even when the Ovambo supplied an average of 10,000 labourers annually between 1910 and 1914, chronic labour shortages remained in the Police Zone. [33] Numbers were not the only problem. Wege shows that absconding and absenteeism led to such a degree of fluctuation in the work-force and low productivity that employers made urgent representations to the administration, who in turn upbraided Ovambo rulers. [34] When one German official rebuked the Ndonga king, Kambonde, in 1912 for his migrant subjects' absenteeism, he countered that he was powerless to do anything about it. [35]

Migrant Labour 1915-30

What is striking about evidence from the early South African colonial period is that the correlations between drought, famine and labour migration were much more complex than Emmett's analysis for the German period would imply. Inadequate recruitment in the specific period just after colonial occupation in 1915 was due to factors inextricably tied up with post-famine recovery. Reconstruction of cattle herds, in particular, required the labour of young men; herds were split into small units and sent off to the Oshimpolo outposts, each requiring two herders. [36] Agricultural cultivation, especially until the harvest of 1917, also tied down labour to the homestead. Accompanying this were ideologically unifying mechanisms such as *efundula*, the female initiation ceremony at whose conclusion marriage partners were claimed. [37] All these reconstructive activities prevented the labour of young men from leaving Ovamboland. Moorsom correctly argues that this was a period of consolidation of lineage social relations. [38]

Shortfall in numbers at this time was exacerbated by the migrants' autonomy in the timing of their departure south. Colonial officials attempting to spur recruitment were dependent on the fate of the crops and the cycle of pastoral activity. For example, in late 1916 and early 1917, the Resident Commissioner (RC) advised Windhoek that "the population was now actively preparing the fields, and the men are reluctant to leave until these are established". [39] In January 1917, the Tsumeb mine found it impossible to obtain labour. Despite "acute labour needs in the mines", which had made a demand for 1,400 labourers in March 1917 [40], the bulk of the potential labour migrants were unlikely to leave "until the marula drinking and harvest were over". [41]

1917, as a whole, was unsatisfactory. Again in mid-1918, the RC warned Windhoek that until mid-August:

a considerable proportion of young unmarried men, who make up the majority of labourers from this country, will remain in Ovamboland for the customary bringing of cattle to the fields preparatory to being sent to distant outposts for the dry months. [42]

The recovery period from the 1915-16 famine was roughly two years. But the problems of labour shortage remained chronic for the Ovambo administration. The greatest check to labour flow appeared in October 1918; all recruitment was halted as Spanish influenza took grip in the territory. [43] A similar epidemic disrupted the labour flow in 1925. [44] Working conditions at the actual labour centres - the core grievances of labour relations - also affected recruitment. [45] The August 1925 strike in Otavi reduced the labour flow to a trickle. Returning workers stopped outgoing recruits in this case by telling them no work was available in the south. [46]

Initial labour recruitment policy relied on the persuasion of collaborative Ovambo leaders. [47] In 1918 colonial policy towards headmen who actively recruited for the administration was laid out. The original proposal had been to award headmen a fee for each migrant recruited [48], but the RC Manning recommended that this money should be used instead for feeding the migrant as he walked south. The RC argued that a system of quasi-tribute already operated. [49]

In Ondonga certainly the *pandulo* system operated as in the pre-colonial period. Evidence from Uukwambi suggests that in the 1920s extraction became increasingly stringent, involving a large cut of the wages or goods brought back to the north. [50] Migrants who had been to the diamond fields were targeted in particular. One oral source alleged that migrants were obliged to pay the Kwambi king, Ipumbu, £1 upon their return. Clothing and knives were also demanded. [51] Ipumbu's extraction of "gifts" in order to purchase various items (including a car) must, however, be viewed in the particular context of his centralizing and

anti-colonial chiefly grip over Uukwambi.

During periods of political tension Ipumbu actually suspended migrants from leaving to work in the south. [52] Despite such bans, young Kwambi men continued to leave clandestinely to work in the south. They did so with the support of their kin. One oral informant described how, on his return from taking up a prohibited contract in the south, Ipumbu "referred to me as a vagabond. He said that I always wanted to escape and that I did not want to carry his gun." [53]

Conditions for Kwambi migrant labour were not universally the case in Ovamboland. It remains difficult generally in Ovamboland to quantify the proportion of wages which accrued to headmen and kings, because these remained largely informal. Lebzelter assessed the average expenditure pattern of Ovambo migrants for the late 1920s as follows: out of an annual wage of R60, fully one third was spent on "purchases" and a further R8 [10] at the mine store by then established in Ovambo. Aside from "taxation" or "gifts" to leaders, much of the remainder went on the workers' own reproduction costs. [54]

The greatest importance must be attached to the migrant's efforts to obtain cattle. The latter contributed to the matrilineal herds and facilitated marriage. Ovambo bridewealth payment was distinct from that of other southern African societies supplying labour migrants. Commercialization and inflation of bridewealth, as happened in patrilineal societies such as Harries describes for the Tsonga in Mozambique, were not the case with the Ovambo. [55] Even the pressures on the matrilineal inheritance system, characteristic of other central African societies entering the capitalist labour market, were relatively delayed in Ovamboland. The plough, a resource of central importance in pressurizing matrilineal inheritance norms to shift towards direct father-son descent, was introduced relatively late in Ovamboland and not in widespread use before the 1940s. [56] This was probably one factor in capitalism's relatively slow impact on bridewealth and matrilineal inheritance patterns in Ovamboland. [57] This very slow seepage of capitalism into the north helps to explain the lower labour supply from Ovamboland between 1915 and 1930.

The question of cattle accumulation in Ovamboland contrasts fundamentally with the Herero further south. Among the Herero, argues Werner, pastoralism offered opportunities for self-peasantization and was energetically pursued as a means of avoiding wage labour. [58] The Ovambo had no access to external markets to exchange cattle or dairy products. No traders were allowed into Ovamboland; the only exchange which could take place was through cash purchase of goods at the Chamber of Mines store when this was established in the late 1920s. [59] Commodity exchange took place internally and in kind. Moreover, the absence of taxation and grazing fees did not place pressure on the Ovambo to intensify commodity production, as occurred in the Herero case. [60] Nor did the Ovambo experience the same land pressures. Their experience of peripheral integration into capitalism operating in the central territory of SWA made the terms on which they responded to the pressures of the colonial economy very different from those of the Herero.

In an attempt to tackle inadequate labour supply, a full-time recruiting agent named Cope was appointed by the Consolidated Chamber of Mines in 1926. The agent concentrated his efforts on persuading the Ndonga to migrate, as their low rate of labour migration was "out of all proportion for the biggest tribe of 40,000". Mission influence was blamed, as was the weak influence of their king. [61]

Early 1927 saw a slight increase in the migration rate; many of the new recruits were very young boys increasingly directed towards farm labour. Such youthful labour had also emerged during the 1915-16 famine, and had been similarly allowed to take up farm labour. [62] Such migration suggested a weakening of social control over youths. It had implications for the later transformation of contract labour into a highly regular pattern in the lives of Ovambo men, for these youths became conditioned to the system from an early age. [63]

Fluctuations in the late 1920s continued, sensitive to developments in areas where the labour was directed. In April 1927 a large drop was reported from the previous month, partly due to harvest, but the Native Commissioner (NC) [64] speculated that it was prompted by the rumour that all labour was being sent to Tsumeb. [65] Overall it was noted that "Cope was not meeting with conspicuous success". [66] By 1927 an increasing amount of cash from migrant labour earnings was being spent at the store opened by the Chamber of Mines. "Up to the present, however, it does not appear to have made much difference to the annual totals of labour recruits." [67]

The late 1920s even began to show a fairly steady decline in migrant labour. In 1928 the October figures were the lowest for two years; the slump in Kwanyama migrants was especially noticeable. This was blamed on political uncertainties surrounding the final border demarcation with Angola. [68]

Colonial Control and Labour Migration

Colonial administration at its inception depended on existing mechanisms of labour organization. The mandatory award to South Africa in late 1920 motivated increased efforts to tighten procedures and recruitment, but until the mid-1920s labour control remained tenuous. South African officials commented unfavourably on the weak influence the Germans had established over the Ovambo. [69] Moreover, the German labour system had provided no infrastructure for the movement of labour from the north to the Police Zone. Plans for the construction of a railway line between Otavi and Ondonga had been halted by the outbreak of hostilities in 1915 [70], never to be resumed by the South Africans. These were the fragile residues of the German labour system over which a handful of Union officials now presided.

From 1915 to 16, officials tried to encourage migrant labour to follow the route from Ondangwa to Namutoni, and from there to Tsumeb. [71] This was to systematize the labour route south and to service Tsumeb's own labour needs. The aim was to cut the route through Okaukweyo and Outjo. Water and food were made available at Namutoni and on arrival at Tsumeb. [72] Vast distances between these points remained a discouragement. The seven-day journey by foot from Ondangwa to Tsumeb was almost waterless; wild animals remained a real danger. [73]

Labour's preference was to avoid Tsumeb and head for the magistracy of Karibib. [74] A powerful incentive was that from Karibib they could be directed to the southern diamond fields near Luderitz, rather than the northern mines or farms near Tsumeb. [75] Given the extremely long lines of administrative communication between Ovamboland and most labour centres in SWA, it was not surprising great loopholes existed to be exploited.

Labour migrants were generally reluctant to submit themselves for registration in recruitment centres in Ovamboland, and unwilling to carry passes. [76] Angolan labourers not only avoided registration at Namakunde on the new South African-Portuguese border [77], but changed their names at the registration centre in Ondangwa to avoid detection of their origins. This was especially the case when Portuguese tried to impose restrictions against allowing Angolan labour to migrate to SWA. [78]

By 1918 a new system of identification was proposed, using metal disks (*odalate*) rather than paper ID. In the state's position of relative weakness, officials laid blame for aberrant Ovambo behaviour on their experience under German masters. [79] But, despite reports by headmen that "people never complained of the harsh usage which formerly existed" [80], migrants continued to practise evasions under South African rule.

Greatest efforts went into avoiding farm labour. Like the constant flow of information about the Southern Rhodesian labour market to the rural hinterlands of central Africa [81], reports

by returning Ovambo workers affected the next wave of outgoing migrants. This intelligence influenced choice of work-place by Ovambo migrants and whether they would migrate at all that season. [82]

Fragility of colonial recruiting efforts was revealed in local officials' cautions to employers against maltreatment and the turning away of unsuitable labour. There is a slight suggestion of the "liberalism" Emmett has noted among central administrators [83], though in Ovamboland it was probably plain pragmatism, stemming as it did from a weak position. This is illustrated in the recommendations made by Manning to labour centres in the south not to turn away over-youthful [84] or unhealthy migrants. These, if refused, might jeopardize the larger flow of labour by spreading word of their rejection. [85] "Bad work" forced on Ovambo migrants acted as one disincentive for prospective migrants who might follow them south. Problems were serious enough in 1917 to warrant the RC's hearing of all cases of alleged underpayment. [86]

Manning also advised against efforts to break down the group formations which Ovambo migrants preferred, both during their journeys and at the workplace [87], and supported the Ovambo prejudice against farm labour. [88] The administration's prioritization of mining labour requirements over farming in this period worked in favour of Ovambo labour.

Further migrant ploys included the use of visiting passes to the south. The RC suspected "these natives are attempting to proceed to Walvis Bay to enter work with the Harbour Works" [89], avoiding the mine labour which the recruiting mechanisms favoured. In March 1926 the NC suspended the issue of visiting passes, except in special cases.

The final problem in the systematization of migrant labour was the administration's weakness in tackling desertions. The OMEG mine in Tsumeb suffered acutely from this problem. [90] Desertion was fairly intractable at this stage because of the difficulty in tracing the offenders. [91] Officials assumed most deserters lived in Angola, where no follow-up action was possible, but the majority of deserters may in fact have been from SWA territory. [92]

1930: a Context of Famine and Depression

Initial room for manoeuvre by labour migrants was facilitated by the territory's problems of labour shortage. But the effects of the world depression at the beginning of the 1930s reduced employment in mines. Though this implies SWA entered a decline, and the economic history of the ensuing decade is more complex than this, from the point of view of Ovambo migrants significant disadvantages appeared in the labour market at this juncture. From June 1930, when the first intimations of unemployment in the south emerged, Cope stopped recruiting for the labour organizations and for the first time the administration gave precedence to the labour requirements of the white farming sector. [93] The implications for labour were significantly lower wages, isolation at the workplace, with less scope for group action against exploitation and abuse.

Because of the 1929-30 famine and state responses to it, in 1930 district administrations all over SWA launched road construction projects to provide labour and ensure that financial remittances reached famine-stricken Ovamboland. Thus the real turnaround in labour demand from the mining sector was initially masked by public works projects. Men seeking work were offered employment with the road boards. But it was an unpopular option, owing to low wages and the fact that food was excluded. [94] When a small amount of work became available again on mines in September 1930, the Southern Labour Organisation quickly absorbed recruited labour and road work was shunned. [95] Those who did resort to road labour barely contained their dissatisfaction with the conditions, leaving as soon as prospects in Ovamboland improved. In addition, many potential labour migrants avoided migrating south altogether and obtained food from their spouses and kin working on the

Ovamboland famine relief programme, despite official prohibitions on feeding "able-bodied" men.

Administrative preoccupations remained centred on control of labour, in this epoch portrayed as necessary to the economy of famine relief. Officials in Ovambo protested at the re-employment of expired contractees from Luderitz at northern mines. [96] Ovambo migrants also procured visiting passes to the south, "where it was quite easy for them to get passes to look for work on stating that they have experienced delay and must earn money to enable them to return home". [97] In this way they were exercising more power of choice at labour centres, only possible when recognized labour organizations were evaded. [98] Windhoek chivvied the Native Affairs staff in Tsumeb to interrogate all arriving migrants to ascertain who had visiting passes under false pretences.

It was an ongoing tussle for better conditions at work in a worsening scenario of unemployment and choice of workplace. In addition, a new pattern of recurrent migration was emerging. This was partly connected with the modernization of infrastructure and the introduction of motorized transport between Ovamboland and the railhead in Tsumeb. It was also fostered by long-term pressures on the environment, exacerbated by the land squeeze in northern Ovamboland after the redefinition of the Angolan boundary in the late 1920s. The type of migrant also began to change: increasing numbers of married men were taking up contracts.

In conclusion, the conjunction of these cumulative changes, crisis-related pressures and infrastructural modernization ensured that labour migration from Ovamboland had become structurally more entrenched by the early 1930s than it had been prior to 1915. This shift was emerging at the same time as new constraints on labour began to operate in the southern centres to which they migrated, most notably the prioritization of farm over mine labour.

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References

- NAN - National Archives of Namibia, Windhoek
RCO - files of Resident Commissioner Ovamboland
NAO - files of Native Commissioner Ovamboland
ZBU - files of Zentralbureau des kaiserlichen Gouvernements
- AVEM - Archiv der Vereinigte Evangelische Mission, Wuppertal, Germany

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Notes

- 1 Ruth First, *South West Africa* (Harmondsworth, 1963), p 125.
- 2 NAN RCO 2/1916/3, RC Ovamboland - UG Representative Namakunde, 7 February 1916.
- 3 NAN RCO 2/1916/1, RC Ovamboland - Secretary Protectorate, 1 December 1917; Hahn - RC Ovamboland, 25 September 1917.
- 4 Robert Gordon, "Variations in Migration Rates: the Ovambo Case", *Journal of Southern African Affairs*, Vol 3, No 3, July 1978, p 265; his figures are based on Union of South Africa, *Annual Reports of the Administrator of South West Africa to the Council of the League of Nations*, 1920-22.
- 5 Union of South Africa, *Annual Report* 1931.
- 6 NAN RCO 2/1916/1, RC Ovamboland - Secretary Protectorate, 20 March 1918.
- 7 *Ibid.*
- 8 Gervase Clarence-Smith and Richard Moorsom, "Underdevelopment and Class Formation in Ovamboland, 1844-1917", in R Palmer and N Parsons (eds), *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa* (London, 1977), *passim*; Richard Moorsom, "The Formation of the Contract Labour System in Namibia, 1900-1926", in A Zegeye and S Ishemo (eds), *Forced Labour and Migration. Patterns of Movement within Africa* (London, 1989), *passim*.
- 9 Clarence-Smith and Moorsom, "Underdevelopment", p 182.
- 10 Gordon, "Variations", p 261.
- 11 Patricia Hayes, "A History of the Ovambo of Namibia, ca. 1880-1935" (PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 1992), pp 87-100. Ukwanyama, the largest Ovambo polity, certainly increased raiding into large areas of southern Angola. But this external activity was steadily curtailed from 1907.
- 12 A B Emmett, "The Rise of African Nationalism in South West Africa/Namibia, 1915-1966" (PhD thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1987), p 307, endnote 7. In Moorsom's defence, see his statistical analysis of climatic and harvest data, 1868-1937, in Moorsom, "Formation", pp 64-72 *passim*.
- 13 Jill R Dias, "Famine and Disease in the History of Angola c.1830-1930", *Journal of African History* 22 (1981), pp 349-378.
- 14 Moorsom, "Formation", p 85.
- 15 Harri Siiskonen, *Trade and Socioeconomic Change in Ovamboland, 1850-1906* (Helsinki, 1990), pp 229-30.
- 16 Michael Watts, "Entitlements or Empowerment? Famine and Starvation in Africa", *Review of African Political Economy*, 51, 1991, p 18. See Chapters 5 and 7.

- 17 See for example W G Clarence-Smith, "Drought in Southern Angola", unpublished paper, African History seminar (SOAS/ICS), University of London, 1974.
- 18 AVEM c/k 7 No 2, Wulfhorst, Was können wir tun, 1905.
- 19 Rene Pélissier, "Les Guerres Grises", *Résistances et Révoltes en Angola (1845-1941)*, (Orgeval, 1977), p 61.
- 20 AVEM c/k 7 No 2, Wulfhorst, Was können wir tun, 1905.
- 21 Moorsom, "Formation", pp 82 and 84; Siiskonen, *Trade*, p 233; Clarence-Smith and Moorsom, "Underdevelopment", p 107.
- 22 Interview with Elifas Shindondola, Oniipa, Ondonga, 20 November 1989; interview with Petrus Ndongo, Odibo, Oukwanyama, 23 November 1989.
- 23 Interview with Julia Mbida, Odibo, Oukwanyama, 21 April 1989.
- 24 Fritz Wege, "Die Anfänge der Herausbildung einer Arbeiterklasse in Südwestafrika unter der deutschen Kolonialherrschaft", *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 1, 1969, p 207; *Luderitzbucher Zeitung*, Nr 45, 5 November 1910.
- 25 As exchange items, clothing or cloth were used to pay for the labour of neighbours in the absence of the head of the homestead: interview with Julia Mbida, Odibo, Oukwanyama 21 April 1989. Clothing was also used by southern employers as payment in kind to "raw" and inexperienced migrants, instead of cash wages: interview with Titus Iita, Nakayale, Ombalantu, 3 November 1989.
- 26 Oral accounts lay considerable emphasis on the migrants' acquisition of clothing. Interview with Konis Imene and Aune Shaningwa, Onampadhi, Ondonga, 4 November 1989; interview with Tomas Kalumbu, Okadiina, Ondonga, 5 November 1989; interview with Simeon Heita, Onawa, Ombalantu, 19 February 1990; interview with Titus Iita, Nakayale, Ombalantu, 3 November 1989; interview with Josua Hamamudibo, Ondobe, Oukwanyama, 17 September 1989. See also Siiskonen, *Trade*, p 236.
- 27 Clarence-Smith, "Drought"; Georg Nitsche, *Ovamboland* (Kiel, 1913), p 133.
- 28 William Beinart, "'Jamani'. Cape workers in German South West Africa, 1904-12", in W Beinart and C Bundy, *Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa* (London, 1987), p 169.
- 29 Official recruitment of Cape labour was halted in 1912: see Beinart, "'Jamani'", pp 182-83.
- 30 NAN ZBU AI H2 Bd 1, Dorbritz - Reichskanzler, 12 August 1904; see also NAN ZBU JXIII B3 Bd 4, Wulfhorst - Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft, 6 January 1905.
- 31 Moorsom, "Formation", p 79.
- 32 Emmett, "Rise of African Nationalism", p 307.
- 33 The boundary placed many Ovambo inside Portuguese territory, where Germany was forbidden to recruit labour. Negotiations to end this prohibition were interrupted by World War I. Wege, "Anfänge", p 209.
- 34 *Ibid.*, pp 200-3.

- 35 NAN ZBU WII k2 B3, Streitwolf - Gouverneur, 30 September 1912.
- 36 For this trend see NAN NAO Vol 18 11/1 v 1, OC NA Ovamboland - Secretary SWA, Annual Report 1928.
- 37 NAN RCO 2/1916/1. RC Ovamboland - Secretary Protectorate, 3 July 1918.
- 38 Moorsom, "Formation", p 89.
- 39 NAN RCO 2/1916/1, RC Ovamboland - Secretary Protectorate, 3 November 1916.
- 40 NAN RCO 2/1916/1, RC Ovamboland - UG Representative Namakunde, 6 March 1917.
- 41 NAN RCO 2/1916/1. Manning - Secretary Protectorate, 28 March 1917.
- 42 NAN RCO 2/1916/1, RC Ovamboland - Secretary Protectorate, 3 July 1918.
- 43 NAN RCO 2/1916/1, RC Ovamboland - UG Representative Namakunde, 14. October 1918; Military Magistrate Tsumeb - Secretary Protectorate, 28 November 1918.
- 44 NAN NAO Vol 18 11/1 v 1, OC NA Ovamboland - Secretary SWA, Annual Report 1925.
- 45 NAN NAO Vol 18 11/1 v 1, OC NA Ovamboland - Secretary SWA, Monthly Report October 1928.
- 46 NAN NAO Vol 18 11/1 v 1, OC NA Ovamboland - Secretary SWA, Monthly Report June 1925.
- 47 NAN RCO 10/1919/8, Memorandum of meeting with Ovakuanyama headmen and Major Fairlie, 7 December 1917.
- 48 NAN RCO 15/1916/1, Fairlie, Report on the Situation in the Ovakonyama country as developed by Recent Military Action, 25 March 1917.
- 49 NAN RCO 2/1916/1. RC Ovamboland - Secretary Protectorate, 25 February 1918.
- 50 NAN RCO 3/1919, Missionary Tylvas - RC Ovamboland, 3 August 1922.
- 51 Interview with Aromas Ashipala, Jason Ambole, Petrus Eelu, Vilho Tshilongo and Jason Amakutuwa, Elim, 25 September 1989.
- 52 *Ibid.*
- 53 *Ibid.*
- 54 Viktor Lebzelter, *Eingeborenenkulturen in Südwest- und Sudafrika* (Leipzig, 1934), p 219. The monetary conversions are Moorsom's: see Moorsom, "Formation", p 90.
- 55 Patrick Harries, "Kinship, Ideology and the Nature of Pre-Colonial Labour Migration: labour migration from the Delagoa Bay hinterland to South Africa, up to 1895", in S Marks and R J A R Rathbone (eds), *Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa: African class formation, culture and consciousness 1870-1930* (London, 1982), pp 151-2.

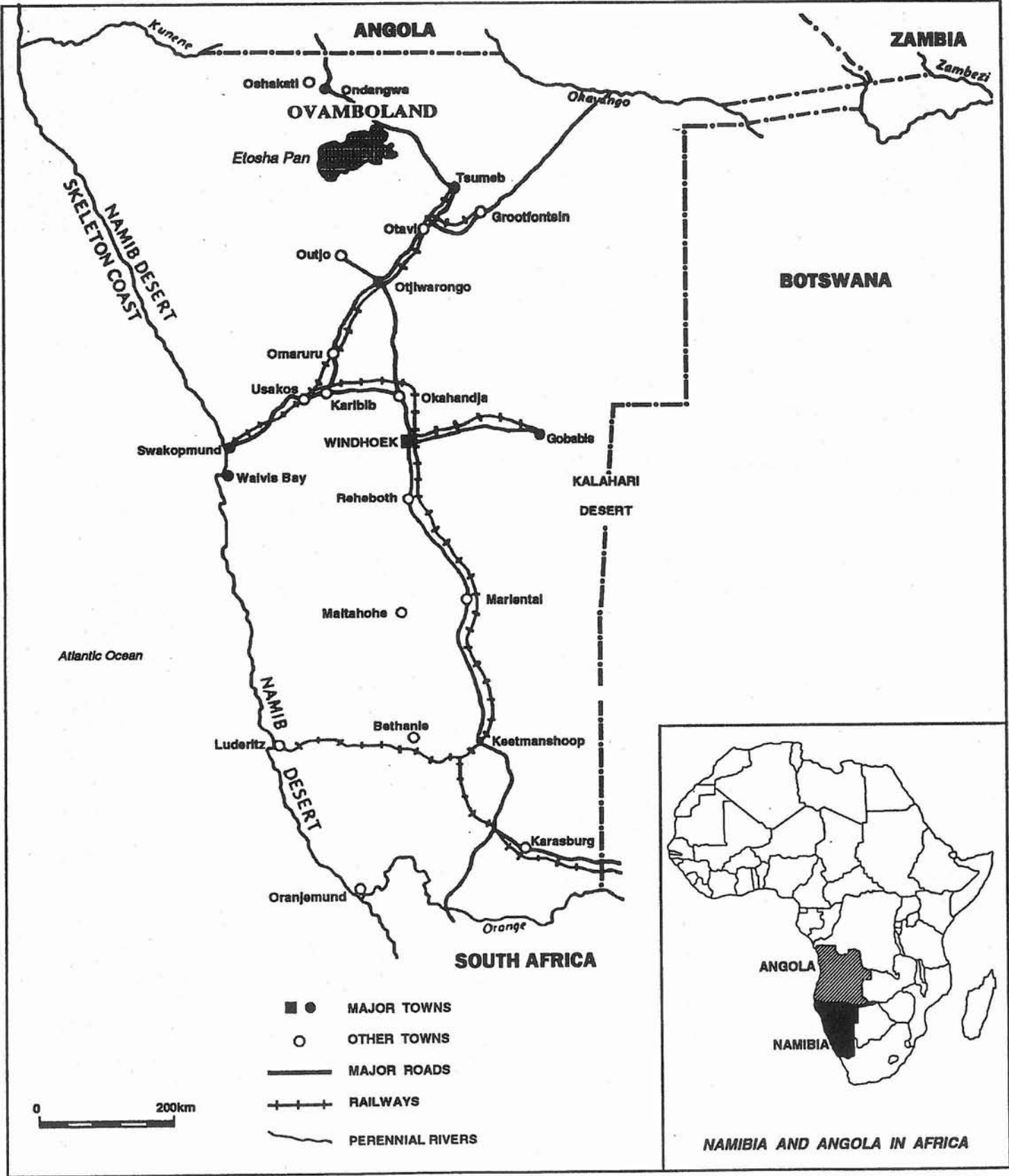
- 56 NAN NAO Vol 11 5/7/2, OC Oshikango - NC Ovamboland, 31 December 1938; OC Oshikango - NC Ovamboland, 19 September 1939; interview with Tomas Kalumbu, Olukonda, 15 November 1989. This last source stated that only by the 1950s were there "many ploughs".
- 57 See Ladislav Holy, *Strategies and Norms in a Changing Matrilineal Society: descent, succession and inheritance among the Toka of Zambia* (Cambridge, 1986), pp 78-87.
- 58 Wolfgang Werner: "An Economic and Social History of the Herero of Namibia, 1915-1946" (PhD thesis, University of Cape Town, 1989), pp 107-9; "Struggles in the Namibian Countryside, 1915-50: some preliminary notes", in Brian Wood (ed), *Namibia 1884-1984: readings on Namibia's history and society* (London, 1988) pp 273-77.
- 59 NAN NAO Vol 19 11/1 v 1, OC NA Ovamboland - Secretary SWA, Annual Report 1927.
- 60 Werner, "Struggles", pp 272-75.
- 61 NAN NAO Vol 18 11/1 v 1, OC NA Ovamboland - Secretary SWA, Monthly Report August 1926.
- 62 NAN RCO 2/1916/1, RC Ovamboland - Secretary Protectorate, 25 June 1918; RC Ovamboland - Secretary Protectorate, 27 March 1918; RC Ovamboland - Secretary Protectorate, 20 March 1918.
- 63 For a good example of this, though at a later period, see Dennis Mercer (ed), *Breaking Contract. The Story of Vinnia Ndadi* (London, 1989).
- 64 The head of the Ovamboland administration was entitled Resident Commissioner until 1920; from this date his official title became Native Commissioner.
- 65 OMEG - Otavi Minen- und Eisenbahngesellschaft. NAN NAO Vol 18 11/1 v I, OC NA Ovamboland - Secretary SWA, Monthly Report April 1927.
- 66 NAN NAO Vol 18 11/1 v 1, OC NA Ovamboland - Secretary SWA, Annual Report 1927.
- 67 NAN NAO Vol 18 11/1 v 1, OC NA Ovamboland - Secretary SWA, Annual Report 1928.
- 68 NAN NAO Vol 18 11/1 v 1, OC NA Ovamboland - Secretary SWA, 8 October 1928.
- 69 NAN RCO 2/1916/1, Acting NC Windhoek - Military Magistrates, 2 April 1918.
- 70 NAN RCO 2/1916/1, British Consulate Luderitzbucht - ?, 14 February 1913.
- 71 NAN RCO 2/1916/1, RC Ovamboland - Secretary Protectorate, 12 February 1918; RC Ovamboland - NC Windhoek, 19 January 1916.
- 72 NAN RCO 2/1916/1. RC Ovamboland - Secretary Protectorate, 12 February 1918; RC Ovamboland - NC Windhoek, 19 January 1916; Military Magistrate Tsumeb - Hahn, 1 August 1917; Military Magistrate Tsumeb - Secretary Protectorate, 30 April 1918; Military Magistrate Tsumeb - Secretary Protectorate, 3 June 1918; RCO 10/1919/8, Memorandum of meeting with Ovakuanyama headmen and UG Representative, 7 December 1917.

- 73 Interview with Petrus Ndongo, Odibo, 23 November 1989; interview with Konis Imene and Aune Shaningwa, Onampadhi, 4 November 1989.
- 74 NAN RCO 2/1916/1, Military Magistrate Tsumeb - RC Ovamboland, 29 January 1918; NC Windhoek - RC Ovamboland, 18 January 1916; RCO 2/1917/1, RC Ovamboland - Secretary Protectorate, 26 March 1918; OC NA Windhoek - OC NA Ovamboland, 7 December 1915.
- 75 NAN RCO 2/1916/1, Military Magistrate Tsumeb - Secretary Protectorate, 13 January 1917; RC Ovamboland - Secretary Protectorate, 24 February 1917.
- 76 NAN RCO 2/1916/1, RC Ovamboland - Secretary Protectorate, 1 January 1917; RC Ovamboland - Secretary Protectorate, 3 March 1917; RC Ovamboland - Secretary Protectorate, 30 January 1918.
- 77 NAN RCO 2/1916/1, RC Ovamboland - Secretary Protectorate, 8 January 1918.
- 78 NAN RCO 2/1916/1, UG Representative Namakunde - RC Ovamboland, 6 January 1917.
- 79 NAN RCO 2/1916/1, RC Ovamboland - Secretary Protectorate, 24 September 1917.
- 80 NAN RCO 2/1916/1, RC Ovamboland - Secretary Protectorate, 8 January 1918.
- 81 Charles van Onselen, *Chibaro. African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia 1900-1933* (Johannesburg, 1980), p 234.
- 82 NAN RCO 2/1916/1, RC Ovamboland - Secretary Protectorate, 20 March 1918.
- 83 A B Emmett, "Popular Resistance in Namibia, 1920-5" in Wood (ed), *Namibia*, p 229.
- 84 NAN RCO 2/1916/1, RC Ovamboland - Secretary Protectorate, 25 June 1918.
- 85 NAN RCO 2/1916/1, RC Ovamboland - Secretary Protectorate, 27 March 1918.
- 86 NAN RCO 2/1918/10, RC Ovamboland - Military Magistrate Tsumeb, 19 February 1918; RCO 2/1917/2, OC Native Affairs Luderitzbucht - OC Native Affairs Windhoek, 14 April 1917; NAN RCO 2/1917/2, OC Native Affairs Windhoek - OC Native Affairs Luderitzbucht, 16 April 1917.
- 87 NAN RCO 2/1916/1, Acting NC Windhoek - OC NA Ovamboland, 8 November 1915.
- 88 NAN RCO 2/1916/1, RC Ovamboland - Secretary Protectorate, 10 April 1918; Military Magistrate Tsumeb - RC Ovamboland, 3 May 1918.
- 89 NAN NAO Vol 18 11/1 v 1, OC NA Ovamboland - Secretary SWA, Monthly Report March 1926.
- 90 NAN NAO Vol 18 11/1 v 1, OC NA Ovamboland - Secretary SWA, Monthly Report December 1928.
- 91 *Ibid.*
- 92 NAN NAO Vol 18 11/1 v 1, OC NA Ovamboland - Secretary SWA, Monthly Report November 1928. Oral evidence reveals that over time headmen became more effective in apprehending deserters; interview Johannes Shihepo, Akwenyanga, 28 October 1989. (This informant was interpreter for the labour recruiting office during and after

World War 2.)

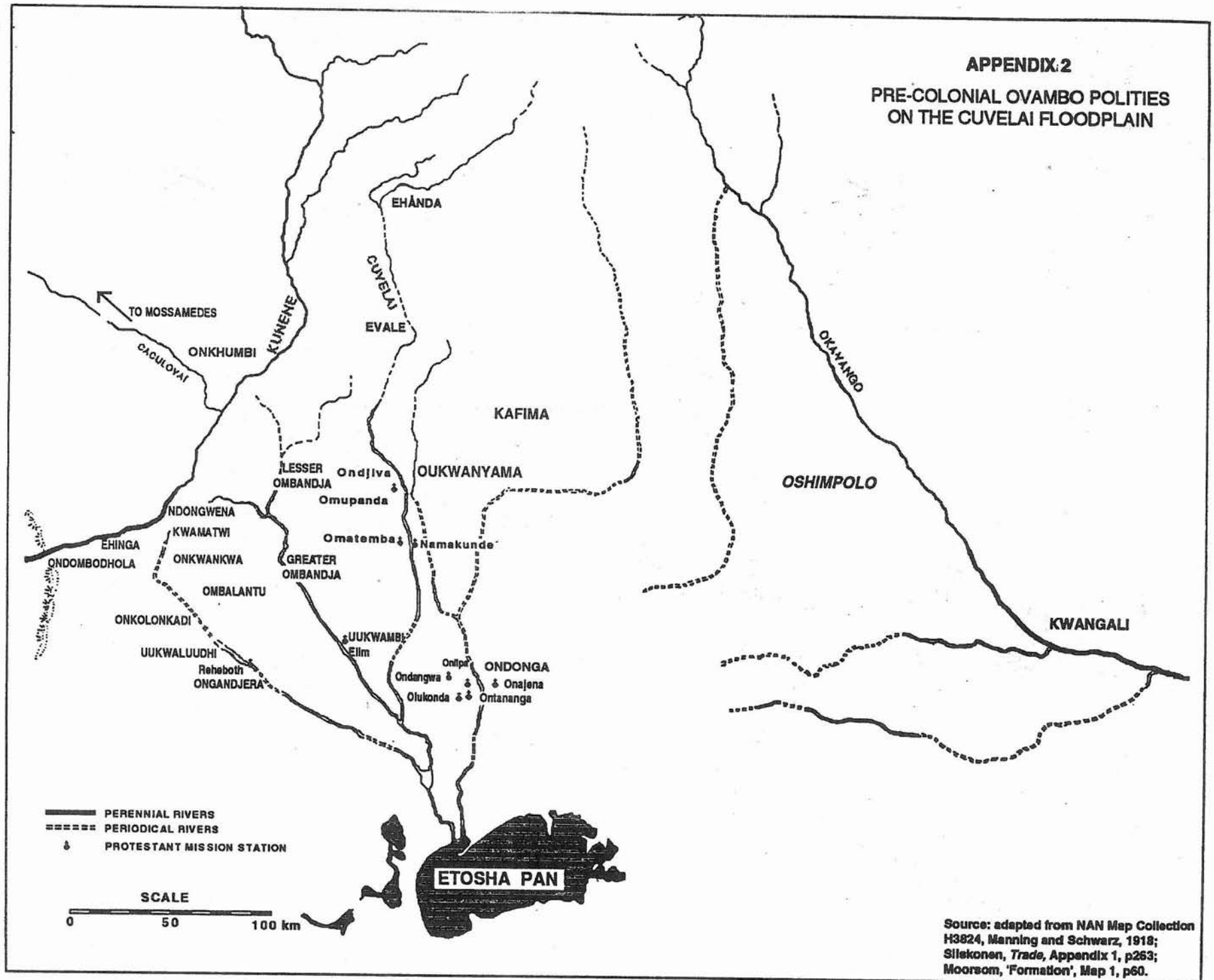
- 93 Emmett, "Rise of African Nationalism", pp 319-23, 332-33, 336-37.
- 94 NAN NAO Vol 3 2/1 v 1, OC NA Ovamboland - Secretary SWA, 18 September 1930; OC NA Ovamboland - Strachan, 2 September 1930.
- 95 NAN NAO Vol 3 2/1 v 1, OC NA Ovamboland - Secretary SWA, 18 September 1930.
- 96 NAN NAO Vol 3 2/1 v 1, Telegram OC NA Ovamboland - Secretary SWA, ca April-June 1930.
- 97 NAN NAO Vol 3 2/1 v 1, OC NA Windhoek - NC Ovamboland, 30 April 1930; Administrator Windhoek - OC NA Tsumeb, 6. June 1930.
- 98 *Ibid.*

APPENDIX 1
NAMIBIA 1990



SOURCE: Idef

APPENDIX 2
PRE-COLONIAL OVAMBO POLITIES
ON THE CUVELAI FLOODPLAIN



70

Source: adapted from NAN Map Collection H3824, Manning and Schwarz, 1918; Silekonen, *Trade*, Appendix 1, p263; Moorsom, 'Formation', Map 1, p60.