Strategic Spatial Planning in an Evolving Governance Structure

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Decolonizing Planning in Namibia

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Abstract

This research explores the challenges the Namibian government faces in the planning process when implementing policies for strategic spatial planning (SSP). The study considers the entire Namibian planning process which primarily is governed top-down but has since independence adopted policies to decentralize power. Thus, this process has been slow and resulted in constant changes in governance settings and responsibilities. The aim of the research is, therefore, to assess the evolving nature of the governance structure in Namibia's SSP system, and to enhance its impact on postcolonial planning strategies against urban sprawl. The rapid development of urban sprawl has been selected because it is one of the major contemporary issues for SSP practices, extending across multiple jurisdictions and demanding stakeholder coordination.

The support question focuses on the nature of Namibia's governance structure in SSP and how it has evolved from the colonial to postcolonial eras. The following research questions explore the effectiveness of spatial strategies for urban sprawl and the communication links within the governance system, as well as the impact of statutory plans for SSP. Together they aim to answer if Namibia is facing challenges in the implementation of SSP, and if so, what can be done to improve the situation.

The methods for data collection consist of semi-structured interviews and a document study. The data enables a comprehensive understanding of the Namibian planning system related to the research questions. The results are analyzed through a theoretical framework with three main themes: land use intentions, governance processes, and external conditions. Identifying relevant planning strategies, hierarchies, and power relations. The empirical material consists of 11 interviews. Six of these are made with officials from all planning levels; the national, regional, and local, and the others by key informants. Key informants are experts on Namibia's planning system and political climate. This is complemented by an analysis of public planning documents used for spatial planning, referred to by the respondents.

The result shows that decentralization from the national to subnational planning levels has taken place to a certain extent, although the autonomy among local and regional planning authorities is limited. This is because of the national government's reluctance to surrender control over the economy as well as due to a local lack of knowledge about strategy-making for land use. Furthermore, the main issues are the lack of strategic plans that coordinates and guides SSP, weak communication links between government levels, and the gap between political initiatives for decentralization and the subnational demand. The lack of

communication links affects the governance process between planning levels as well as the coordination inside each government. This prolongs decision-making and connects to the gap between the national intentions for decentralization and the weak local demand for it. Moreover, the partial decentralization has confused stakeholders by delegating responsibility without the actual mandate to act, leading to limited strategies and poor execution of actions against urban sprawl. External pressures from international agencies influencing the governance process also add to the challenges for postcolonial planning.

The thesis suggests several improvement opportunities to increase the implementation rate of spatial strategies. These include strengthened support systems from the national to the subnational level, alignment among strategic plans, and stronger communication links to improve governance processes. External pressures could become a more rewarding asset if international involvement began to support local knowledge instead of channeling Western ideals. These understandings matter because they provide theories of the urban with a global south narrative instead of the dominant Western perspective of governance, decentralization, and SSP.

Acknowledgments

Thank you, PK, for shining so bright,

Through writing you're a guiding light,

On the bonnet you sit,

As the wind strongly hit,

Face filled of smile, pointing me right.

To 77 Independence Avenue,

Thanks for supporting when things felt blue,

Singing loud in the bar,

Or just driving the car,

Would not have been the same without you.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to all the interviewees who generously shared their time, insights, and experiences for this research. I would also like to extend a special thanks to Dr. Eric Yankson, my co-supervisor, for the warm welcome and guidance in understanding how the Namibian planning system works.

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List of Abbreviations

ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
SSP	Strategic Spatial Planning
MURD	The Ministry of Urban and Rural Development
HRC	Hardap Regional Council
MM	Mariental Municipality
RTC	Rehoboth Town Council
LTC	Lüderitz Town Council
KTC	Kalkrand Town Council
HIRLUP	Hardap Integrated Regional Land Use Plan
Act No. 5 of 2018	Urban and Regional Planning Act

Introduction

Namibia experiences rural-urban migration and there is a growing debate in Africa regarding a similar development across the continent. Since independence, the urban population has increased threefold, with a prediction of 75 percent of the population living in cities by 2050. The driving forces behind urban growth are mostly the establishment of informal settlements creating urban sprawl. Apart from this, offering a life under unsafe conditions and without tenure security (Giz, 2021). Although governments across Africa have made efforts to implement land tenure security programs, these programs have not generated any substantial changes in land ownership, and the land rights of the poor are still vulnerable (Chitonge, 2021, p. 3). In particular, the debate is drawn from the conclusion that since the demise of colonialism over the past decades in Africa, regional development programs and urban policies have been incapable of dealing efficiently with socioeconomic development. Inequalities have tended to be intensified, with land and capital concentrated in fewer hands, separating the elite from the growing poor. One of Africa's most recent independent countries, Namibia, is of interest as an unusual example of democracy and peaceful civil society (Frayne, 2000, p. 52). Along with major challenges of inequality and rapid urbanization, which further constitutes one of the major contemporary planning issues in the country (Amoo, 2018, p. 18; Chigbu et al., 2021, p. 2).

This research is set within the context of the Namibian planning system to comprehend how strategic spatial planning (SSP) practices are authorized within a changing governance context. The government is still undergoing reforms within its political organization, legal framework, and planning system, resulting in constant change in governance and power relations. Followed by a largely unsuccessful implementation of land development projects, which in turn have generated more policies. Creating a negative spiral of increased complexity and fragmented practices instead of solving the problem (Chigbu 2021, p. 1).

The conclusion of this case study has relevance to a broader context of social change as it widens the debate on post-colonial planning practices and their impacts. Additionally, it could raise the knowledge of why regional development programs and urban policies often end up unsuccessful.

Figure 1: Namibia's position on the African continent

Namibia is a post-colonial nation that gained independence in 1991 after more than 100 years of colonial rule by South Africa and Germany (Figure 1). The first Europeans to settle to any degree in Namibia were British missionaries who arrived in 1806. The second wave of missionaries was German and Finnish Lutherans, arriving during the 1840s, at the same time as British companies first began exploiting Namibia's natural resources (Frayne, 2000, p. 52). Britain's interest in Namibia motivated the Germans to take control of the country and formally formed Germany's first colony in 1884, calling it German South West Africa (Melber, 2019, 73).

However, during the First World War, South Africa invaded Namibia. They overtook control of the country within months, marking the beginning of a new colonial order but with a continued white minority rule. After the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, the country officially fell under the rule of South Africa, and the infamous structures of the apartheid society. The apartheid system is infamous for its racial oppression and removal of the colonized people from their land in favor of white settlers (Melber, 2019, 73). On the one hand, the system restricted most Namibian people to underdeveloped rural reserves or dens and deprioritized

urban areas called "locations". While on the other hand, it gave the white settlers all the profitable land areas (Britannica, n.d.). The land distribution was done so that families could no longer support themselves entirely off the land. Making reliance on wage income from white-owned farms, the mines, and the towns the only way to survival, which further undermined the traditional way of life (Frayne, 2000, p. 54).

In the late 1970s, there was a slow change toward decolonization, beginning with the relaxation of movement restrictions for natives and allowing rural-urban migration. Followed by the United Nations revoke of South Africa's mandate over the territory, thus placing Namibia "'*de jure*', under the direct responsibility of the United Nations." An action that triggered South Africa to intensify its campaign against the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN). The military wing of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), fighting for freedom in the northern areas of the country. Finally, in 1989/1990, negotiations led to the implementation of UN resolution number 435 and the independence of Namibia on 21 March 1990 (Frayne, 2000, p. 54). SWAPO won the first elections with 57 percent of the votes and became the ruling party, led by the revolutionary, anti-apartheid activist Sam Nujoma (photo 1). Since then, Namibia has been a de facto multi-party state, but the governing party, SWAPO, has occupied the political scene exclusively. Until the 2020 election, when the local and regional elections went poorly after a weak national election performance. A result of the last years' corruption scandals and maladministration in the public sector. Consequently, the opposition parties have gained influence as the pressure for change is growing (Kamwanyah et al., 2021).

The oppression and inequality faced during colonialism have contributed to the current struggles with income disparities and high poverty rates. During the time of colonization, indigenous people suffered severely. The Herero and Nama people had to endure genocide and collective punishment wages by the German Empire between 1904 and 1908, which is considered the first genocide of the 20th century (photos 2 and 3). It was directly followed by the oppression from the apartheid laws by the South African rule, which has impacted the country's development and loss of planning history. Town structures all over Namibia are stamped by German and South African apartheid planning with clear boundaries between the former 'white and black areas.' Thereto, are the most profitable land areas, still largely owned by Germans. Hence, the result of the colonialization remains alive and makes questions about land rights and spatial zoning important topics within the country (Frayne, 2000, p. 54).

Regarding current planning, Namibia is still influenced by the colonial and apartheid ethos of elitist planning, meaning that it has contained the centralized planning model that is primarily governed top-down (Yankson, 2021, p. 82). To face this issue, the Namibian government has since independence infused regulations towards decentralization of power, by introducing regional and local authorities and decentralization policies. Although, the process of decentralizing power has been slow just like the implementation process for strategies (Romeo, 2012, p. 1).

In this thesis is the Namibian planning process used as a case study while investigating spatial planning strategies and actor responsibility. To investigate the evolving governance setting, the transition from guiding strategic plans to binding ones will be explored together with communication links between government levels. Simultaneously, this reviews the impact of the Urban and Regional Planning Act of 2018, a political policy enacted to decentralize power and make strategic spatial plans binding. It is studied by conducting interviews with planners from a national to a local level. Exposing both effective and ineffective structures of the Namibian planning process and the evolving governance system. The interviews are complemented by a document study examining the land use intentions and guiding strategies expressed in plans and policies.

To further understand SSP in this context, this research identified several gaps in the present literature that it has sought to fill:

Firstly, it is important to understand the needs of strategic planning and how long and short-term strategies are used today to expose critical factors behind the low implementation of plans and programs. The study of SSP practice is by no means a new area of concern for academic researchers (Ward 2020, 3). While many studies have sought to understand the nature of SSP and the governance structures that support it (Albrechts, 2004; Berger, 2003a; Healey, 2004; Jessop, 2016), few have researched the unsuccessful implementation of developing programs and projects in Namibia (Christensen, 2019, p. 4). This creates a significant knowledge gap as the state emphasizes the importance of strategic planning through new legislation, and the question of what must change becomes even more prominent.

Secondly, this research develops previous work about Namibia's evolving governance setting (Frayne, 2000, p. 60; Middleton et al., 2016, p. 93), by exploring how planning actors cooperate and communicate at a practical level. Consequently, the thesis discusses strategy-making and explores if there are any missing links within the governance system that prevent the successful implementation of regional development plans and urban policies.

Photo 1: The first president of Namibia, Sam Nujoma, at the independence ceremony.
Photo 2: Shark Island concentration camp, Lüderitz. Used 1904-1908.
Photo 3: Natives captivated in labor camps as slaves to German settlers.

Problem Statement

Informal settlements are spreading around Namibia's urban centers at the same time as regional and urban development plans have proven incapable of dealing efficiently with socioeconomic development (Frayne, 2000, p. 52; Giz, 2021). The government has failed to keep pace with the rural-urban migration (table 1), which accelerated after the abolition of the apartheid restrictions. As seen in Table 1 below, there is a major growth in urban areas while the rural areas experience a decrease in population. It is the combination of freedom to move and rural poverty that has contributed to considerable growth in peri-urban areas (Amoo, 2018, p. 18).

Table 1: Population increase and annual growth rates (1991-2001) and (2001-2011) by area.

Area	Population increase (1991-2001)	Annual growth rates (1991-2001)	Population increase (2001-2011)	Annual growth rates (2001-2011)
Namibia	420 410	2.6	282 747	1.4
Urban	208 834	--	299 822	4.0
Rural	211 576	--	-17 075	-0.1

To change this development, the Namibian government adopted a decentralization program, which has proven to be an ineffective attempt to reform the planning process. It has rather contributed to a multi-government-level system but without adequate distribution of power and knowledge. Indeed, understanding the politics of decentralization is critical as it is driven by political policy decisions, not development. However, the understanding of the ineffectiveness goes beyond political power and objectives, it is the decomposition of all the processes behind that is vital. The governance and planning process gives, for example, insights into why political decentralization reforms are not fully implemented (Romeo, 2012, p. 2).

More research is needed about how planning can become an efficient tool to avoid widening inequalities and urban sprawl. Informal settlements, a consequence of poverty and inequalities, have already been declared a human settlement disaster by President Hage Geingob in 2019. The unfair land distribution has forced more than half of the urban population to live in unsafe shacks, seen in photo 4 below, that are formed without proper infrastructure, creating uncontrolled urban sprawl (The Namibian, 2019). Moreover, the

inhabitants of the informal settlements are regarded as illegal occupants of the land, making a majority of the urban population criminals (Chigbu 2021, 1).

The young sovereign nation is still undergoing reforms within its political organization, legal framework, and planning system. Resulting in constant changes in governance and power relations (Christensen, 2019, p. 3). In turn, creating fluid and fragmented spatial planning practices with a low implementation rate, generating frustration among the people that gets empty promises from plans and programs (Chigbu 2021, 1).

It is currently a lack of understanding of changing governance structures as a part of strategic planning practices (Christensen, 2019, p. 3), urging more knowledge about (1) the political drivers of the decentralization reforms, (2) local and regional autonomy and needs to increase the implementation success of strategies, and (3) more contextual knowledge about how decentralization of power could be used to fight the human settlement disaster happening in Namibia.

Photo 4: Informal settlement in Rehoboth. Illustrating the shacks that constitutes these areas.

Research Objectives

The aim of this research is:

> To assess the evolving nature of the governance structure in Namibia's strategic spatial planning system to enhance its impact on postcolonial planning strategies against urban sprawl.

This research will assess how SSP is used within the planning process to manage urban sprawl. The objective is to understand better Namibia's governance system and decentralization of power within spatial planning. This will be conducted by identifying the main challenges and opportunities for the evolving planning system and especially by reviewing the treatment and interpretation of the Urban and Regional Planning Act. If successful, the outcome may provide new insights into how SSP is implemented and how key stakeholders in Namibia interpret change within the governance structure.

Research Questions

To answer the research aim, this thesis will, besides the research questions, be guided by a support question to understand the context of the SSP system and Namibia's heritage. The support question is more closely linked to the background and the literature review while the research questions are directly connected to the empirical material.

Support question: What is the nature of the governance structure in Namibia's strategic spatial planning system and how has this evolved from the colonial to postcolonial eras?

Research questions:

1. What spatial strategies exist within the evolving governance system when planning against urban sprawl, and how effective have these strategies been?

2. What communication channels for strategic spatial planning exist within the evolving governance system, and how effective have these channels been?

3. How can the introduction of statutory regional and urban structure plans enhance the impact of strategic spatial planning?

These research questions will provide insights into the effectiveness of spatial strategies, communication channels, and the potential impact of introducing statutory plans to enhance the strategic spatial planning efforts in Namibia.

The Namibian Planning System

Namibia is a top-down governed country with a national planning act and ministers with extensive power over spatial planning. There are currently three major kinds of authorities: the national government, the regional councils, and the local authorities. The local authorities are divided into different sub-categories; municipalities, towns, or villages (Act No. 23, 1992).

During the South African colonization, the Odendaal Commission was established to divide Namibia into geographic and administrative regions, resulting in eleven regions based on racial and ethnic criteria. The ten black regions received 40 percent of the country's total land area, and the one white region received 43 percent. The remaining land was devoted to natural reserves or mining districts under government control (Frayne, 2000, p. 54).

After gaining independence, a reconstruction of the country took place, replacing the apartheid regions of the country with thirteen new regions based on geographic, economic, and social norms rather than the racial and ethnic criteria of the past. New local and regional government systems were established, with elected representatives (Frayne, 2000, p. 60).

Thus, the land tenure system in Namibia is still based on the rational decision-making model from South African rule, which can partly be traced to the Deeds Registries Act of 1973. Even though changes have been made, it is largely a slow and inefficient land delivery system that excludes a significant proportion of the population (Yankson, 2021, p. 84).

There have been multiple attempts to address the issue of land tenure and access to land, such as: the proclamation of the first National Housing Policy (1991), the Regional Council Act (1992), the Local Authority Act (1992), the National Planning Commission Act (1994), and the Town and Regional Planners Act (1996). In terms of spatial planning, the Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act (1995), the Decentralization Act (2000), the Agricultural (Communal) Land Reform Act (2002), and the Environmental Management Act (2007), have been enacted (Becker, 2013, p. 3). Recently also the Urban and Regional Planning Act (Act No. 5, 2018), which allows decentralization by transferring decision-making power from a national to a subnational level.

Tied to the Decentralization policy are several land reform strategies, such as the Resettlement Program and the reform of the communal land system, which introduced The Flexible Land Tenure System, an alternative form of land title that is supposed to be simpler and

cheaper to administer but still provide security of title for persons who live in informal settlements.

The Urban and Regional Planning Act of 2018 has two requirements for the local and regional authorities before it can be put into effect. One requirement is to become an 'authorized planning authority' by registering a town planner with at least five years of working experience and adequate education. The other requirement is to adopt and get ministry approval for a Structure plan with statutory effect, which replaces the guiding structure plans that are also a part of today's planning process. After becoming an authorized planning authority, there are no requirements of having to get decisions approved by MURD as long as they are aligned with the urban structure plan. Any proposed changes to the plan must go through a formal amendment process and be accepted by the ministry.

National planning

At the national level, the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development (MURD) coordinates and guides spatial planning in Namibia together with the National Planning Commission. MURD oversees the development and implementation of national policies, strategies, and urban and rural spatial plans. The Ministry of Agriculture, Water, and Land Reform (MAWLR) oversees land-use management and rural development policies. The theoretical structure for the planning system of Namibia has been drawn up (figure 2). Figure 2 is a hierarchical illustration of the planning system, from national to local. It further contains all the planning documents relevant to SSP and selected laws and policies especially relevant for the decentralization of planning authority or tackling urban sprawl.

The National Planning Commission and MURD are responsible for producing the National Development Plan (NDP), the leading framework for development, complemented by regional and local strategic plans (National Planning Commission, 2017). At the time of writing, it is the NDP5 that is the current edition, even though it has exceeded its five-year durability. Thereto is the Urban and Regional Planning Act (2018) declaring a further responsibility for MURD to prepare a National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF), especially for SSP. The NSDF is supposed to provide a national vision and strategy for spatial development in Namibia, setting out the government's priorities for land use. It is intended to guide regional and local spatial development and become the governing framework for the statutory regional and local structure plans, which are also newly required strategic planning documents from the Urban and Regional Planning Act (Act No. 5, 2018).

The Namibian Spatial Planning System
in theory

Cabinet
President: Head of State and the Executive Branch of Government
Prime Minister: Chief Advisor to the President and Overall Coordinator of Government Offices, Ministries and Agencies

National Planning Commission (NPC)
Mandated by Article 129 of the Namibian Constitution and the NPC Act of 2013 to oversee development planning for the whole country in order to ensure better coordination, monitoring and evaluation.

Laws and policies

The Decentralization policy
- Local Authorities Act, 1992
- Regional Councils Act, 1992
- National Decentralization Policy, 1998
- Namibia's land policy (1998)

Laws and policies

Flexible Land Tenure Act (2012)
A complementary tenure registration system to freehold titles that aims to provide an affordable security of tenure to inhabitants in informal settlements.

Urban and Regional Planning Act (Act No. 5 of 2018)
Provides the establishment of a comprehensive urban and regional planning system with statutory structure plans, and the creation of the URPB.

Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform (MAWLR)
The Ministry focuses on the promotion of the sustainable socio-economic development of the country through:

- Promotion of the agriculture and water sectors.
- The redistributive land reform process (the willing buyer, willing seller and resettlement programmes)
- Tenure reforms and protection of communal land rights.

The Ministry of Urban and Rural Development (MURD)
The ministry is responsible for regional governance (Regional Councils) and local governance (Local Authorities) and therewith plays an important role in the decentralisation process of the Namibian government.

Additional ministries (18)

Strategic documents
- Vision 2030
- National Development Plans i.e. NDPs (NDP5)
- National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF)
- Harambee Prosperity Plan (Harambee Prosperity Plan II)

Regional Councils (14)
Constituencies

Integrated regional development plan/ structure plans

Local Authorities (57)
Municipal Councils (13), Town Councils (26) and Village Councils (18)

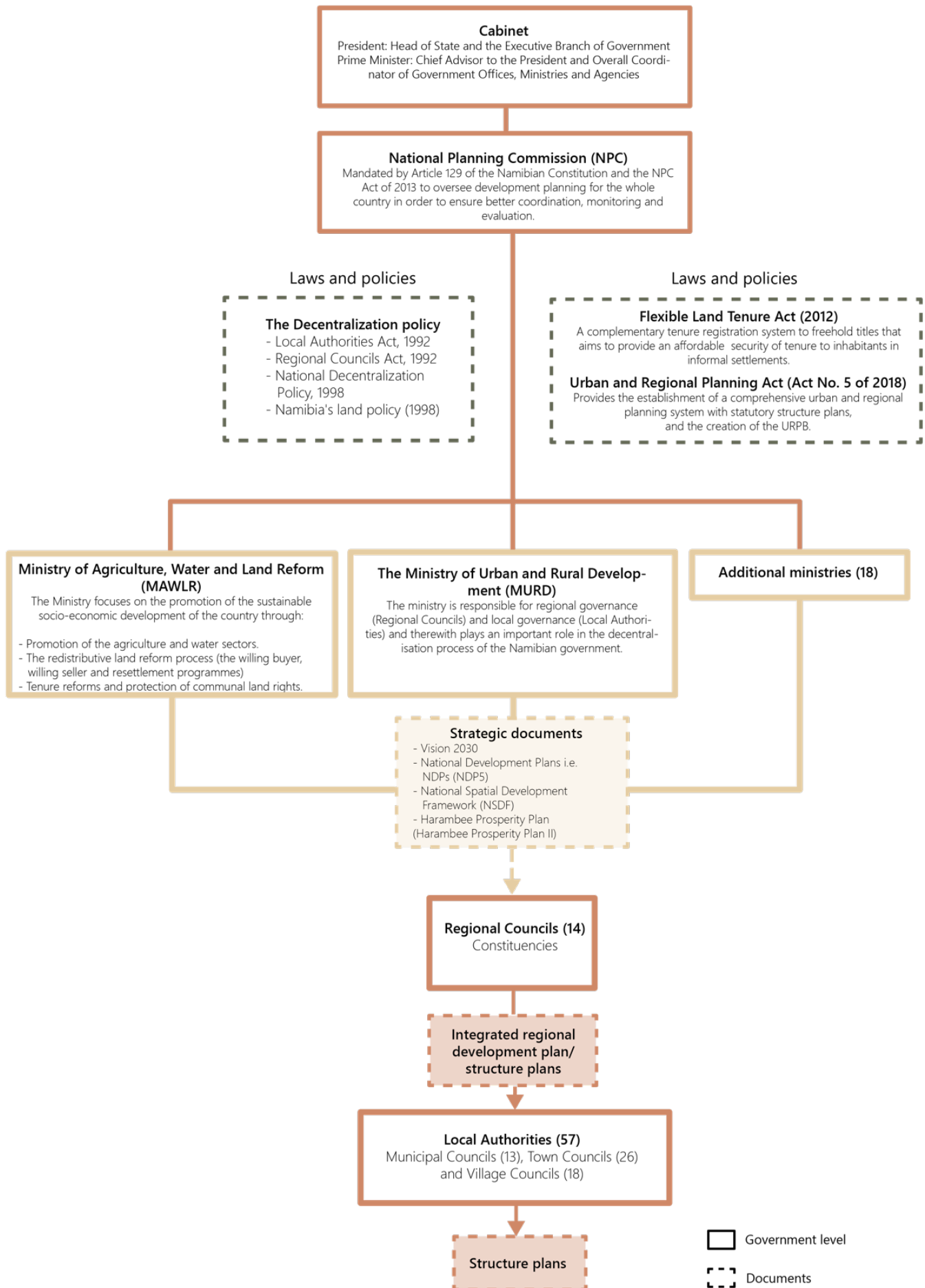**Structure plans**

Government level

Documents

17

Figure 2: The Namibian planning system in theory.

Regional planning

Regional Councils are responsible for developing and implementing Integrated Regional Land Use Plans (IRLUP) and Regional Structure Plans, which are to be aligned with national policies and planning frameworks (figure 2). The regional jurisdiction is the rural areas outside of town boundaries. Still, regional SSP covers the whole area but emphasizes general land use, rural development, and large structural investments. The Regional Council has the authority to approve or reject land-use applications solemnly within their jurisdiction, not within the town boundaries.

An IRLUP is a comprehensive plan that sets out a long-term vision and strategy for land use and development. The plan considers many factors, including economic development, social equity, environmental protection, and infrastructure requirements (Ministry of Lands and Resettlement, 2011). The structure plan is a more specific plan for spatial planning that previously has been guiding but is to become legally binding due to a new spatial planning framework (Act No. 5, 2018). In other words, an IRLUP provides a broad vision and strategy for land use and development in a region. In contrast, a regional structure plan provides a more detailed and specific plan for the region's physical layout and land use patterns.

Local planning

Local authorities: municipalities, town councils, village councils, and traditional authorities are responsible for developing and implementing local spatial plans that align with regional and national policies. They are also responsible for the administration of land-use applications within their jurisdictions. The main planning instruments are urban structure plans, town planning schemes, and zoning schemes (Act No.23, 1992) Urban structure plans are traditionally guiding documents monitoring long-term development regulating their respective jurisdiction, but they are now becoming statutory instead of guiding (Act No. 5, 2018).

On the other hand, Town Planning Schemes provide a detailed vision and strategy for developing a town or urban area. Town plans typically include visions for land use, development standards, infrastructure requirements, and environmental protection. They are complemented by regulating zoning schemes that regulate land use within a defined area or zone. Zoning schemes divide a city, town, or municipality into different zones, each with permitted land uses, building density, height, and other development standards. In Namibia, the schemes are prepared by local authorities in consultation with the public and must be approved by MURD before becoming effective (Act No. 23, 1992)

Traditional Authorities are somewhat different as they administer and execute the customary law and work to uphold and protect the culture, language, and traditions. In terms of planning, they assist the government in the execution of their policies without implementation responsibility (Act No. 25, 2000).

Private stakeholders

In addition to the government actors, other stakeholders play a role in Namibia's SSP process. These include private companies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), private sector entities, and the public.

NGOs and CBOs are involved in spatial planning as project partners, and consultants, often facilitating community participation in the planning process. Traditional authorities, such as chiefs and headmen, have an important role in administrating rural areas as they are responsible for managing customary land tenure systems. Private sector entities, such as developers and investors, are involved in the spatial planning process as land-use rights applicants and contributors to economic development. Private consultants are also prominent as developers of spatial plans for local and regional authorities that often lack adequate competence in-house. Finally, the public is involved in spatial planning through public consultations and feedback on spatial plans (Mendelsohn et al., n.d., p. 1; National Planning Commission, 2005).

Land tenure

There are two major land tenures: communal and commercial land. The government owns the communal land but is delegating the governing to the traditional communities to utilize it for farming, and other purposes. This type of land accounts for about 38% of the country's total land area. The second type, commercial land, is privately owned and used for commercial purposes such as farming and mining (Mendelsohn et al., n.d., pp. 1-2). Not only was land unfairly distributed along racial lines, but a sharp division in land governance also existed between the commercial central and southern regions and the communal northern regions. The historical remains that still can be seen, illustrated in Figure 3 showing land tenure separating the north from the south. Access to land and ownership still affects the way of life of inhabitants, with a close connection between land and wealth (Middleton et al., 2016, p. 91). The commercial land is still mostly concentrated in the hands of a few wealthy landowners, many of whom attained the land during the colonial era. Thus, this is slowly changing through government attempts to buy back and return land (Mendelsohn et al., n.d., p. 1-2).
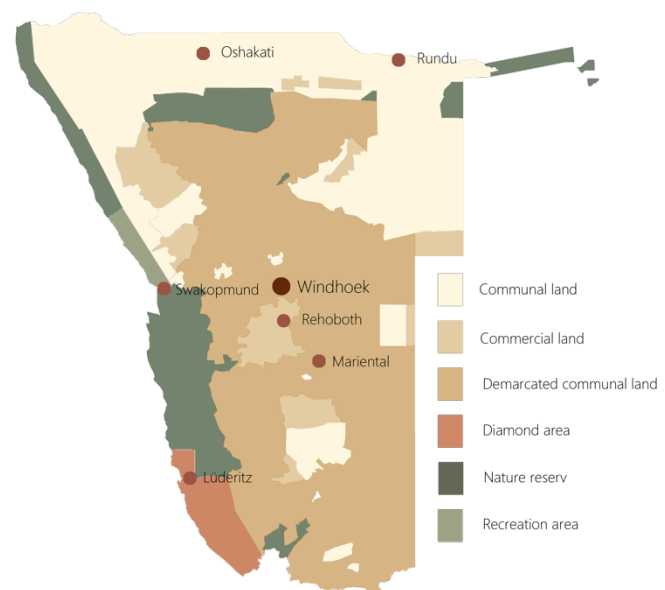
Figure 3: Land tenure in Namibia.

Literature Review

Many post-colonial countries, including Namibia, have inherited spatial inequalities and weak economies created by the colonial powers and the struggle for freedom. In Namibia, likewise many other former colonies, there is a need to address these inequalities by creating a more equitable distribution of resources and opportunities. It is also urgent to find strategies to manage social inequalities by creating more livable and accessible urban environments, improving housing conditions for marginalized communities, and promoting mixed-use development that brings people of different socio-economic backgrounds together (Amoo, 2018; Chigbu et al., 2021; Lühl, 2020).

To address this issue, an approach to development known as strategic spatial planning (SSP) can be implemented. In this chapter, the aim is to contextualize the research within ongoing academic discussions and insights. However, much of the existing literature on SSP has been shaped by Western perspectives, which consequently means that while utilizing SSP as a framework, it is also crucial to examine the post-colonial context of Namibia. To understand the Namibian planning heritage and the differences between Western and African planning conditions.

The chapter commences by examining the definition of 'strategic spatial planning' and its interpretation within the scope of this research. This is followed by an overview of how SSP is applied in post-colonial planning contexts and how it is operated in a context of ongoing decentralization of governance, particularly in Namibia.

The concept of SSP and governance

In its simplest terms, strategic spatial planning (SSP) could be described as a process of envisioning and managing future spatial change focused on collaboration between stakeholders. SSP is often contrasted with other more 'traditional land-use planning practices', which are more regulated and pragmatic forms of land-use planning, such as Town plans. (Albrechts 2004, 745-746; Healey 2009, 441).

Healey (2009) and Albrechts (2004, 2009) have contributed much to contemporary understanding and the theoretical debates around SSP. This thesis adapts Albrecht's definition:

> 'a public-sector-led, socio-spatial process through which a vision, actions, and means for implementation are produced that shape and frame what a place is and may become' - Albrechts, 2004, p. 747.

As this quotation highlights, SSP is a strategy-focused approach affecting governance structures and power relations. It can be described as 'strategic' in that it provides a framework for subsequent decision-making and 'spatial' in a way that relates to a particular place or territory. Planning, in turn, is described as an effective way of integrating different agendas: economic, environmental, cultural, social, and policy agendas. It further integrates well with the concept of governance, which also is understood to be a social process focused on stakeholder coordination and actor relations (Albrechts, 2010, p. 1119).

Apart from SSP is governance one of the main subjects of interest of this thesis. Without effective governance, SSP would lack the necessary framework to engage stakeholders, generate guiding frameworks, and have flexible land usage. Furthermore, governance processes have been stated as one of the key solutions to effectively tackle urban challenges in Africa (Smit, 2018, p. 56). Governance issues are often fragmented among large numbers of government stakeholders with limited capacities and conflicting interests. To effectively tackle urban challenges and implement strategies, stakeholders need to be brought together in collaborative processes. In order to do this, understanding how the governance actors interact and operate becomes important (Smit, 2018, p. 55).

The actual meaning of governance is wider than government and is used in a variety of ways. In this article, the term will be understood based on Berger's (2003, p. 221) definition of governance, i.e., "a multi-level government involvement," which implies a stronger inclusion of all tiers of government. This approach emphasizes the principle of subsidiarity, which expresses the idea that political action takes place at the level most appropriate to the issue at hand (ibid., 221). In this respect, the viewpoint of governance as a multi-level involvement is especially suitable for analyzing changing government and power structures. While 'government' is considered a hierarchical structure of the government levels, then 'governance,' on the other hand, focuses on the creation of networks and interactions between them (Amdam, 2010, p. 1805).

Ideally, SSP is introduced early in the development projects to generate a guiding framework for the following decision-making. It could, for example, result in policy documents or broad visions enabling flexible and long-term usage (Albrechts, 2010, p. 1119, 2004, p. 747; Healey, 2009, p. 448, 2004, p. 65).

During the last decades, there has been an increased popularity of SSP associated with an emphasis on 'regions' as the spatial focus for growth (Healey 2004). Informal governance structures, in contrast to the formal government, stretch across administrative jurisdictions in complex ways, and the process itself is often characterized by a "back and forth" struggle to reach a near consensus on the path forward (Healey, 2009, p. 441). Further, SSP could be used to manage and coordinate public policies, to develop a collective 'asset base', or to redress unequal distribution of access to opportunities across urban regions (Healey, 2004, p. 45). It could also provide raised influence for subnational planning levels by articulating land use intentions, which strengthens the possibility to access resources from higher government levels and mobilize stakeholders (Healey, 2004, p. 45).

Hersperger et al. (2019, p. 329) emphasize that it is only recently that researchers have started to pay attention to policies, plans, and regulations to analyze the role of spatial planning in urban development. To broaden the theoretical understanding in regards to changing power relations and governance structures, they further argue that it is important to distinguish (1) the intentions expressed in the plans, (2) the means of implementation of the plans through governance processes, and (3) the role of external conditions influencing implementation (Hersperger et al., 2018, p. 35).

About SSP, this implies that studying policies, plans, and regulations becomes crucial to comprehend how spatial planning influences urban development. By examining the intentions expressed in plans and understanding the governance processes used to implement them, researchers and practitioners can gain insights into the strategic aspects of spatial planning and its impact on shaping cities and regions. External conditions could include a higher level of political power or economic, social, and cultural contexts, which with external pressure can affect the planning process and the government actors. Therefore, even if a region has sufficient governance provisions, the planning intentions might be interrupted by events from beyond the government. For example, unstable political situations nationally or historical events could change local priorities from a long-term to a short-term perspective (Hersperger et al., 2018, p. 36). In SSP, identifying such external conditions is crucial since governance actors need to consider them when developing and implementing plans and key strategies (Hersperger et al., 2018, p. 38).

Overall, the main challenges with governance and strategic spatial planning are coordination, power relations, and capacity limitations. Another aspect to consider while understanding strategic plans is that plans are rarely implemented as they are because of unforeseen developments. This becomes an issue for conceptualizing governance and the role of spatial planning in urban development (Hersperger et al., 2018, p. 33).

It shall be noted that the concepts of governance and SSP mainly is described from a Western perspective rooted in Western cultural, social, and historical contexts. Applying these concepts directly to post-colonial contexts without considering place-specific characteristics can lead to a disconnect and lack of relevance.

SSP in Namibia's Post-Colonial Context

Post-colonial contexts often have complex power dynamics that European planning concepts may not adequately address on their own. Planning in post-colonial countries must consider colonization's historical and social contexts, including the colonial legacy that has shaped society's structure and spatial conditions. In research is the continued influence of Western culture and the relationship between the sovereign nation and its former colonial power vital, as it addresses the underlying factors about how society is changing and why.

Even after gaining independence, the connection between Europe and Africa persists, and Western culture remains part of the global South (Fanon, 1965, p. 17). Rebuilding a government and previously oppressed country brings challenges as young governments must transform themselves from irresponsible and militant to fully functioning entities capable of making informed decisions (ibid, p. 74).

Fanon (1965) discusses that the issues related to colonialism cannot be fully explained by capitalist thought or Marxist analysis. This source is printed before Namibia gained independence but makes an important observation that the ruling race in colonized countries held power primarily due to their weapons and guns rather than their industries or built environments. Their dominance was maintained by their differences from the native inhabitants (ibid, p. 31). From a planning perspective, this could be interpreted as an argument for why the Western perspective of planning and governance should not be unquestionably applied in a post-colonial context.

To better understand the present ideology of Namibia and how this affects planning in the country, it is important to outline the ruling party South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO). The party changed its approach from radicalism to pragmatism as it formed the post-independence government of Namibia. It was initially created out of nationalism to free the country from the status of colonization (photo 5). However, realizing that liberation from colonialism was not possible without an armed struggle, SWAPO lost international support from the Western countries and had to turn to the Eastern bloc nations for help (Frayne, 2000, p. 59; Saunders, 2019, p. 351). This coincided with a shift in policy statements from a desire for basic human rights to 'a profound social and economic restricting of Namibia.' In 1976, SWAPO officially stated its ideology based on the principles of scientific socialism.

Photo 5: Poster for the South West Africa People's Organisations (SWAPO) fight for independence between the years of 1966-1990.

The final phase of the liberation movement was termed the phase of 'social revolutionary nationalism' as can be seen in the poster below. The extent to which the Eastern countries' support influenced SWAPO's ideology is uncertain. However, it would have played a role when independence was aimed to be achieved through Marxist-Leninist ideology (Frayne, 2000, p. 59).

Afterward, independence brought a quite different ideology as the economy mainly remained capitalist with protection for private property and a multiparty political system (Saunders, 2019, p. 351). The extensive socialistic reforms for land redistribution and ownership of capital have never been realized and the close relationship between the Soviet GDR and SWAPO is largely forgotten (Frayne, 2000, p. 60; Saunders, 2019, p. 354). A change in political ideology coincided with the winding down of the Cold War and the collapse of the state socialist regimes of Eastern Europe, leading to the acceptance of a liberal democratic constitution in 1989. Neo-liberal economic policies were adopted as Namibia gained independence in 1990 (Saunders, 2019, p. 354).

Creating functional and responsive governments is highlighted as a part of nation-building. Requiring, from a planning perspective, the upbuilt of governance structures, capacity-building for public officials, and investment in public services and infrastructure, especially in previously neglected neighborhoods.

Under colonization, the colonizers introduced a framework of what was considered legitimate and formal planning in Namibia, which still provides the guiding norm for all development goals (Lühl, 2020, iii). One example is what counts as formal housing, resulting in the urban areas called informal settlements making the inhabitants criminals. Additionally, the relationship with the former oppressors is often valued after independence, as the newly sovereign country is dependent on financial support. The risk of colonial powers reacting by saying, "Since you want independence, take it and starve", adds another layer of complexity to governance issues and land restitution (Fanon, 1965, p. 77).

A nuanced picture of planning that considers historical impact is important as planning in the global south still is shaped by the Western countries (Roy, 2014, p. 15). For example, from the 1950s to the 1970s, planners in the global south were taught the importance of regional development plans as they were spreading across the West, and later in the 1980s and 1990s, new public management and market-oriented plans were seen as best practices. These models of 'how to' with all-purpose instructions are applied in situations and contexts entirely different from the ones for which they were conceived (Lynch et al., 2020; Mwathunga and Donaldson, 2022; Veiner, 2014, p. 49; Wan et al., 2020).

Western planning is relevant in African urban studies, both in theory and in practice, because everything is narrating the West, and the things that do not are simply non-West, still referring to the master narrative. Post-colonial theory is a way to approach, rather than discard, the epistemological problem; the Western dominance and superiority within planning.

Meaning that postcolonial theory is a way of interpreting and questioning the West more than narrating the postcolonial (Roy, 2016, p. 205).

Decolonizing knowledge might be the key to imagining a different world and challenging the conditions under which concepts, methods, or theories are conceived. However, a specific 'global south' epistemology is missing to replace the Western ones. Still, Veiner (2014, p. 51) suggests that actors should always acknowledge their context and discourse to enable open dialogues and transmit experience and knowledge. Acknowledgment is viewed as one step towards decolonizing planning and challenging what is currently viewed as best practice.

Development reforms made within a post-colonial context face different challenges than the European. Successful reforms from the global south can canalize a different view of planning. Research in post-colonial conditions contests Western representation by exposing a non-privileged world and creates a dictionary to widen the idea of globalization (Roy, 2014, p. 16). Thus, successful land reforms in post-colonial contexts are few to number, as post-colonial countries have been demonstrated to be correlated with weak governance structure (Chitonge, 2021, p. 3).

Namibia's evolving governance through decentralization

Decentralization refers to the transfer of power and authority from a central government to a subnational government. It typically involves giving greater control over policymaking and implementation to lower levels and delegating the ability to raise and allocate funds independently (Boko, 2002, p. 1). The implementation of decentralization in Africa is, however, a relatively new phenomenon as much of the continent lacks a tradition of strong local governments. Thus, from the 1980s onwards there is a shift toward decentralization and international interest in African urban management. The concept of decentralization is also closely connected to the concept of 'good governance' from the World Bank's agenda (Romeo, 2012, p. 1; Smit, 2018, p. 61).

International involvement began right after independence, with international agencies, NGOs, and CBOs encouraging investments in the upbuilt of Namibia. International agencies, such as the International Monetary Fund and The World Bank, of which Namibia became a member to the former in 1990 (IMF, 2022), has been involved in various investment projects and, among else, contributed to the financial liberalization of the Namibian financial system (Dembele, 2005, p. 390). International influence from liberal states, such as Germany and Great Britain, together with private stakeholders have engaged in developing countries to raise the attraction to foreign investors. In exchange for financial support, private stakeholders have been given influence over policymaking which has shifted the focus from state-led development strategies in favor of market-led strategies and decentralization of power (ibid., 394).

International involvement has further prompted the adoption of 'good governance' in exchange for technical and financial assistance. Over the last two decades, the good governance' concept, often connected to the World Bank report in 1992, has been promoting decentralization as a key component for successful governance. Consequently, governance programs are largely funded by donor and development partners to promote effective management of land resources (Chitonge, 2021, p. 19; Romeo, 2012, p. 1; Yankson, 2021, p. 76).

Practices of governance are not clearly defined between government levels or in public versus private action; rather, it is an intertwined social reality that cannot be read off from simple "maps" of organizational structures. Appling effective governance structures is regarded as difficult in top-down hierarchies as multiple actors and diverse governmental directives characterize it. Further criticism of a centralized government is the neglect of actors. While decentralized governments are legitimized by their actors, centralized structures are legitimized by policies and regulations (Sabatier, 1986, p. 30). Contradicting the idea of autonomous power to subnational levels to maintain effective governance networks (Healey, 2006, p. 303).

One way to identify governance changes is to search where new discourses appear, new ideas or concepts that have sufficient effect to shift the way resources are allocated and regulatory tools used (Healey, 2006, p. 304). Reforms and new governance structures create challenges of remobilization, aligning old practices with new ones, and acceptance of changes in power relations (Healey, 2006, p. 307, 2004).

Effective governance is regarded as a key factor in processing the complicated disputes around land tenure in Africa, and successful implementation of collaboration is viewed as the solution to weak government capacities in post-colonial nations (Chitonge, 2021, p. 16; Smit, 2018, p. 71). According to Jessop (2016, p. 15), state power can be examined as a combination of the formal, inflexible structure of government and the informal, adaptable governance practices. The government establishes the regulations and ground rules for governance, and through these rules, governance actors can operate within a regulatory, formal order (Jessop, 2016, pp. 16-17; Berger, 2003).

At the same time, criticism is raised towards the international pressure of adopting the concept of 'good governance.' The standards of what is to be accounted as good are stated out of Western standards, not created by post-colonial countries with their history and cultural differences as a basis. The preconditions differ between Western and African countries, and the concept of 'good governance' might, in a post-colonial context, have to be restructured to a 'good enough governance' agenda (Romeo, 2012, p. 1).

SSP and Governance in Namibia

To effectively address the research aim, it is crucial to comprehend the context of the Namibian governance structure within the government and what challenges the country faces generating a need for SSP. By understanding these dynamics, the research can shed light on the role of governance in SSP implementation and explore how it can contribute to controlling urban sprawl.

During the periods of colonialism and apartheid, most of the black population was subject to explicit political and socio-economic exclusion. During the German colonial rule, Germany had three primary objectives in Namibia: (1) systematically taking control of indigenous people's land to make farmland available for the German settlers; (2) increasing the dependence of the Namibians on the white settlers by destroying traditional social, political, and economic structures, and keeping education to a minimum; and (3) finally, setting up a system of forced labor (Frayne, 2000, p. 54). The planning ideology during the colonial era was a potpourri of the political apartheid ideology combined with rational and scientific methods. This undermined the well-being of the majority of people in the country while maintaining all advantages for the whites (Frayne, 2000, p. 56).

Independence from colonialism enabled the introduction of a new ideology based on equality and justice, instead of racial and exclusive norms. Although, the idea of planning as a rational science is still upheld in Namibia to a certain degree. Agricultural planning, for example, adopted a "scientific" approach to rangeland management using European and North American practices of determining land capacities for livestock farming. The Western farming model was not adopted after dry climates, and the social and cultural system became undermined through the removal of traditional agricultural methods (Frayne, 2000, p. 56).

Following Namibia's independence, the issue of underdevelopment became increasingly evident in urban areas in the form of unplanned and unregulated settlements. Up until 1978, the 'black' majority was denied access to urban land ownership and was only allowed to enter towns as contract laborers (Middleton et al., 2016, p. 92). The government has had difficulty in controlling and guiding development activity in Namibia in a coordinated and goal-oriented way. However, at independence, Namibia did not inherit any form of plan, either on a regional or a national scale. With shortages of qualified personnel, an unclear ideology, and little to go from the past; Namibia's national planning process has been largely unsuccessful (Frayne, 2000, p. 60; Middleton et al., 2016, p. 93).

The freedom to move after independence, together with poverty in rural areas, triggered urbanization, which in turn has led to considerable urban sprawl (Amoo, 2018, p. 18). An urban development that has not conformed to the elites' visions of what the urban landscape should be (Lühl, 2020, 157). The black urban poor are the ones impacted by these socio-spatial realities, and their circumstances are often labeled as 'informal' since they do

not own the land they occupy. As a result, local authorities can relocate residents if they 'illegally' occupy land designated for formal housing (Chigbu et al., 2021, p. 9). Making inequality a present part of everyday life, even though the 'informal' areas constitute most of the urban population with diverse living conditions (Lühl, 2020, p. 275). Along with urbanization, the demand for urban land increased steadily, leading to the development of innovative concepts to provide land tenure security for people who are in need of low-income housing (Middleton et al., 2016, p. 91).

In most developing countries, land ownership is critical for economic growth. The question of land tenure security tops the list of the most burning social and ethical issues in Africa (Chigbu et al., 2021, p. 2). Despite almost three decades of independence, the land question in Namibia continues to be a matter of national concern and contributes to uncontrolled urban sprawl. Land management remains entangled with race, class, and inequality, with a wealthy white elite still largely controlling the economy (Yankson, 2021, p. 81). African communities are thereby stuck in a state of uncertainty, caught between the Western government system that is currently practiced and the legal and land tenure systems that governed society before colonialism (Amoo, 2018, pp. 13, 20).

Evidence of the racial approach to planning is still present today, both through segregation and through the names of districts in cities and towns. The inherited power relations situated in the discourse, housing and living conditions, are to a larger extent contested in the urban theories. As the 'informal' reality grows, with informal settlements and markets, it keeps overlapping formal government decisions and is hard to ignore in urban politics (Lühl, 2020, p. 158). In the northern area of the capital city Windhoek, lies the largest residential area called Katutura. It has a high density and was created to relocate and restrict the black population. It highlighted that the natives were not permanent residents of the city, as Katutura means: "a place we do not belong", which is still the name of the place. It is also still largely dominated by black residents (Frayne, 2000, p. 58). The rethinking of everyday socio-spatial practices, such as street names, challenges the predetermined norms and could create a new paradigm of spatial theory (Lühl, 2020, p. 158).

While the constitutional system of Namibia grants equal rights to all citizens in matters concerning legal rights and land redistribution, a practical gap still needs to be bridged to achieve true equality. The distribution of land is crucial not only from an economic point but also as a matter of identity both for those who own it and those who believe that it rightfully belongs to them (Yankson, 2021, p. 75). Regarding spatial planning in Namibia, there is a will to correct the consequences of the apartheid, but planners do not know how to improve the situation. The inequality issue includes an enormous amount of people, living in areas such as Katutura, barely having enough means to eat from day to day (Frayne, 2000, p. 59).

The governance structure in neo-colonized nations often contains fuzzy actor networks and the distinctions between urban, rural, cultural, and economic objections are unavoidably blurred (Becker, 2013, p. 4). For example, the Namibian political system contains both

the formal government and informal, traditional leaders which is a debated power relation since independence. Traditional leaders, in general, have more legitimacy than politicians and with their support, the formal government is hoping to strengthen its credibility, but without giving up power (Chlouba, 2021, pp. 445–446). The power of the traditional authorities is kept limited to matters concerning communal land where they only have the opportunity to advise (Chlouba, 2021, p. 451). Further, because of increased central government control and the establishment of regional and local institutions to deal with land matters, there is a development towards even less power to the traditional authorities. Again, straightening the 'Western planning system' at the expense of the global south (Yankson, 2021, p. 82).

In Namibia's second land conference in 2018, more attention was brought to communal and ancestral land issues. Resulting in a resolution emphasizing the need to protect tenure rights; The Flexible Land Tenure System. It was created particularly for the poorest individuals who are victims of the formal system (Melber, 2019, p. 78). It also resulted in the Urban and Regional Planning Act (Act No. 5, 2018) as a new attempt to decentralize planning power.

However, land reform in Namibia has been slow and the attempts to introduce Western land administration solutions have lacked success, leading to many Namibians still struggling to access land (Chigbu 2021, 1). Furthermore, the implementation of legislation, such as the Flexible Land Tenure system and Communal Land Reform Act, have been unable to address existing social inequalities and faces bureaucratic challenges (Yankson, 2021, p. 84).

The question of the right to ancestral land and tenure security is recognized as a subject that policy or legal instruments have not adequately addressed in policies and reforms (Amoo, 2018, p. 14; Yankson, 2021). The issue is sensitive because just as land dispossession has a history, so does the white agricultural order that followed. Meaning that in a politically and racially charged state, determining who owns the land is difficult (Amoo, 2018, p. 15). Amoo (2018 p. 15) explains that even though Namibians have received more rights when it comes to ownership of land and some measures correcting the injustices, inherent problems of past racial discrimination still affect the country.

The cautious land reforms and attempts of decentralizing planning are quite different from the radical position held by SWAPO before independence; a highly centralized, one-party government and a unitary national state. The establishment of the local and regional governments in the 90s, was one step towards an abandonment by the government of its previously Marxist-Leninist ideology, while the decentralization strategy was the next step. Thus, not wholeheartedly committed to (Frayne, 2000, p. 60).

The regulations towards decentralization have resulted in expanded subnational responsibility to reduce rural-to-urban migration. However, regional councils have a limited mandate over the development of their respective regions. For instance, they can only grant leasehold titles, which discourages investors from investing in settlement areas. The ability

to obtain ownership in rural areas is necessary for attracting investors and countering urbanization (Amoo, 2018, p. 33).

Key articles about post-colonial planning agree that enforcing Western rational planning culture, and rejecting earlier knowledge, has resulted in a flawed planning system. They highlight the importance of allowing a more nuanced narrative of people and urban environments (Potter, 2020; Sayın et al., 2022). Frayne (2000) argues for a new ideology to meet postcolonial countries' social and political needs. Without adjusted ideologies and models, planners risk justifying policies on the basis of rational and Western-formed norms. Further risking to benefit the elite and the capital market instead of the needs of the majority (Frayne, 2000, p. 63). The free-market ideology tends to increase the gap between the rich and the poor, especially when the poor almost stands outside the market's growth factor and labor market. Allowing rich countries to continue to capitalize on the growing domestic market, resulting in a new economic colonial order (Frayne, 2000, p. 63).

To address inequalities governance constitutes an important restitutive mechanism to create justice in a postcolonial context (Yankson, 2021, p. 80). By introducing governance focused on land use, the constitutional framework could adopt legislation that redresses historical injustices by ensuring that the rights of different groups, such as those based on race, ethnicity, and gender, are taken into account. By decentralizing institutions that deal with land matters, local communities, and civic organizations can better advance their interests, although this may result in a less coordinated approach to land use planning (Yankson, 2021, pp. 84, 93–94). For example, could public-private partnerships, such as government cooperation with rural farmers' cooperatives, be used to change land use governance structures (Yankson, 2021, p. 82). Eventually, could a dismissal of regulations and planning standards become a solution to recreate the planning process, enabling planning for the majority instead of the elite (Frayne, 2000, p. 62).

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework that underlines the study builds on the crucial role governance plays in defining SSP by defining a framework for collaboration among stakeholders and guiding future spatial change. Previous research has recognized the significance of governance in SSP, both from a European perspective (Berger, 2003b; Healey, 2006; Jessop, 2016) and a Namibian perspective (Chlouba, 2021; Christensen, 2019; Yankson, 2021). The governance concept is used as a part of the theoretical framework because of its ability to explain informal processes and actor relationships within the planning system. Governance processes are a part of SSP as it provides the necessary mechanisms for collaboration, discourses, and guiding decision-making. Using governance as an analytical concept provides a wider understanding of how decisions are made and implemented and can assist in identifying opportunities for change (Smit, 2018, p. 59).

To understand the dynamics in governance and decentralization, it is also important to include the deeper cultural assumptions which give authority and legitimacy (Healey, 2006, p. 300; Jessop, 2016, p. 10). Underlying cultural assumptions are, among else, the colonial heritage and tribe belonging affecting equality, leadership, and power relations (Amdam, 2010; Healey, 2006; Schmitt and Well, 2016). The theoretical framework will therefore also include post-colonial theory to contextualize the concept of governance. The post-colonial approach is used to question current structures and narratives, allowing a rethinking of the relationship between place, knowledge, and power. Postcolonial theory helps to explain the process of decolonization and the complex relationship that formerly colonized countries still have with the West (Roy, 2016, p. 207).

These concepts are utilized in the study to identify how communication and cross-border planning between government levels works and why. The theoretical concepts of 'governance' and 'post-colonial theory' emphasize the contextual conditions creating challenges when implementing SSP. Moreover, governance viewed with a post-colonial perspective nuances the European perspective of governance and challenges the norms that characterize the Namibian planning process today. Governance and post-colonial theory connect to the research aim by explaining the context in which the government operates and how communication and informal processes affect it.

To operationalize the research questions, I have chosen to use Berger's (2003, p. 221) definition of governance as 'a multi-level government involvement,' along with Hersperger et al.'s (2018) theoretical framework on how changing power relations and governance structures can be distinguished. The framework is based on three main factors: (1) land change

intentions, strategies expressed in plans as spatial information and strategic thinking by planners (2) the means of implementation of the plans through governance processes and communication between government levels (3) the role of external conditions that influence the implementation process, such as the introduction of new statutory frameworks (Hersperger et al., 2018, pp. 36–39).

1. Land change intentions

Land change intentions are expressed in plans in the form of spatial information, which can be presented through maps or text. This information aims to describe the development visions and strategies for addressing development issues. Plans commonly provide details on the proposed locations and extent of built-up areas, their various densities, the expansion of transportation infrastructure, and strategic projects (Hersperger et al., 2018, pp. 36–38).

2. Governance process

To comprehend governance processes, it is necessary to investigate the institutional context and planning procedures. Under this theme, the aim is to uncover the communication channels between different planning levels and the decentralization process. For instance, exploring how explicitly the goals and objectives are expressed in plans or interviews and whether there is any mention of responsibility for implementation. It is important to examine if the responsibility is appropriately anchored across different planning levels and hierarchies, as it could reveal how the communication is working. Furthermore, it identifies who is responsible for what (Hersperger et al., 2018, pp. 36–38)

3. External conditions

Urban planning and implementation can be affected by numerous external conditions, such as; economic changes, migration, demographic pressures, changing relationships between national states, regional and local authorities, and environmental challenges (Hersperger et al., 2018, pp. 36–38). Although the distinction between 'internal' and 'external' conditions is not always clear-cut, as they tend to influence each other.

Returning to the theoretical concepts, Namibia's governance (Chlouba, 2021; Christensen, 2019; Yankson, 2021) and post-colonial planning (Fanon, 1965; Lühl, 2020; Veiner, 2014), they will serve as a theoretical guide to help distinguish 'external' conditions from 'internal'. Overall, the theoretical framework of governance and post-colonial theory is operationalized through Berger's definition of governance (2003, p. 221) and Hersperger et al.'s framework (Hersperger et al., 2018, pp. 36–39). This provides a lens through which to analyze the results from the interviews and the document study. The framework helps explain the challenges and opportunities faced by actors involved in the planning process. It further provides a theoretical basis for understanding the complexities of planning and governance in a post-colonial context. It is used in the discussion chapter to interpret and contextualize the empirical findings of the study and to guide the discussion to answer the research questions.

Methodology and Methods

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology and methods employed in the study. It begins by discussing the research design, followed by the selected research methods of semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Thereafter follows the chosen method for analysis of results and the methods' limitations. The chapter concludes by presenting the ethical considerations.

Methodology

This thesis's research methodology is qualitative, focusing on social aspects of the construction of processes, in this case, the governance structures within the planning process. It is the reasons why and how they are constructed that will be examined (Bryman, 2016, p. 34). The results will be analyzed within a constructionist framework, meaning that governance processes will be viewed as changing socially constructed phenomena. Governance structures are built on communication in formal and informal spaces and its evolution is affected by both. Thus, it is assumed that social actors can affect their situation rather than view it as something external (ibid., pp. 29-30).

Case study
Namibia's planning process constitutes the case study of this thesis. It is explored through samples from all planning levels enabling a comparison between the different, to understand how SSP is infused into the planning process.

Each government institution illustrates the variances in authority and power between them and provides a holistic approach toward the system as a whole. The data collection of SSP is limited to strategies focused on urban sprawl. This allows a deeper understanding of the underlying reasons why the implementation's success is considered low and how different factors interact to produce a certain outcome (Bryman, 2016, p. 67). One reason for selecting the whole planning system as the case study is to understand how new regulation is received by the different government levels and to examine how they interact to implement strategies and regulations for SSP.

Units of study
The units of study are selected to provide necessary data and context to address the research questions by examining SSP application, spatial strategies for urban sprawl, communication between planning levels, and the impact of new planning regulations for SSP. This

includes understanding government practices, policy adaptation, and insights into the respective responsibilities of and coordination between different actors.

The chosen units of study come mainly from the Hardap region, including the Hardap Regional Council (HRC), Mariental Municipality (MM), Rehoboth Town Council (RTC), and Kalkrand Town Council, along with the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development (MURD) on a national level and Lüderitz Town Council (LTC), in the Karas region. The objects of study are selected based on their size and hierarchical position to include a diverse selection and at least one actor from each government level. LTC is added for comparison since it is governed under a different regional council and for its unique features with a current decreasing population expected to increase rapidly (Sharan, 1994, p. 61). Including a town from a different geographical and administrative region, deepens the understanding of how governance settings and regional factors influence planning practices. The selection of study units, including all planning levels across multiple jurisdictions, further contributes to the research aim by providing a more comprehensive view of the governance structure within the strategic planning system. It helps capture the diversity and nuances of planning practices and governance across different regional contexts and hierarchies.

Hardap region
The primary unit of study is the Hardap region, which is the third largest region in Namibia, with a low population density of 0.6 persons per square kilometer. The councils selected are the two major urban areas, Mariental Municipality and Rehoboth Town Council, and one small town council, Kalkrand Town Council (figure 4). The first oversees the administration of the city of Mariental and its immediate surroundings, while Rehoboth Town Council governs the town of Rehoboth and its surrounding areas. The small town of Kalkrand is situated between Rehoboth and Mariental, and it is included as a more rural area to understand how planning is adopted in less dense areas (photo 6).

Photo 6: Kalkrand town center. Photo taken from outside of the council building, illustrating the rural feel of the place.

The Hardap region is known for its agricultural activities; 75 percent of the entire region form part of commercial farms, and 10 percent is communal farmland. Furthermore, the region has a significant tourism industry, with attractions such as the Hardap

Dam and the Namib-Naukluft National Park, and national parks claim almost 15 percent of the remaining land area (Hardap Regional Council, 2018, p. 8).

When it comes to spatial planning, the region faces several issues. One major problem is the unequal distribution of land, as some areas are overpopulated while others remain underdeveloped. This leads to overcrowding and sprawl in urban areas and limited access to resources in rural areas. It further creates financial struggles for both rural and urban inhabitants. The region also experiences environmental challenges such as a predicted decrease in rainfall, leading to more droughts, land degradation, and desertification, which threaten agricultural production and impact livelihoods (Ministry of Lands and Resettlement, 2011, p. 25).

For the region to approach these issues, the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development (2011, pp. iii–viii) has stated that there is a need for comprehensive development of SSP and multiple stakeholder involvement, including government institutions, civil society organizations, and local communities (ibid. 2011, pp. iii–viii). This all together made the Hardap region a suitable unit to study how SSP is applied for strategy implementation and the governance structures between planning levels.
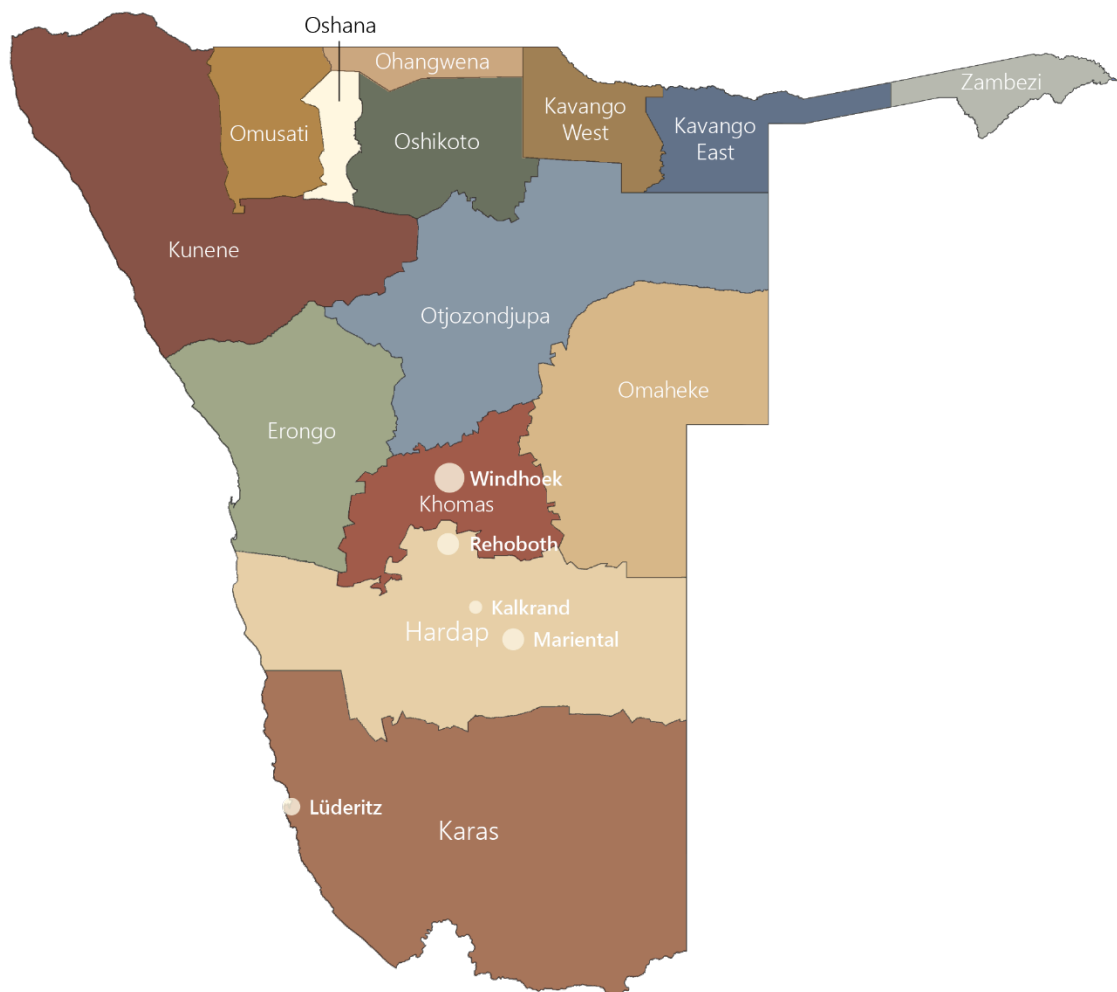
Figure 4: Namibian regions and the study objects: Rehoboth Town, Mariental Municipality, Kalkrand Town and Lüderitz Town. The capital, and Namibia's only city is also pointed out on the map.

Lüderitz Town
Lüderitz is a coastal town in the Karas region, southern Namibia (figure 4), known for its German colonial architecture and historical significance (photo 7). The town is approaching major structural changes as Namibia's first-ever green hydrogen plant is designated to be built there soon. It is chosen as a unit of study because of its current decreasing population but with an expected shift to a large increase of population within the near future.

The green hydrogen project in Lüderitz is expected to bring significant economic benefits to the region, including the creation of jobs, an influx of people, and increased revenue from exports. It is made as a joint venture between the Namibian and German governments, with support from the European Union. The project aims to produce green hydrogen using renewable energy sources such as wind and solar power. In addition, the Namibian government has identified Lüderitz as a key area for investment and development, with plans to upgrade the town's infrastructure, including roads, water supply, and sanitation systems (Green Hydrogen Organisation, n.d.).

Photo 7: Mansion in the coastal town of Lüderitz designed after German design principles.

However, there are also several spatial challenges for planning and development in Lüderitz. The town is located in a remote area with limited access to resources and services. The harsh desert environment surrounding the town also challenges infrastructure development and limits land available for development. This makes it important for planners and

developers to carefully consider the efficient use of available land and resources while also considering the need to preserve the natural environment and protect sensitive ecosystems. Another challenge is the high unemployment that still triggers mass migration of youths from rural areas to urban centers, creating urban sprawl (IIKharas Region, 2017, pp. 12–13). The combination of a lot of challenges but with an expected shift makes Lüderitz an interesting and unique unit to include in the study.

Methods

The process of analysis involved several stages, including selecting relevant documents, transcribing interviews, preparing the data for analysis, categorizing, and interpreting the findings. The chosen methods of data collection are semi-structured interviews and document studies.

Semi-structured interviews

A major contribution to this research is the in-depth interviews concerning SSP practices in the evolving governance context of the Hardap Region, the national level as well as the complementary sample of Lüderitz Town Council. To answer the research questions, the study uses semi-structured interviews with officials connected to the study objects and key informants within the field of politics and planning (Bryman 2016, 470).

The interviewees' viewpoints are sought from a national, regional, and local perspective, and the questions are modified depending on their expertise. Creating validity from being first-hand sources and providing a flexible framework (Bryman 2016, pp. 466, 468-469). Most prominent are the different questionnaires between officials and key informants, see Appendix 2 (pp. 82-83).

The respondents from the government were selected by a consultant with good knowledge of Namibia's governance structure, and some of the interviews were conducted with his assistance. All interviews, except one, were carried out on-site and recorded. The exception was made online but also recorded. The recordings were later transcribed with an AI-based transcoding tool, called Rev (Rev.com, n.d.).

The snowball method was used to identify relevant documents and key informants to mitigate the limitations of the interview method. Meaning that a small sample of participants recommended other suitable participants and documents (Bryman, 2016, p. 415). The key informants are experts on spatial planning who work outside the government structure but with important knowledge about the governance structure and planning practices.

The following individuals were interviewed in this study:

Government interviewees

1. Public servant of the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development (MURD)
2. Regional economist in the Hardap Region Council (HRC)
3. Town planner of Mariental Municipality (MM)
4. Town planner of Rehoboth Town Council (RTC)
5. Human Relations Officer and administrator of Kalkrand Town Council (KTC)
6. Control Officer of properties and the responsible officer for infrastructure technical services of Lüderitz Town Council (LTC)

Key informants

7. Senior manager of Urban Dynamics Africa; a private consultant within strategical spatial planning
8. Ph.D. in Architecture, Planning, and Geomatics. Senior lecturer at the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment at the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) with research focused on land rights, governance, housing, and urbanization.
9. Ph.D. in Political Sciences and a Habilitation in Development Studies. Senior Lecturer in International Relations and was the Director of the Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit in Windhoek and Research Director of the Nordic Africa Institute in Uppsala. President of the European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI).
10. Ph.D. in Urban and Public Affairs. Senior lecturer at the Department of Architecture and Spatial Planning, Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), with research focused on urban and regional governance and land use planning.
11. Technical advisor and rangeland expert. Master of Agriculture, Rangeland Management.

All participants work with community planning or urban issues to different extents, although all of them are not spatial planners.

Document study

The method involves reviewing plans and policies related to SSP and analyzing them to identify patterns, trends, or inconsistencies in the adopted planning strategies. The documents offer the opportunity to compare stated strategies from the interviewed planners with the politically approved strategies. It further offers the opportunity to compare the discourse around issues without it being affected by the researcher's questions (Sharan, 1994, pp. 119–120).

The population of documents used in the analysis includes:

1. Urban and Regional Planning Act 5 of 2018 (Act No. 5 of 2018)
   Government Gazette of the Republic of Namibia, 2018

2. Integrated Regional Land Use Plan for Hardap Region 2011-2016 (HIRLUP)

Published 2012 by MURD. Consultants: Stubenrauch, Geocarta Namibia, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

3. Mariental Town Council Structure Plan (MSP) 2014-2040
   Published by MM, no date. Consultants: Stubenrauch. Supported by: Staffanstorps kommun.

4. Rehoboth Town Council Strategic Plan 2020-2024 (RSP)
   Published 2019 by RTC and MURD.

The selection is based on if the documents were mentioned during the interview. Meaning that each document has been referred to during the interview with the respective respondent, which implies that it is used to some extent in the planning process.

None of the gathered documents were publicly available online and were instead accessed with the help of the respondents.

Analysis of Results

The analysis of the empirical material is conducted using an analytical framework called a coding scheme, as shown in Annex 1 below. The first step was to categorize the data after predetermined themes and categories to make the process systematic and the data management consistent to suppress bias (Bryman 2016, p. 284). All the raw material, from both the interview transcriptions and the document study, is gathered in a single coding scheme and presented in Appendix 1 (p.82).

The second step is a comparison, presented in the results chapter, between what is said during the interviews and what their guiding documents state, as each interview is paired with their respective document.

The coding scheme is built upon the theoretical framework's three main themes and then subdivided by the research questions. To further categorize the material to ensure a systematic approach, each research question has been divided into several operational questions. The last column states, 'what do they mean and who's doing what' and contains the author's interpretations and summaries of long quotations. The notes are used as a first step in analyzing the results. Overall, the selection of quotes is based on a three-step categorization with a theoretical theme, research questions, and operational questions.

The results chapter consists of summaries from the coding scheme with references to the specific cell in the Excel matrix where the raw quotes are to be found. For example: *(MURD, Tab 2: F26)* means that the paragraph is based on the interview with the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development, which is to be found in the 2 tab, column F and row 26.

There are three tabs in the Excel matrix: (1) Municipalities and Towns, (2) Ministry and Region, and (3) Key Informants. Documents are included in the first two tabs while interviews are included in all of them. The key informants do not have any attached documents since they do not produce strategic documents relevant to the data collection.

Annex 1: Coding Scheme, analytical framework for categorization of data. The empirical material is divided into 3 equal charts, called tabs.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
	Coding scheme					
1	Theoretical framework	Research question	Operational question	Object Time/ page	Themed quotes	What do they mean and who's doing what?
2	Land change intentions	What is the nature of the governance structure in Namibia's SSP system and how has this evolved from the colonial to postcolonial eras?	Why is the governance setting changing?			
			Which documents are used for SSP?			
			How are these documents used?			
			What are the major challenges that hinders the documents to be used as they are intended to?			
		What spatial strategies exist within the evolving governance system when planning against urban sprawl, and how effective have these strategies been?	Why is urban sprawl an issue?			
			What strategies is stated?			
			Who is responsible for the implementation?			
			Who has power to implement strategies?			
3	Governance process	What communication channels for strategic spatial planning exist within the evolving governance system, and how effective have these channels been?	How is the communication link between the different planning levels working?			
			What is the interpretation of power within the respective planning level?			
4	External conditions	How can the introduction of statutory regional and urban structure plans enhance the impact of strategic spatial planning?	What does the Act mean when it comes to SSP?			
			How do planning authorities interpret the act?			
			What needs to change within the current system for the efforts of decentralization to benefit the planning system?			

Limitations of research

This research is based on a case study and collects data through interviewees and document studies. That contributes to possible limitations, such as:

1. Limited generalizability: The case study is the Namibia's planning system meaning that the result is not generalizable to countries with different institutional frameworks. Although, it contains a wide range of study objects from within the country making the results applicable in multiple local contexts within the same national framework.

2. Reliance on secondary sources: The research partly relies on secondary sources of information, such as policy documents and reports, which are not all written by the institution that they are labeled after. Commonly strategic documents in Namibia are produced by the ministry, and they are all approved by the ministry, which may not provide a comprehensive understanding of the views and experiences of local and regional actors (Sharan, 1994, p. 120). The document study is therefore complemented by interviews, generating primary data to balance the limitation.

3. Potential biases: The research may be influenced by the biases and perspectives of the researcher and the interviewees, which could impact the interpretation and analysis of the data (Sharan, 1994, p. 47). The conducting of the thesis has been a gradual learning process of the Namibian planning system, which have affected the questions asked. To counteract that effect, all the empirical material has been analyzed in the same analysis matrix, at the same time.

4. Time and resource constraints: Conducting fieldwork and collecting primary data within a limited timeframe abroad may have contributed to some constraints. Furthermore, case studies are a time-consuming method with a small sample size, which, due to time and access to contacts, limited the selection of study units to southern Namibia (Sharan, 1994, p. 47).

5. Difficulty in measuring impact: Measuring the impact of strategy can be challenging because of the long processes and multiple stakeholder involvement. It has impacted the ability to provide conclusive evidence of the impact of policies and development programs and instead meant that the experience-based interview material has been given the greatest weight in the result.

Ethical considerations

One of the most important ethical issues is the sensitive area of "land use." Namibia is a post-colonial nation with a tragic history of forced displacement and oppression, making land use a most sensitive question.

Additionally, the major method of data collection will be interviewing, which can lead to sensitive questions related to the issues of gender, race, power, and social aspects (Sharan, 1994, p. 190). Another factor to consider is the fact that being a white person in a post-colonial country comes with certain privileges. While deeply critical to this reality, I am acutely aware of my privileged position within this setting: a white person with a European heritage living in the capital's central district. A reality that differs completely from what most of the urban inhabitants' experience.

Therefore, it is of high importance to be extra observant and respectful in the meeting of representatives. For instance, being able to adapt the questions depending on the interviewee's response and perspective on the subject could be a key factor in creating the trust necessary to conduct a successful interview. All respondents are anonymized to enable a free discussion.

Furthermore, the planning system is relatively new, after independence in 1991, and still under growth. As a researcher not growing up in a colonial or post-colonial context, it is important to acknowledge that the current distribution of privately owned land is a constant reminder that colonialism did not end with independence. The brutal crimes, culminating in genocidal practices to force people off their land, remain, as restorative justice has not been infused enough into the land debate. In addition, it is important to acknowledge the different purposes of planning between the global north and south. While planning in the north focuses on the development and future change. Planning in the global south is still much of a restitutive tool to mend the past as well as a means by which politicians could strengthen their power by uplifting the previously oppressed people's needs and aspirations.

Results

In this chapter, the results of the data analysis are presented, which is structured according to the research questions, including the support question. Every question is answered by each interviewee who mentioned the subject. This approach has allowed diverse and nuanced answers from the respondents, revealing different interpretations and perspectives on the subject matter.

The results from the semi-structured interviews are presented along with the results from the document analysis. However, the answers from the key informants are presented separately from the government responses because of the different starting points between them. The key informants are mainly speaking from an academic perspective while the government respondents have a practical viewpoint and include the document analysis. The interviews with the government cover all planning levels: the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development (MURD), Hardap Regional Council (HRC), Mariental Municipality (MM), Rehoboth Town Council (RTC), Lüderitz Town Council (LTC), and Kalkrand Town Council (KTC) as well as the respective strategical documents. To refer to the source material, parentheses show in which tab, row, and column the raw data are located in Appendix 1 (p.82), ex. (MURD, tab. 2: F8). All the interviews and documents are found in the same coding scheme.

Concerning the document study, neither the towns, municipality, region, nor ministry has an approved structure plan according to the new Urban and Regional Planning Act of 2018 (referred to as 'Act'). Meaning that the document study is unable to answer how the Act is interpreted since none of the government levels have published plans or programs about it. That research question is answered through interviews only. In addition, RTC lacks a guiding Structure Plan too and refers to the Strategic Plan, a financial document. LTC has a Structure Plan but stated during the interview that it is not in use due to significant investments not included in the plan. KTC does not have a Structure Plan but is supposed to have a Strategic Plan, although it only exists as a hard copy that could not be found despite several efforts from the interviewees.

SSP in Namibia

The results presented here address the support question of the thesis: What is the nature of the governance structure in Namibia's strategic spatial planning system and how has this evolved from the colonial to postcolonial eras?

The first subheading is the government-level comparison, to understand which documents that are currently in use for SSP and what changes the actors see going forward. Under the second subheading, key informants speak about the evolving governance setting and post-colonial planning. The key informants explain the underlying factors that have affected how today's system for SSP has been designed. Further raising issues with the justification of the historical abuse, inequalities in land ownership, and how and why the elitist rule is still present today. Finally, under the third subheading, there is a special section devoted to international influence on SSP and governance. While conducting the interviews it became apparent that globalization has impacted the design of the planning system and the government's ambition to adopt SSP.

Government-level comparison

MURD: The responsibility for developing a National Strategic Development Framework lies with the ministry level of the Namibian government. However, the framework has not been completed to meet the demands of the Urban and Regional Planning Act, which is intended to become the national guiding document for all local authorities, regional councils, as well as urban and regional structure plans. The strategy document currently in place is the outdated NDP5, a more general and guiding development framework. All of the mentioned plans must align with the national framework (MURD, Tab. 2: F8).

HRC: The regional level does not have an approved structure plan according to the new Act. Still, they have the outdated Hardap Integrated Regional Land Use Plan (HIRLUP) from 2011-2016, referred to as the main document used in terms of spatial development. Moreover, it is pointed out that the local authorities' structure- and master plans must be aligned with the HIRLUP (HRC, Tab. 2: I8). It is not a stand-alone document, as multiple assessments support it. The plan should ideally be the platform for planning within the region from which ministries and the regional council should draw up their Sub-Regional Development Plans and Local Economic Development Plans (ibid. L11).

MM: The Mariental municipality is currently in the process of reviewing its structure plan to align with the new Act. The first step is to secure funding from the ministry, as Mariental lacks long-term development plans for town expansion and is already lacking suitable land for housing. To enable statutory strategies to take place, they need to be sure that development is possible by owning land (MM, Tab. 1: F18).

RTC: Rehoboth Town Council faces distinctive challenges regarding spatial planning. In 2021, Rehoboth appointed its first town planner, marking a shift towards prioritizing spatial planning. However, the lack of prior planning has forced the planner to focus on rectifying past issues, even those predating the country's independence. SSP with a long-term perspective has yet to be implemented (RTC, Tab. 1: L6; L8; L15).

Analyzing Rehoboth Strategic Plan 2020-2024, the plan is not made to be used in spatial planning but rather is an economic plan for future investments. This means that the Rehoboth planner neither has a local strategic spatial plan nor a national or regional one to guide

the development (RSP, Tab 1). The only planning document currently in existence is the Town Planning Scheme, which serves as the legal framework for property usage (RTC, Tab. 1: L6)

KTC: The Town Council of Kalkrand faces an even more challenging situation. They lack specific planning documents and the strategic economic plan that Rehoboth has. The hard copy of the previous plan is lost, and since the documents are not digitized, it has been difficult to retrieve. Consequently, the strategy for planning is to continue with business as usual, with little concern over the lack of spatial planning documents (KTC, Tab. 1: R8).

LTC: The interview with three public servants from Lüderitz Town Council revealed that while a current structure plan exists, it is not utilized due to ongoing major changes that were not considered during the development of the plan. The structure plan is therefore under revision to cover all aspects of the future development, from the utilities, water, sewer, electricity, and town planning as well as to be adjusted according to the new Act (LTC, Tab. 1: U9; U15). Before finalizing the new framework, the first step will be for all the stakeholders to sign an implementation agreement and for the town to conduct an environmental impact assessment to collect important knowledge for strategy-making to the plan. The objective is to establish both short-term and long-term goals, culminating in a guide capable of directing the design of the following project plans (ibid. U10).

The upcoming development projects in Lüderitz are expected to significantly impact the town. The first project, a Green Hydrogen project funded by Germany and the EU, will require 15,000 construction workers in its first phase and an additional 15,000 in the second phase, with an extra 3,000 workers needed for the operational maintenance of the infrastructure. The second project, an oil and gas development, will also require infrastructure and housing for workers. As a result, stakeholders are calling for the development of a housing policy to guide decision-making and future development plans (LTC, Tab. 1: U24).

> *We are expecting a hundred percent population growth.* – Lüderitz Officer of Properties (Tab. 1: U20)

In comparison: When it comes to the nature of the governance structure in Namibia's SSP system only a few levels have their own strategic plan for spatial planning, and even fewer got an updated one. None of the stakeholders have completed the demands of the Urban and Regional Planning Act. The lack of suitable land use plans from before independence has forced the planning authorities to focus on rectifying burning issues from the past rather than working with long-term planning.

Key informants

In addition to the government levels' explanation of the applied documents for SSP, it is also important to reconnect to the research question's second part about Namibia's evolving governance setting. As previously has been shown is the political mandate changing, caused by a disappointment with politicians who, despite 33 years since the liberation, have

failed to deliver on their promises. The results of the latest election were a major step back for the ruling party SWAPO, but even as new political parties have come into power in some local elections nothing has changed. Instead, is the political top layer described as a new black political elite, claiming to be advocates of black economic empowerment but without the capacity of reducing the gaps between rich and poor. The political elite together with the white elite rather increases then reduces the differences between rich and poor, further fueling the people's frustration with the government (Ph.D. Political Sciences, Tab. 3: O6; O7; O8; O9).

The raised public voice puts pressure on politicians to be able to present long-term plans for the development which has enhanced the importance of SSP. Additionally, the growing frustration, together with the historical trauma of being suppressed, put pressure on those in power to create change through decentralizing decision-making. Although the process began already in the 1990s, it has proven difficult to implement as power tends to remain with those who hold it (Urban Dynamics, Tab 3: R6). For example, if a town such as Lüderitz wishes to obtain permits for various activities, they must do so through Windhoek, even if they are a significant distance away. Resulting in a risk of losing local knowledge and it becomes a time-consuming process, which especially affects low-prioritized rural areas (Technical Advisor, Tab. 3; I15).

International Influence on SSP and Governance

Similar to Namibia's experience, other postcolonial countries have also experienced a pattern of unfair land management before independence. Including white elites controlling most of the land while the majority of the population lacked access to it. For example, after gaining independence, the government of Zimbabwe implemented a reform program that involved forcibly seizing land from wealthy white farm owners. However, this was done in an unorganized and non-political manner, resulting in significant consequences for the economy, raising concerns in Namibia about adopting similar reforms. Stressing the dilemma between ensuring that those without access to land are granted it while also avoiding damage to the economy (Ph.D. Urban Affairs, Tab. 3: L8). Despite the questionable approach of forcibly seizing land, a subsequent consequence was that those who gained land were not adequately prepared for it (ibid: L8). Meaning that land was given to people who previously lacked access, but no education was provided telling how land could be utilized. This is further connected to the decentralization process in Namibia, where it has been recognized by the HRC that the increasing responsibility has not been followed up with sufficient training (HRC, Tab. 2: I27). Marking that it takes preparation and holistic thinking to complete a larger reform successfully.

Currently, there are bilateral negotiations between the governments of Namibia and Germany. Prompted by the latter's admission in 2021 of its roles in the genocide between 1904-1908. Namibia was hopeful that this acknowledgment would result in measures towards restorative justice, but no reparative offerings from the German government or legal consequences have been given. Germany has instead proposed a singular payment

intended as aid for the affected indigenous communities (Ph.D. in Political Sciences, Tab. 3: O32).

> *"… they offer 1.1 billion euros as a one-off compensation to settle the issue once and for all."* - Ph.D. in Political Sciences (Tab. 3: O32)

The compensation offered by Germany is deemed insufficient for achieving restorative justice, as argued by a political science and development studies professor. The German government should instead have engaged in negotiations with Namibia without imposing a ceiling amount. Additionally, they should have set aside sufficient funds to purchase commercial farmland from white landowners at fair prices. Thereby compensating for the land taken away a century ago without creating conflicts between those who currently own the land and those who believe it rightfully belongs to them. Along with educational investments to reestablish traditional knowledge about farming and land management. This is one approach to achieving restorative justice but requires an international political will to acknowledge the injustices created during colonial times (Ph.D. in Political Sciences, Tab. 3: O48).

Finally, to return to how SSP is applied in Namibia's planning process, the results point out that the attitude towards SSP has undergone significant changes in recent years. A clear turning point was the Land Conference 2018, which gathered planners, politicians, and thinkers from the whole country. After the conference, urban land became a crucial topic, attracting international attention to Namibia. New land-related projects were proposed by Germany and France, and international organizations such as The World Bank increased their interest in the country's development. Although centralization was necessary during independence, there is now a shift towards broader perspectives, recognizing the growing urban centers (Ph.D. Planning, Tab. 3: F6). In Rehoboth, an international, multi-level government project is in place, aiming to improve life in the town's informal settlements. The project is called 'The Inclusive and Sustainable Urban Development Project (2020-2023)' and is supported by the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development and commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation. The project aims to guide local authorities' town planning and upgrade informal settlements using a community-based approach to planning. It is one example of a rural-urban migration project with international involvement that was implemented after the Land Conference (Giz, 2021).

Spatial Strategies to Plan Urban Sprawl

The results presented here address the first research question: What spatial strategies exist within the evolving governance system when planning against urban sprawl, and how effective have these strategies been?

The first subheading contains the answers from the key informants addressing the historical foundations behind the rural-urban migration. The second subheading contains the

government responses showing the different approaches to strategy adaptation and its effects on each government level.

Key informants

Urban sprawl, urbanization, and informal settlements are interrelated topics in Namibia. The emergence of informal settlements, which were declared a national crisis, was closely linked to the country's independence and the government's attempt to establish itself. The lifting of police zones that prevented people from migrating and the search for economic opportunities also contributed to the growth of informal settlements (Ph.D. Urban Affairs, Tab. 3: L23).

The contradiction between the Western formal system of monetary land ownership and the traditional African system of heritage and land rights is a commonly cited explanation for the issue of the upbringing of informal settlements. A professor in land governance explains that commercial farmers and local communities have entirely different views on land ownership. Commercial farmers claim ownership based on the length of time they have been farming the land, whereas local communities argue that they lack access to the land that was supposed to be their ancestors. These opposing positions are deep-rooted and not easily resolved (Ph.D. Urban Affairs, Tab. 3: L19). If the government forcibly evicts individuals who are illegally occupying land in the informal settlements, they are likely to come back and argue for their ancestral right to the country that the 'so-called' landowners stole. They believe that the land belongs to them and that they cannot be classified as illegal occupants. The professor describes the issue as highly emotional, and it presents a duality of being an independent country with most of its inhabitants classified as criminals (Ph.D. Urban Affairs, Tab. 3: L20).

The split between communal/traditional land and commercial land is a current topic of debate in Sub-Saharan Africa (Ph.D. Planning, Tab. 3: F19). Key informants express concern over the fact that the land management systems have not been designed to account for rural-urban migration or to fit the African context. Towns and cities could, in theory, benefit from population influx but the lack of an integration system has rather created more problems than economic growth (Ph.D. Urban Affairs, Tab. 3: L21).

It is important to highlight the extent to which these groups of people who migrate from rural to urban areas are exposed. Because if they cannot make a living in the rural area, they are beyond poor. Resulting in the development of informal shacks as the only housing possibility. There are national programs that build houses, but it doesn't matter how cheap you make it; it is still not affordable (Technical Advisor, Tab. 3: I19; I20; Urban Dynamics, Tab. 3: L19).

Another explanation for the phenomenon of urban sprawl in Namibia is the preference of individuals for low-density housing areas. The reluctance to high-density living is associated with the historical trauma of being forced to live in crowded conditions (Ph.D. Planning,

Tab. 3: F21). This sentiment is also reflected in Namibian law, which imposes restrictions on planners from selling land smaller than 300 square meters, thus contributing significantly to urban sprawl since independence. Additionally, changes in household formation, fewer large family groups living in the same house, contributed to a higher demand for housing. Altogether, the cultural component of valuing low-density living, coupled with changes in household formation, increased demand for more housing (Urban Dynamics, Tab. 3: L19; L21).

Figure 5 below illustrates the high rates of rural-urban migration in Namibia from 2000-2011. The northern areas had the highest population increase, which also accounts for the largest populated areas, together with the capital region Khomas. The share of the population in regions with a large rural population has declined, whereas the population has increase with rapid urbanization in regions with cities and larger towns. The urban population has nationally increased from 27.1% in 1991 to 42.8% in 2011 (Republic of Namibia and Namibia Statistics Agency, 2011, pp. 26–27).

The study objects are constituted of both increasing urban areas, Mariental and Rehoboth, and decreasing, Lüderitz. Mariental is the only municipality in the region and Rehoboth is growing rapidly because of its commuting opportunities to Windhoek. Lüderitz, on the other hand, shas been shrinking after independence but prepares for a 100% population growth, as a result of the new investments.
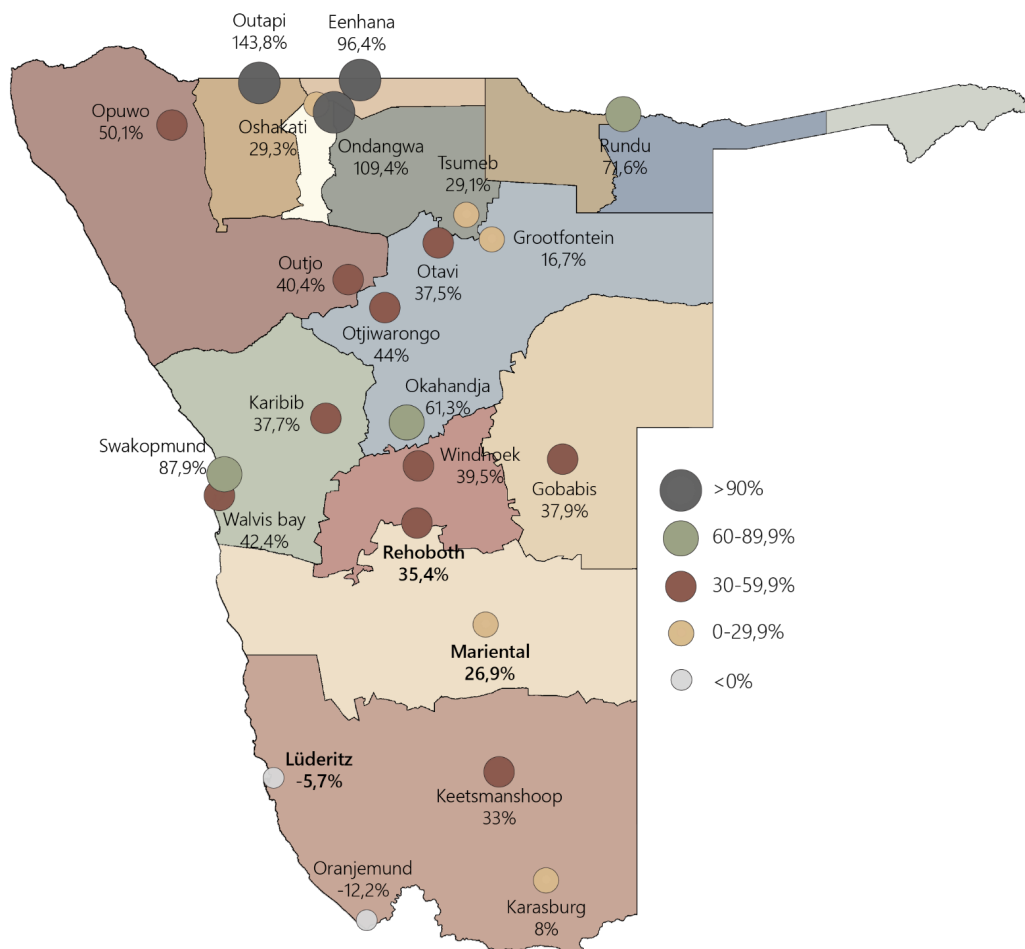

Figure 5: Urbanization in Namibia from 2000 to 2011.

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Government-level comparison

MURD: The ministry representative said that the ministry lacks specific strategies towards urban sprawl but is partly responsible to create opportunities for strategy implementation and for stakeholder involvement, such as contract writing with large investors and developers. Private developers play an essential role in strategy implementation and are crucial for addressing housing challenges in the country. As a result, the Ministry prioritizes large private development projects in the planning process (MURD, Tab. 2: F33; F24).

HRC: The HIRLUP presents some goals to enable continued life in rural areas instead of having to migrate to urban areas; (1) assist local authorities in broadening their economic base, and (2) enable resettlement programs mentioning the flexible land tenure system and creating small agriculture holdings (HIRLUP, Tab 2: L17; L18). Overall, the document is more economically focused than land use specific. The regional planner said they do not have any strategies in place for dealing with the issue of land ownership (HRC, Tab. 2: I17).

MM: The current structure plan is the only document within the study that addresses urban sprawl and contains spatial strategies to address the issue. Urban sprawl is addressed as the most prominent issue in the plan, as the phenomenon is described as having negative effects on segregation and car dependency. It states that most of Mariental's population growth is occurring in low-income groups as more people arrive from rural areas. Former strategies for handling urban sprawl and its informal settlements have been to gradually formalize these areas. However, the local government can no longer keep up with the demand and speed of urban expansion (MSP, Tab. 2: 6; 20; 46).

The town planner of Mariental shares the same concern about the urban sprawl issue, stating that informal settlements are growing exponentially. The challenge lies in preventing segregation and the former apartheid divisions while maintaining property values in high-income areas. This has resulted in a continued separation between low, middle, and high-income individuals (MM, Tab. 1: F20). The municipality intends to upgrade informal settlements in partnership with the private Namibian housing action group as a public and private partnership (PPP) (ibid: F25). The planner acknowledges a lack of land use plans, which means that when people migrate, there is no designated inception area for them to settle, leading to people settling wherever they can and constructing shacks that the government is not legally allowed to demolish (ibid: F27).

> *If there were some sort of long-term planning taking place, that would have allowed us to have three or five extensions already planned ahead of time* - Town planner, Mariental (Tab. 1: F27).

Photo 8: Rehoboth informal settlement, with houses created of sheet material.

RTC: The rapid population growth in Rehoboth necessitates planning for a future genera-tion. However, the lack of specific planning documents has resulted in a lack of strategies for handling issues such as urban sprawl and informal settlements (photo 8). Although the process of researching the town's growth direction has begun as a first step towards devel-oping a Structure plan according to the Act, clear development policies have yet to be pro-duced (RTC, Tab. 1: L24; L25).

KTC: Informal settlements are not a concern, as individuals may rent land for a minimal fee. The rural town between Mariental and Rehoboth maintains a steady population and possesses a substantial amount of town land, currently leased to farmers, which can be allo-cated to new residents (KTC, Tab. 1: R20; R42).

LTC: The housing strategy in Lüderitz focuses on development along the valleys, as it is more affordable than development on the mountain tops. Future housing demand, after industrialization expansion, is expected to be in the middle to the low-income range, with high-income brackets already catered for (LTC, Tab. 1: U20; U21). However, this strategy results in urban sprawl due to the rocky topography. To address this issue, the town coun-cil has approved new layout plans for informal settlements, which utilize a flexible land ten-ure system for collaborative land ownership (ibid. U25).

In comparison: There are few spatial strategies targeting urban sprawl. Mariental munici-pality is the only planning authority with a planning document relevant to the subject. In

the smaller areas of Kalkrand and Lüderitz is urban sprawl less of a problem, but as Lüderitz prepares for rapid population growth the issue of urban sprawl will grow. The effectiveness of Mariental's strategies is not high enough as the demand for urban expansion is enormous.

Communication between SSP levels

The results presented here address the second research question: What communication channels for strategic spatial planning exist within the evolving governance system, and how effective have these channels been?

The first subheading contains the answers from the key informants focusing on the historical grounds behind the current governance setting. The second subheading contains the government levels complex network of communication and how different the weight of communication can be perceived between actors.

Key informants

Seeking an answer to the research question, the first step is to look into the underlying factors behind the governance structure, and thereby examine the bases of the power relations. The centralized governance structure could emanate from the historical context of apartheid planning, which was very elitist, and the Namibian planning structure originates from top-down decision-making. After independence, the country's constitutional system became a federal one, called the unitary system, further keeping the power centralized (Ph.D. Urban Affairs, Tab. 3: L32).

Because of the centralized structure, the communication links between institutions are considered weak, particularly in relation to issues of land ownership. One potential solution is to create more communication platforms between commercial farmers, local communities, and traditional authorities to facilitate better communication and collaboration among stakeholders. Although these platforms may not solve all issues, they could clarify many concerns and help stakeholders find common ground (Ph.D. Urban Affairs, Tab. 3: L25). Additionally, increasing the frequency of national land conferences and informal interactions between stakeholders could ensure that all stakeholders actively participate in formal and informal governance forums (ibid: L26).

In addition, concerns have been raised regarding communication links between departments within the same ministry. This lack of coordination at the top level has caused planning processes to take an unnecessarily long time (Technical Advisor, Tab. 3: I33).

Government-level comparison

MURD: The ministry is considered the coordinator of the planning process. Responsible to ensures that other authorities comply with the regulations and that all the necessary documents are in place for spatial planning (MURD, Tab. 2: F26). The supervision process

involves verifying that all actions taken at the local authority or regional level are submitted for approval. After approval, other key stakeholders such as the Ministry of Land Reform (MLR) may need to be involved. Suppose the application is for a township establishment; in that case, the first step will be an approved layout plan by the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development (MURD) and the second step is an approval of the general plans from the Ministry of Land Reform (MLR). (MURD, Tab. 2: F30; F31).

HRC: Development coordination for urban and rural areas, including communal and commercial farmland, falls under the region's responsibility, including development within the local authority's jurisdiction. Municipalities and town councils are advised to report to the region, as the regional council is responsible for advising or making requests to local authorities. However, the region has no power and can only make recommendations to the respective sector or ministry if private investors or other authorities do not follow the regional plans (HRC, Tab. 2: I20; I24).

The HIRLUP explains the communication links for the plan as follows:

> *"Ideally the Regional Council should appoint a Monitoring and Review Team consisting of at least two members from the Regional Council and two members from the MLR regional office. This team should report to both the Governor, HRC, and MLR headquarters with any updates on the plan...Once in implementation stage, the sector ministries must convey the implementation process to the regional Ministry office which in turn must report to the Monitoring and Review Team of the HRC. This is a continuous cycle of monitoring and review."* – HIRLUP (Tab. 2: L21)

The Ministry is responsible for producing the regional plan, and it is evident throughout the document that the connection between the region and the ministry is important for the fulfillment of the presented strategies. However, it is noted that the decentralization policy has not been fully implemented, as sectoral and top-down planning remain common practices. Resulting in a lack of harmonized development initiatives between the national, regional, and local administrative levels. Another recognized issue is the absence of comprehensive and overarching legislation dealing with land use planning in Namibia. Instead, the legislation addressing land use planning is unique for every line ministry, with no integration between them which affects strategy implementation as the regional council is highly dependent on support from the ministry (HIRLUP, Tab. 2: L45).

Furthermore, local authorities and regional councils operate under distinct laws, namely the Local Authority Act of 1992 and the Regional Council Act of 1992, respectively, making each one an autonomous body. Despite the regional council's mandate to coordinate activities, the local authority is not legally obligated to report to the regional level, and the regional level is not superior to local authorities in the hierarchy (HRC, Tab. 2: I26). This lack of communication linkages affects coordination activities, particularly concerning land ownership, where the buyer or seller of land, the region, and the local town planner should be connected via communication channels (HRC, Tab. 2: I28).

The current system presents challenges of responsibility allocation between local and regional authorities, particularly in issues that overlap, such as rural-urban migration, which affects both jurisdictions. The local authorities point the blame on the regions for failing to provide necessary services in rural areas, which people require to remain. At the same time as the regional level blames the local authorities for not providing adequate inception areas, leading to the emergence of informal settlements. This has resulted in a cycle of blame when ultimately it comes down to a resource challenge. The region lacks the necessary technical and financial capacity to develop rural areas, and the same goes for the local authorities regarding inception areas (HRC, Tab. 2: I27).

One major issue in Namibia's planning process is the large number of plans and policies that are enforced but not aligned. A consequence of the approach is to develop new policies on top of existing ones to solve a problem. The suggestion is to eliminate most of the plans and policies because they give power to different institutions and individuals and result in uncoordinated actions (HIRLUP, Tab. 2: L6).

MM: According to Mariental's town planner (Tab. 1: F13), the ministry is a crucial stakeholder in planning, and decisions are made from the top. The town cannot grant permission to commence development without ministerial approval.

And all we do is just give some sort of recommendation to the minister to approve. – Mariental Town Planner (Tab. 1: F13)

Collaboration agreement exists among various local authorities, including the city of Windhoek, which is utilized to exchange experiences and provide guidance. As the largest town in the Hardap region, most local authorities seek guidance from Mariental. The planner suggests that it would be beneficial to empower the regional council with engineers, town planners, and other experts to assist all the local authorities within their jurisdiction. That could redirect power from the ministry and help decentralization (MM, Tab. 1: F36; F37).

The ministry also plays a significant role in budget planning and approval. However, a major challenge during SSP implementation is the absence of a budget for implementation plans, which most likely will result in no progress (MM, Tbl 1: F15). To address issues such as urban sprawl and population growth, Mariental requires more land areas but lacks adequate funds to purchase them. Consequently, the town is seeking funding from various ministries such as the MAWLR and the MLR (MM, Tab. 1: F34).

Moreover, the planner mentions that most local authorities will draw attention to capacity problems. The lack of engineers and struggles to become a registered planner to utilize the expanded authority from the Urban and Regional planning act means that the Act cannot

be used as intended and that the planning sometimes lacks sufficient expert knowledge to make well-founded decisions (MM, Tab. 1: F17).

RTC: According to Rehoboth's town planner, the link between the town and the community is considered strong, and the link towards the ministry is functioning, mainly revolving around policies rather than action plans. The link to the regional council is described as a vacuum, and the towns mostly plan in isolation since their jurisdictions are not overlapping or even adjacent, indicating that the regional development goals are not being noticed (RTC, Tab. 1: L37). The town planner suggests establishing a dialogue between the regional council and local authorities to learn what the region work towards (RTC, Tab. 1: L42).

Compared to other planning authorities, Rehoboth emphasizes community awareness as a key to successful planning. Community participation is another form of communication within the planning process, that could have a great effect on SSP. Because of the long tradition of participation, it is seen as a positive contribution and not time-wasting since the people are used to being involved (RTC, Tab. 1: L27). One challenge of working with community development without a mandate to accomplice change is that the people still perceive the local level as responsible for development issues, and complaints are directed towards the local level instead of the ministry (ibid: L43).

Once the town becomes an authorized planning authority and has an approved structure plan, will a need to establish a strong link between local authorities raise. Communication between towns and regions will become even more critical when the ministry steps back. The regional council will have to communicate its expectations to local authorities during the planning process to coordinate the development. Additionally, as stated by the key informants, is a need to strengthen communication even within the same department on all government levels acknowledged (RTC, Tab. 1: L57; L58).

LTC: Concerning Lüderitz's future development, with significant structural changes occurring in a short period, the government is seen as a crucial financing partner for infrastructure development. PPPs will also be essential for land delivery as the town faces rapid growth due to private investments. The council's annual budget is minimal, and the town is mostly self-financed through taxes. However, the ministry will engage and make investments in larger projects such as the Green Hydrogen project (LTC, Tab. 1: U32; U33).

It is the ministry and the town council that works together with the project developer in the PPP, which has caused the region to feel like they are not consulted in the decision-making process. Thus, from the local level is the interest in extending the link low. It is their opinion that the region has already been involved through two public consultation meetings, where the region and traditional authorities were invited and consulted (LTC, Tab. 1: U36; U37). Although, the official also notes that there is a communication gap existing between the regional and local levels, a link that could be improved (ibid: U39).

The link to other local authorities is considered sufficient, thanks to the Twinning Agreement, which exchanges best practice examples between councils (LTC, Tab. 1: U40).

KTC: Kalkrand's funding comes from MURD through an annual budget rather than local tax collection due to the small population. Spatial and economic planning is thus carried out before the following year's budget claims, meaning that the planning is done one year in advance (KTC, Tab. 1: R9). Previous attempts have been made to increase the low employment rate together with the region, but these are currently not in place. However, the region remains an essential stakeholder in such attempts (ibid: R15).

In comparison: When it comes to communication channels for SSP, the highest level of government is the hub of the planning process. Although the communications among different departments within the ministry are questioned as they tend to prolong the planning process through misunderstandings and long lead times. The regional authorities got a monitoring responsibility over the local authorities. The local authorities, on the other hand, are not obligated to report to the regional council and see little interest as the regional councils often lack adequate expertise to help the local development. This has caused the communication between the regional and local authorities inexistent to a large extent.

Impact on SSP from statutory structure plans

The results presented here address the third research question: How can the introduction of statutory regional and urban structure plans enhance the impact of strategic spatial planning?

The first subheading begins with the purpose of Act No.5 2018 which allows structure plans to become statutory. Followed by the different government levels' interpretations of the legislation and its impact on the planning process so far. The second subheading contains the answers from the key informants who puts the new law context of the decentralization process and provide guidance on how to enhance its impact.

Government-level comparison
The purpose of Act No.5 2018 is to decentralize certain spatial planning matters and to establish a board responsible for spatial development frameworks. The Urban and Regional Planning Board is assigned an advisory function, which enables it to make recommendations to MURD and subnational councils on all matters related to spatial planning and provide guidelines for the preparation, approval, and review of the NSDF and structure plans (Act No. 5, Tab. 3: O35). It consists of people from different government institutions such as MURD, MAWLR, and MLR (ibid: O30).

Finally, the Act mandates that policies, plans, and laws at the national, regional, and local levels of government must be harmonized. Furthermore, all stakeholders involved in

implementing such policies, plans, and laws must cooperate to avoid land use conflicts. Moreover, coordination should hinder delays in decision-making to minimize negative social, economic, or environmental impacts (ibid: O26).

MURD: The ministry has clarified that the Act has led to changes in power dynamics, with local and regional authorities only needing to report decisions that differ from those in the approved structure plan. Thus, the representative enhances that although the new planning act represents a shift of power from the national to the local level, the ministry still has the mandate to oversee the planning process and is responsible for the development and the quality of spatial strategies (MURD, Tab. 2: F6).

However, as no local authority has yet been given the status of an authorized planning authority, all developments still need to be reported to the ministry (Ministry, Tab. 2: F35; F45).

HRC: From a regional perspective, there has been no significant difference in the system since the Act was introduced in 2018. The interviewee was unsure about the implications of the Act and did not believe it would make regional plans statutory. Showing the lack of clarity from the central level as the plans for a fact will become statutory. The planning system is described as confused, possibly because Namibia is governed by two parallel governing systems - a unitary system where decisions are made at a central level and a federal state where regional councils act as regional governments without any authority or power (HRC, Tab. 2: I41; I45).

For the decentralization policy to have a real impact on the system, there is a need for a structural change in budget authority. The ministry's current system of annual budgets does not allow for long-term development projects and hinders the regional level from utilizing the full budget. There is a discrepancy between the budget offered on paper and the actual budget at the regional level, as the time to use it is not offered. To make the decentralization policy work, it is necessary to transfer budget responsibility from the ministry to the regional level, allowing the implementation of strategies (HRC, Tab. 2: I46; I47).

The lack of capacity on a regional level is also acknowledged in the HIRLUP, stating that the Decentralization Enabling Act of 2000 has been a slow process and, in many instances, hampered by a lack of capacity at the regional level (HIRLUP, Tab. 2: L46).

MM, RTC, LTC: Local authorities in Lüderitz, Mariental, and Rehoboth are aware of the changing status of the structure plans from being inductive to statutory. However, questions remain about the level of detail that should be applied to the structure plan, particularly when compared to the Town Planning Scheme, which imposes strict regulations on development. The town planner of Mariental emphasizes the need for flexibility, as strategic spatial plans tend to evolve, and adaptability is necessary for areas to grow in new directions (MM, Tab. 1: F52). One positive aspect of the strengthened position of the structure plan is the power it transfers from the top level to the local and regional authorities:

"If I have a Structure Plan like this, I can say even if the minister were to say no to the layout plan, I can challenge them to say, but look, this is how we want to grow and this is in line with our structure plan. So, these are the guiding documents that I can use to motivate my applications as I'm reviewing them." (MM, Tab. 1: F13)

Rehoboth, unlike Mariental, does not have a Structure plan in place that is possible to update to fit into the Act. It will take time to develop policies and strategies for how the plan could become both a guiding and binding document. The attitude of the town planner is overall positive as the aspect of long processes is considered. The current process is a time-consuming discussion, as mentioned by others as well, resulting in slow development processes and frustration with the lack of power. Until they reach authorized planning authority, the local level's power is limited to policy developments, and action plans for projects approved by the ministry (RTC, Tab. 1: L42). But when the town reaches that status and has an approved structure plan, processes that have taken up to a year will hopefully be reduced to two or three months (RTC, Tab. 1: L50).

The new structure plan is comprehended to be a detailed document and an exact guide on how the town should be developed. Policies and action plans for implementation will complement the plan. The high level of detail is seen as a cornerstone for the plan to be approved, as the ministers want to know and control everything. The challenge is that it is impossible to know what the future has. A statutory document could lead to tied hands for new developments, and concerns are raised about how changes are to be made in the plan (RTC, Tab. 1: L52; L53).

Overall, when it comes to the introduction of statutory urban structure plans most local authorities are optimistic about the Act and believe it to be an advantage from a planning perspective. Even though the effect on the planning process, so far, has been absent since none of the researched authorities have been able to utilize the new regulations. Lüderitz believes that a statutory vision also must be detailed, formed as a proper guide stating what should be done daily to achieve it (LTC, Tab. 1: U52; U53). Although the plan limits the liberty of change, it will be based on a lot of research, and the visions, strategies, and goals will have to be trusted as correct. The act also allows for amendments, making inflexibility less of a problem, according to the officials from Lüderitz. As demonstrated with the current structure plan, which is still the governing document, it is not used due to changing circumstances and new investments. Setting an example that even guiding plans lose their meaning when unexpected change comes along. Showing that a sustainable long-term plan will need to have an element of flexibility, no matter if they are statutory or guiding (ibid. U56).

Key informants
Key informants have explained that the previous attempts at decentralization have mostly been unsuccessful, as most decisions are still taken at the national level. The attempts have often not been completely carried out as the will to contain power at the central level

stands in the way, leading to discrepancies between the stated ambitions in the policies and what has been enforced in practices (Ph.D. Political Sciences, Tab. 3: O13; Ph.D. Urban Affairs, Tab. 3: L7). This creates a long governance process as both subnational and national governments must be involved in all projects (Ph.D. Urban Affairs, Tbl. 3: L47; Ph.D. Planning, Tab. 3: F47). The effect of implementing new regulations is dependent on government coordination, and as explained under the previous research question, coordination is weak resulting in ad hoc strategy-making. Development applications are approved without following a specific strategic goal and the strategies from one level are not transferred to the following. It is these issues that the Urban and Regional Planning Act is trying to address, at the same time as it contributes to more policy regulations.

Contrary to previous attempts at decentralization, the newly enacted legislation establishes a hierarchy of statutory plans, commencing with the National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF) and extending to regional and local structure plans. However, the NSDF is not yet in place, and neither are any regional structure plans, the first approved local structure plan has been adopted in Swakopmund, and those of Walvis Bay and Windhoek are in the process of being developed. The lack of superior plans contradicts the original idea of a hierarchy among the strategical documents (Urban Dynamics, Tab. 3: R40; R45).

In general, there is a certain level of skepticism among key informants about the actual impact of the Act, given that the budget control still lies with the ministry (Ph.D. Urban Affairs, Tbl. 3: L47; Ph.D. Planning, Tab. 3: F47). Meanwhile, another professor is concerned about delegating responsibility over funds to local authorities, given their relatively low legitimacy and reputation. The first step to addressing this issue could be the creation of efficient governance structures, occupied by qualified and committed individuals who do not abuse their positions for personal gain. Rebuilding trust in government, at all levels, is essential to changing the governance structure and financial system. Namibia's growing elite system has hindered decentralization and efficient governance (Ph.D. Political Sciences, Tab. 3: O49; O50).

The new legislation does not imply that all subnational councils will become authorized planning authorities, rather it is only the ones with qualified planners. Nonetheless, they are all obligated to produce a Structure plan as a strategic spatial framework, making the planning process less ad hoc, even if the road still will be long for decisions to be made (Urban Dynamics, Tab. 3: R41). For the decentralization efforts to be successful, a loosening of rules and a departure from the strict European planning system is necessary. African cities and towns face different challenges compared to the European system, and applying European ideas about land governance and ownership is not the solution to local issues (Urban Dynamics, Tab. 3: R49).

Thereto, criticism is raised regarding the requirements of adopting structure plans in smaller towns and villages. They lack competence and monetary sufficiency to support the creation and implementation of structure plans, making the requirement unachievable without assistance (Ph.D. Planning, Tbl. 3; F11).

In comparison: The introduction of the new Act has so far had little impact as the requirements have not been fulfilled for local and regional autonomy in decision-making. For statutory structure plans to become effective, more clarity is needed from the national government regarding flexibility and scale. There is currently confusion among stakeholders regarding the statutory plan's meaning. To enhance the impact of SSP, the local and regional authorities prompt a decentralization of budget responsibility as it is hard to make long-term strategic decisions on a one-year budget.

Discussion

This chapter seeks to answer the research questions by providing an understanding of how the Namibian planning authorities interpret the governance structure and how the impact of SSP can be enhanced to counteract urban sprawl. To achieve this objective, the discussion is based on the theoretical framework: (1) land change intentions, (2) governance processes, and (3) external conditions. Specifically, exploring the internal and external influences of decentralization and post-colonial history that have affected the planning process.

Land change intentions

Land change intentions mean the result will be analyzed with a focus on the practical application of SSP, contributing directly to the answering of the research questions about what strategies exists and their effectiveness, as well as how Namibia's governance structure has evolved from the colonial to postcolonial era.

The theme, land change intentions, includes spatial information aiming to describe both visions and strategies for urban sprawl (Hersperger et al., 2018, pp. 36–38). Starting with an own illustration of how the planning system works in practice, see Figure 6 below. The figure is based on all results and how the actors dealing with SSP seem to relate to each other. The attempt is to explain how governance and power distribution affect the planning process. The figure can be put in comparison with the illustration made of 'Namibia's planning system in theory' (figure 6), under the chapter explaining the planning system, to see the difference between what decentralization is meant to mean in theory and what it has resulted into.

The Namibian Spatial Planning System
in practice

Cabinet
President: Head of State and the Executive Branch of Government
Prime Minister: Chief Advisor to the President and Overall Coordinator of Government Offices, Ministries and Agencies

National Planning Commission (NPC)
Mandated by Article 129 of the Namibian Constitution and the NPC Act of 2013 to oversee development planning for the whole country in order to ensure better coordination, monitoring and evaluation.

Laws and policies

The Decentralization policy
- Local Authorities Act, 1992
- Regional Councils Act, 1992
- National Decentralization Policy, 1998
- Namibia's land policy (1998)

Flexible Land Tenure Act (2012)
A complementary tenure registration system to freehold titles that aims to provide an affordable security of tenure to inhabitants in informal settlements.

Urban and Regional Planning Act (Act No. 5 of 2018)
Provides the establishment of a comprehensive urban and regional planning system with statutory structure plans, and the creation of the URPB.

Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform (MAWLR)
The Ministry focuses on the promotion of the sustainable socio-economic development of the country through:

- Promotion of the agriculture and water sectors.
- The redistributive land reform process (the willing buyer, willing seller and resettlement programmes)
- Tenure reforms and protection of communal land rights.

The Ministry of Urban and Rural Development (MURD)
The ministry is responsible for regional governance (Regional Councils) and local governance (Local Authorities) and therewith plays an important role in the decentralisation process of the Namibian government.

Additional ministries (18)

Final approval of structure plans

Urban and Regional Planning Board (URPB)
Advising MURD in questions relating to urban and regional planning policies and make recommendation of applications of regional and local planning schemes.

implemented but outdated

Strategic documents

- Vision 2030
- National Development Plans i.e. NDPs (NDP5)
- Harambee Prosperity Plan (Harambee Prosperity Plan II)

not implemented

National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF)
A strategic long-term plan, has to be aligned with the NDP.

impact?

Local Authorities (57)
Municipal Councils (13), Town Councils (26) and Village Councils (18)

Regional Councils (14)
Constituencies

made by the ministry, consulted by the local/regional authority

not implemented

Structure plans
Guiding

Local and regional structure plans
Statutory

Integrated regional development plans
Guiding

Government level

Documents

partly implemented
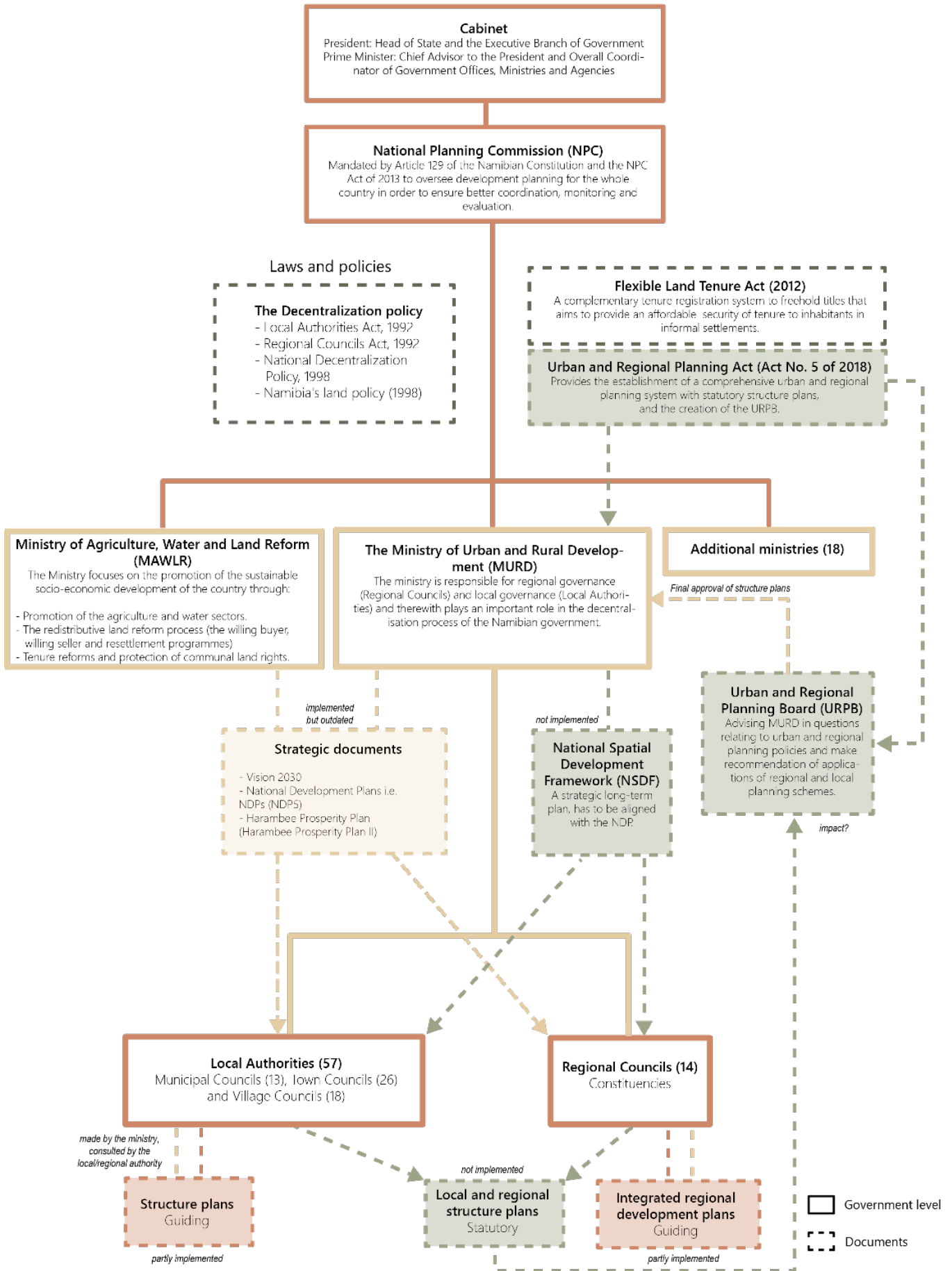
partly implemented

Figure 6: The Namibian Spatial Planning System in Practice.

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The solid lines in the illustration are the different hierarchical levels of the government; starting with the national level including the cabinet, laws and policies, and the ministries. Followed by the local and regional levels, which the results suggest placing at the same hierarchical level rather than letting the region be placed above the local actors.

In comparison to Figure 2, this illustration contains two types of structure plans (documents are illustrated with dashed lines). It is shown that the transfer to statutory structure plans is a slow process leading to regulations overlapping, creating a system with both binding and guiding plans. Showcasing that the introduction of statutory plans changes the governance system within the government, although since none of the respondents have implemented new plans, no effect can be proven.

The green fields are the rules, actors, and documents that belong to it the Urban and Regional Planning Act of 2018. It begins with the regulations that demand the ministry to produce the NSDF and create the monitoring unit called The Urban and Regional Planning Board. All the older strategic documents at the national level will continuously be used alongside the NSDF.

The findings of this study directly address the research questions by showing that most planning authorities lack updated plans and strategies especially adopted for spatial planning and urban sprawl. For example, no region has yet finalized a Regional Structure Plan required already in 2018. The older demand for Integrated Regional Land Use Plans (IRLUP) has, in turn, only been applied in six out of 13 regions (Naholo, 2020).

During colonialism, planning was not made for all which meant that all forms of planning had to be redone after independence. The process of adjusting to a new government has resulted in major work for the town planners to rectify past issues. This has led to little time for long-term, strategic planning (RTC, Tbl. 1: L6; L8; L15). The complex history that has created shortages of qualified personnel, and financial limitations, contribute to the government's difficulty in controlling development in a coordinated and goal-oriented way (Frayne, 2000, p. 60). The lack of land use intentions and the government's difficulty in controlling development could be one reason for the introduction of statutory structure plans. Intending to force regional and local authorities to create long-term land-use strategies and pressure all government levels to implement the stated strategies.

Apartheid's rational view of planning, without a social foundation, has enormously impacted the physical structure of Namibia and continues to do so (Frayne, 2000, p. 56). Urban sprawl is just one example of the many consequences of the racial division of society, which sprung from the severe poverty forcing a rural-urban migration (Technical Advisor, Tbl. 3: I19; I20; Urban Dynamics, Tbl. 3: L19). Urban sprawl is also a result of the historical trauma of forced high-density living that has created resistance towards compact living in the cities (Ph.D. Planning, Tbl. 3: F21). History is still present to a high extent in

Namibia and urban sprawl continues to enhance the divisions between people, forcing the poorest to travel the longest to access the city. Moreover, the lack of plans has resulted in uncoordinated actions between government levels, creating ad hoc planning for urban sprawl and informal settlements. It has also emerged a lack of knowledge about how to get control over the uncontrolled spreading of informal settlements. Even the national programs for cheap housing are still unaffordable for the majority of dwellers (Technical Advisor, Tbl. 3: I19; I20). When the planners do not know how to treat the problem, while lacking strategic documents to follow, the risk is high that everything continues as usual. This, in turn, can mean that planning continues to be ad hoc or reinforce historical, racist structures as there is no holistic plan.

The outcomes, connected to the research question about what spatial strategies exist when planning against urban sprawl, conclude that none of the respondents nor the documents had any suggestions on how to get control over rural-urban migration. Although, one strategy for dealing with established informal areas, mentioned by all the responding town planners, was the Flexible Land Tenure System sprung from the resettlement program and Namibia's second land conference (LTC, Tbl. 1: U16, MM Tbl.1 G26, RTC Tbl. 1: L26). The conference has been raised as a positive example of a national investment that joins knowledge from across the nation to deal with the land issue (Technical Advisor, Tbl. 3: I19; I20, PhD. Urban Affairs Tbl. 3: L26). More recurring governance-promoting events, where government levels, private investors, and NGOs can join forces, could help local and regional strategy-making. At the same time, becoming an innovative platform for new ideas and policies dealing with rural-urban migration.

Mariental's current strategies for urban sprawl are relocation and restructuring of the informal areas, but rapid urbanization has made it impossible to keep up. Moreover, the duality of preventing segregation in the former apartheid-segregated areas and maintaining property values in high-income areas is challenging, as property value shrinks when mixed with low-income housing (MM, Tbl. 1: F20). Lüderitz Town Council also faces the challenge of integration as affordable housing only can be developed along the valleys while the high-income inhabitants can build homes in attractive locations above the others (LTC, Tbl. 1: U20; U21). Both examples show the complexity of formulating strategies capable of targeting the issue and the challenge of building affordable without separating or creating sprawl. The racial structures and urban sprawl tend to be reinforced when planning for affordable housing, because of the need for inexpensive land area.

The Mariental municipality is the only respondent with a strategic document and written spatial strategies that address urban sprawl (MSP, Tbl. 2: 6; 20; 46). The reason is probably that the other towns did not have land use-specific documents. Showing the importance of plans specially designed for spatial development if strategies targeting urban sprawl are to be made. The other planning authorities did not refer to their strategical documents since they are not using any, which also resulted in a lack of guiding strategies (RTC, Tbl. 1: L24; L25). Furthermore, Kalkrand's loss of planning documents, without knowing that the documents had disappeared, is further proof of the ad hoc planning in smaller towns. Even if

urban sprawl is not an issue, the lost document meant that there were no guiding documents for any kind of development in Kalkrand (KTC, Tbl. 1: R20; R42).

Governance process

In order to comprehend governance processes, it is necessary to recognize all levels of government and how they communicate with each other. The findings discussed here directly respond to the research question about what channels exist for SSP within the evolving governance system and their effectiveness. Furthermore, as governance structures are up-built on relations and communication links, regulated by policies and laws, all research questions are affected by the underlying governance processes. Under this theme, the main aim is to uncover the social links between different planning levels to understand what is hindering the implementation of policies and programs.

For instance, it explores the planning process from the actor's point of view emphasizing whether there is any mention of responsibility for implementation. It is important to examine whether the responsibility is appropriately anchored across different planning levels and hierarchies. In addition, it is interesting to identify who is responsible for what, as it is a prerequisite for strategies to go from intention to action (Hersperger et al., 2018, pp. 36–38). Governance processes include Namibia's changing governance setting and the political influence on the governance structure within the planning process.

Photo 9: German architecture and street names is a distinctive feature in the town of Lüderitz.

Like the colonial and apartheid philosophy of elitist planning, Namibia has a centralized government which also shapes the governance structure (Yankson, 2021, p. 82). One example is that the colonizers' standards for what is considered legitimate and formal planning still guide all development in Namibia (Lühl, 2020, iii). Photo 9 shows that the German heritage is still clearly prominent in the architecture and street names of Lüderitz.

Namibia is also influenced by the 'Western planning system' with a bottom-up governance structure, creating regional and local planning levels (Yankson, 2021, p. 82). These are not negative influences *per se,* but the demand for decentralization in combination with the top-down colonial planning heritage has caused the Namibian planning system to balance between a top-down and

bottom-up approach to governance. As the results suggested, this has created a power struggle within the government. Additional arguments reinforcing the signs of a power struggle is the political shift emerging as the ruling party SWAPO risks losing its first national election in 2024 (Ph.D. Planning, Tbl. 3: F9). Dissatisfaction was seen already at the beginning of the century, from the growing inequalities between the rich and the poor and the lack of impact of policy documents, among other things (Frayne, 2000, p. 52). A final argument is the recurring decentralization attempts, which have resulted in two parallel governing systems, both national and sub-national, and with many plans and policies that are enforced but not aligned (HRC, Tbl. 2: I41; I45). Like Frayne (2000), the regional economist suggests eliminating most of the plans and policies because they give power to different institutions and individuals and uncoordinated actions (HRC, Tbl 2: L6).

Functioning communication is vital for an effective governance, but as Namibia's government is characterized by constant restructuring, and a pronounced confusion about how, what, and by whom things should be done, it is not performing (HRC, Tbl 2: L27). The quote from the HIRLUP (Tab. 2: L21), presented in the Results, is just one example of the long processes of monitoring and reviewing that are connected to planning. Constant reforms and new governance structures come along with challenges of aligning old practices with new ones, and acceptance of changes in power relations (Healey, 2006, p. 307, 2004). This confused process of reforms and new networks is perhaps the only way to shape post-colonial planning but it has severe effects on the performance of the governance process. According to Healey (2006), a transformation of governance requires a shift in the way resources are allocated and regulatory tools are used, which cannot occur completely until a new way of thinking is implemented. Despite updates of regulatory tools by the introduction of statutory strategic plans, there has been little change in the Namibian government's resource allocation. The responsibility for the budget remains with the top-level government while the expectation is that the local level should be able to make independent decisions. The short-term budget system contradicts the concept of long-term planning, even though decentralization policies have been implemented to some extent.

The results further indicate that Namibia has not yet found its identity, resulting in uncoordinated development actions and a limited impact of SSP (Ph.D. Planning, Tab. 3: F7; E9). Identity is important in the discussion of governance processes as a way to understand what is hindering the development of SSP. The meaning of the claim that Namibia has not yet found its identity is connected to politics and SWAPOs shift from a revolutionary spirit before independence to a quick shift into a liberal ideology in the early 90s. This moved Namibia closer to their former colonizers Germany and Great Britain's liberal ideology, and best practices of New Public Management and market-oriented plans were adopted. Further allowing the free market to capitalize on Namibia's assets (Lynch et al., 2020; Mwathunga and Donaldson, 2022; Veiner, 2014, p. 49; Wan et al., 2020; Frayne, 2000, p. 63). The years between independence till today (2023) have caused confusion around the identity of the ruling party SWAPO. Subsequently, affecting the governance process through leadership with multiple ideologies and quick shifts in political will, even though the same party has been in power since the beginning. These findings illustrate the

connection between how changes in governance affect its performance, as SWAPO is accused of underperforming.

Moreover, governance processes are connected to the responsibility of strategy implementation, which RTC has been working on through community participation. The results indicate that this way of using governance helps the authorities to lift the local identity in the strategy-making and it is promoted as an asset that strengthens the faith in planning from the community (RTC, Tbl 1: L37). This connects to the central purpose of understanding how to raise the success rate of planning, more trust in the local authorities raises their power to implement development ideas.

Responsibility for implementation must be communicated across different planning levels so that each level does its part when it comes to cross-boundary issues, such as rural-urban migration. The results show a need to develop coordination between urban and rural areas by enhancing the link between the region and the local authorities as well as private stakeholders. The region lacks power over the local authorities but is the responsible authority for their coordination, which creates a conflict as the local authorities are not obligated to report to the region (HRC, Tbl 2: I20; I24; I26; RTC, Tbl 1: L42). However, the ministry also states themselves as coordinators of the planning process, and as governors over both the regional and local authorities (MURD, Tbl 2: F26). One reason for the limited regional authority could be the ministry's desire of keeping control over the process, contradicting the aim of decentralization. Instead, responsibility overlaps among government levels creating confusion within the governance structure and the process prolongs as none of the actors truly has the adequate power to carry out its mission.

Another reason for the communication gap is the different perceptions of what is sufficient communication. LTC experienced a misperception when the Karas region complained that they had been left out of the process when the town council on their part considered the region to have been involved through public consultation meetings (LTC, Tbl 1: U36; U37).

These kinds of misunderstandings might be due to overlapping laws and policies because of the absence of overarching legislation dealing with land use planning in Namibia. Perhaps it is a dismissal of regulations and planning norms that would enable reform and adjusted planning practice to take form. New design principles, governance structures, and resource allocation could lead to a dismissal of the deeply rooted colonial structures and shift the focus from elitist planning to a community-based approach. There is also a recognition of the multiple ministries dealing with land use, all of which have unique legislation without collaboration (HIRLUP, Tbl 2: L45). This lack of communication links between the ministries and the policy documents at the top level further prolongs the planning processes (Technical Advisor, Tbl 3: I33).

Lastly, after all the interviews, it became clear that the responsible actors for strategy realization are the local authorities. They were the only ones speaking about the

implementation challenges, not just the visions and communication with other planning levels, and the main challenges mentioned are: (1) the lack of updated strategy documents, (2) know-how and time, and finally the biggest issue (3) the lack of financial control (MM, Tbl. 1: F27; F34; RTC, Tbl. 1: L24; L25). It shall also be noted that the respondents from the regional council and Kalkrand Town Council did not work specifically with spatial planning, this could potentially affect their understanding of the planning process and SSP.

External conditions

This theme aims to investigate the impact of statutory structure plans on planning and governance by examining the effects of decentralization and strategy implementation as outlined in the Urban and Regional Planning Act. The results have previously implied that the implementation success of SSP is affected by both external and internal conditions (Dembele, 2005, p. 390). That connects this theme to the research aim of assessing the nature of the governance structure within SSP. Internal conditions, such as access to strategic plans and communication within the government have previously been examined. External conditions, on the other hand, could be changes in; finances, relationships between national states, regional and local authorities, and new regulation adaptations (Hersperger et al., 2018, pp. 36–38). The post-colonial theory has previously shown the importance of understanding the role of Western influence in post-colonial countries. In addition, the results imply that Western perspectives should not be unquestionably applied in Namibia's planning process as it affects both governance and the design of SSP, which is further discussed under this theme.

The introduction of a statutory framework for SSP could have an impact on all types of state power, both the formal governments' responsibilities and the informal governance structure as it establishes new regulations for governance actors to operate within (Jessop, 2016, p. 16-17; Berger, 2003). However, the results indicate that the new Act has had limited impact on the system since none of the included study areas have finalized a structured plan or been titled an authorized planning authority. Thereto, the ministry has yet to finalize the first NSDF, meaning that the impact is more or less insignificant. Similarly, the decentralization policy of 2000 has not changed the true relationship of power. This could partly be explained by the fact that the ministry still controls the funding for local authorities if they are not also funded by locally collected taxes from the inhabitants. This has resulted in criticism of the decentralization policy aimed at the ministry for the resistance to delegating budget responsibility as part of the reform (HRC, Tbl. 2: I46; I47). Although, key informants have also raised concerns about delegating responsibility for funds to local authorities, given their relatively low legitimacy and reputation. Instead, is a more efficient governance structure with qualified personnel suggested as means to raise the success of regional development plans and urban policies, as it rebuilds trust in the government (Ph.D. Political Sciences, Tbl. 3: O49; O50).

This issue has been addressed in the new Act, as it advocates for decentralization but is limited only to authorities that possess qualified personnel. However, it mandates that all

authorities produce a strategic structure plan, regardless of the staff's suitability, which reveals one of the paradoxes facing the country (Urban Dynamics, Tbl. 3: R41). Another paradox is the way decentralization is initialized. The reforms are pushed from the top rather than being pulled from below, reflecting a politically driven act of change instead of a subnational demand for more authority and power (Romeo, 2012, p. 11). The lack of demand is for example shown by Rehoboth who stands in the infancy of implementing a planning system and lacks the resources and time to work with long-term perspectives (RTC, Tab. 1: L6; L8; L15).

It is suggested in post-colonial literature that large reforms are the necessary step to decentralize and at the same time challenge Western planning norms (Veiner, 2014, p. 51). The Western planning structure was introduced during colonialization when power was delegated by weapons rather than suitability (Fanon 1965, p.19). The dominance was maintained by the rulers' difference from the natives, meaning that Western planning structures were introduced as a means of maintaining power, not necessarily because of its suitability. Market-orientated strategies tend to increase the gap between the rich and the poor, and external actors have shaped the nature of the new economic order through a Western liberal ideology (Frayne, 2000, p. 63). The introduction of statutory plans does not seem to be the reform needed. Not necessarily because of its ineffectiveness but rather because the internal governance process is not working. The regulation is solemnly an external pressure for change but without internal actions, knowledge, and communication, no meaningful reform can take place. At the same time, concerns are raised questioning whether reforms are the solution to Western power or if it only would cause major damage to the financial system (Ph.D. Urban Affairs, Tab. 3: L8). However, the results suggest that to accomplish reforms, no matter how small, both internal and external conditions must be taken into account.

To link back to the research question about the nature of the governance structure in Namibia's SSP system and how it has evolved from the colonial to postcolonial eras, it is important to consider external influences and globalization. Since independence, multiple international actors have affected the design of the government and made certain policies an important part of the government. The apartheid system's effect on the loss of Namibian planning history has earlier been discussed but the question of why the major rural-urban migration and development of urban sprawl has happened after independence remains.

International actors did not vanish with independence but rather changed their influence. The connection with the EU and South Africa is generally strong in Namibia, which is a common phenomenon where post-colonial nations maintain a good relationship with their former oppressor because newly sovereign countries are still dependent on their former oppressor's support to rebuild the economy (Fanon, 1965, p. 77). As shown by Mariental's structure plan and the HIRLUP used in this study, they were made by German and Swedish consultants: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and Staffanstorp Municipality, showing that European countries are largely present in the Namibian planning system. The Swedish municipality does not have an ongoing exchange

with Mariental but is simply there to help them produce a strategic plan (ICLD, n.d.). Even if they are engaging to do good, they are still influencing the planning process with Western planning norms which thus shapes the design of Namibia's SSP.

The global influence and Namibia's economic disadvantage are, for example, apparent in the town of Lüderitz, where the EU and Germany are going to invest in a large Green Hydrogen project. The town will completely adapt its development according to the new investments and is rejecting the old planning strategies to create new ones as soon as the implementation agreement is signed. The development is of national interest, and the ministry will be a part of the investment to make the European project successful (LTC, Tbl. 1: U9; U15; U24). The investment is seen as a contribution to the GDP of the country and a chance to raise the low employment rate in Lüderitz. The negative aspects are the lack of local highly educated personnel as a consequence of apartheid. This means that all the highly paid positions will be filled by Europeans while the locals are offered low-paid, non-skilled jobs. Leading to a continuing enhancement of the economic differences between local people and Europeans and creating a dependency on foreign staff to keep the factory running. This new economic colonial order is an additional paradox showing the complex and intervened relationship between Namibia and its former oppressor.

When it comes to the enactment of SSP in the evolving governance setting, there is more pressure for strategic planning and decentralization coming from the top level of government than the bottom level. Top-down governed countries often legitimize their decision-making through regulations and policies to the disadvantage of governance networks and subnational autonomy (Healey, 2006, p. 303; Sabatier, 1986, p. 30). In Namibia, this is partly true due to a regulatory system that is described by the respondents as confused with overlapping and unaligned policies. The confusion could be explained by the observation that new policies are coming continuously but the engagement to enhance local competence, providing conditions for policy implementation, is lacking. This creates an imbalance between the external, regulatory framework and the internal ability to adapt it. It could be compared to the investments in Lüderitz that will bring multiple job opportunities but continue to contribute to the imbalance between the rich and the poor.

In conclusion, is the criticism against external aid for decentralization the lack of understanding that "whole-of-government" reforms also demand support throughout the whole chain, which is rarely provided for by international agencies in developing countries. The concept of 'good governance,' alongside a large portion of Western norms, needs to be rethought to fit developing states (Romeo, 2012, pp. 16–17).

While the country appears to be transitioning towards more SSP, it still struggles to make policies and strategies effectively implemented. The results indicate that the national level must slow down and develop an effective governance system to get the sub-national level on board before a major change can have an impact. Perhaps is a large reform necessary to abolish racial structures and Western norms, but if anyone knows what that reform should contain and if the local capacity can handle the pressure is most doubtful.

Conclusions

This thesis aims to assess the evolving nature of the governance structure in Namibia's SSP system, to enhance its impact on postcolonial planning strategies against urban sprawl. Seeking answers to the research questions this chapter will pick out the most important aspects of the discussion and bring them together into the main challenges and opportunities for improvement.

As indicated by this study, the adoption of the SSP is deemed inadequate, and the coordination of spatial planning actions is lacking due to weak communication links. Planning authorities reveal structural issues through divergent policies. Resulting in confusion within the governance structure, where responsibility is given without sufficient authority. The discovered gap between the political drive for decentralization through policymaking and the lack of subnational autonomy makes the implementation of decentralization impossible. This leads to limited strategies and poor execution of actions aimed at addressing urban sprawl and land tenure security. While there is some degree of decentralization of functions, autonomy remains restricted due to the reluctance of those in power to surrender control over the economy.

These findings are significant, not just because they highlight non-Western realities but because they present urban theories from a distinct historical perspective. Thus, they create an alternative narrative that is not disconnected from the Western viewpoint but rather told from the Namibian. More narratives from the global South are one step towards critically rethinking how planning norms and heritage affect today's structure and inequalities.

Main challenges

The following conclusions are based on the discussion, highlighting the main challenges that have been noted within the Namibian planning system. The structure is based on the theoretical framework starting with spatial strategies and documents. Followed by communication and relation challenges, and finally, external influences impacting planning.

Land change intentions
- The utilization of strategic plans is limited among government institutions as local and regional councils lack the necessary knowledge and resources to implement them effectively.

- The absence of a mandate and budget allocation hinders the implementation of strategies. The use of one-year budgets by the government generates uncertainty

around long-term investments, and the current autonomy granted to local and regional councils has yet to have a significant impact on important matters.

- The implementation of new national policies, like the Flexible Land Tenure System, aimed at addressing uncontrolled urban sprawl and informal settlements, is progressing slowly. This is primarily due to extensive administration and bureaucratic and civil legal problems.

Governance processes
- The inadequate internal communication links between the different ministries result in uncoordinated goals and strategies for the next government level, the same goes for local and regional councils. This, in turn, leads to slower processes for project approval.

- Insufficient external communication links between different levels of government, coupled with a lacking amount of land use plans and alignment of strategies, results in uncoordinated actions for implementation.

- The low trust in authorities is founded on Namibia's growing elite system, corruption issues, and shortages of skilled personnel. These factors have become a hindrance to both decentralization and efficient governance.

External pressures
- There is top-down involvement from international agencies and national pressure for 'good governance' and decentralization. Generating a gap between the national level and the local since more knowledge is needed about how local authorities are going to adapt to the changes.

- There is an increasing community demand for change, evidenced by changing voting patterns in elections and growing frustration over the lack of job opportunities. It is crucial to prioritize the previously neglected urban areas and listen to the inhabitants. The historical injustices that are still displayed through discourses, norms, and regulations need to be acknowledged in both planning and politics.

Main improvement opportunities

Like the main challenges will the improvement opportunities identified in the Namibian planning system be presented. The structure is also based on the theoretical framework, commencing with spatial strategies and documents, followed by communication and relationship opportunities, and culminating with external influences affecting planning.

Land change intentions
- An enhanced support system from the ministry that solely supports and oversees the delegation of responsibilities would enable subnational authorities to make autonomous decisions. While a ministry focused on large investment projects is beneficial, it is necessary to grant decision-making rights to the local level, as minor development changes can become low-priority items with long lead times.

- To avoid uncoordinated actions resulting from overlapping power among various stakeholders, it is recommended to eliminate most of the plans and policies that contribute to this issue. Additionally, aligning strategic plans and prioritizing the establishment of a national framework would lead the way for local and regional structure plans.

Governance process
- To prepare for decentralization and increased responsibility, it is important to strengthen the in-house expert competence within the regional council. Enabling responsibility to be transferred from the national to the regional level, resulting in better local coordination and support. This could lead to a more efficient governance structure with qualified personnel and no overlapping responsibility, increasing the success of strategies and policies and rebuilding trust in the government.

External pressure
- International involvement should engage system-wide to support decentralization reforms. The development of local knowledge should be prioritized by external actors and help authorities fulfill the demands of a well-functioning decentralization. Raising the amount of skilled personnel will make pay gaps decrease over time and counteract the elite system. One way to achieve this is by aiding the national level in the preparation of the NSDF as well as engaging as a direct partner to local governments.

- To provide legal and secure housing to informal settlers, local authorities require continuous funding from the government. Restorative justice initiatives at the international level could assist local and regional authorities in repurchasing land seized during colonialism. It could be conducted by providing fair compensation for land areas, preventing conflicts between landowners and those who lack access to land.

Continued Research

Potential areas for continued research are based on the conclusions and recommendations presented in the previous section. The continued research areas identified are aimed at addressing the weaknesses in the adaptation of spatial planning systems (SSPs) and governance processes in Namibia.

- Firstly, by including Swakopmund municipality in the selection of study objects, the study would also include the first structural plan that has recently been approved according to the Urban and Regional Planning Act. An examination of what it means to have an approved structure plan could provide further knowledge of what it can mean to become an authorized planning authority.

- Research into the relationship between political initiatives for decentralization and the actual functional, organizational, and economic changes necessary to enable subnational autonomy. This could include an investigation of the factors that drive political decentralization reforms and the obstacles that prevent their successful implementation.

- Examination of the impact of top-down involvement from international agencies on decentralization reforms in developing countries. This could include a study questioning whether international agencies should provide support for decentralization reforms in post-colonial contexts.

- Investigation into the effectiveness of new national policies, such as the Flexible Land Tenure System, for handling uncontrolled urban sprawl and informal settlements. This could include a detailed analysis of the administrative and bureaucratic challenges faced during implementation, and how these challenges could be overcome.

Overall, continued research in these areas could help to identify strategies for improving spatial planning and governance processes, promoting autonomy at the local and regional levels, and raising the success rate of urban policies and regional development programs.

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Interviewees

Control Officer of properties and the responsible officer for infrastructure technical services of Lüderitz Town Council (LTC).
Personal interview [recorded interview] 7 Mars 2023.

Human Relations Officer and administrator of Kalkrand Town Council (KTC).
Personal interview [recorded interview] 23 Feb 2023.

Public servant of the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development (MURD)
Personal interview [recorded interview] 8 Mars 2023.

Ph.D. in Architecture, Planning, and Geomatics. Senior lecturer at the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment at the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) with research focused on land rights, governance, housing, and urbanization.
Personal interview [recorded interview] 28 Feb 2023.

Ph.D. in Political Sciences and a Habilitation in Development Studies. Senior Lecturer in International Relations and was the Director of the Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit in Windhoek and Research Director of the Nordic Africa Institute in Uppsala. President of the European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI).
Personal interview [recorded interview] 20 Dec 2022.

Ph.D. in Urban and Public Affairs. Senior lecturer at the Department of Architecture and Spatial Planning, Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), with research focused on urban and regional governance and land use planning.
Personal interview [recorded interview] 16 Feb 2023.

Regional economist in the Hardap Region Council (HRC).
Personal interview [recorded interview] 28 Feb 2023.

Senior manager of Urban Dynamics Africa; a private consultant within strategical spatial planning.
Personal interview [recorded interview] 16 Feb 2023.

Technical advisor and rangeland expert. Master of Agriculture, Rangeland Management.
Personal interview [recorded interview] 10 Feb 2023.

Town planner of Mariental Municipality (MM).

Personal interview [recorded interview] 28 Feb 2023.

Town planner of Rehoboth Town Council (RTC).
Personal interview [recorded interview] 23 Feb 2023.

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Photos

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Photo 3:
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Photo 5:
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Appendix

Appendix 1: Excel matrix – Coding scheme
Separate file.

Appendix 2: Interview Questions:

Officials and planners

1. First, I would like to know more about you and X?

2. What is the expected development for *the town*?

3. Are there any strategic planning documents that you follow in your decision-making process?

4. Is there an expectation of (continued) population growth/urbanization in the area?

   1. how comprehensive does the town perceive it to be looking into the coming years and decades?
   2. How will that affect the structure of the town?

5. Are there any strategies in place that targets population growth?

   - What do they mean and who shall follow them?
   - Are there also investments in rural areas to prevent rapid urbanization?

6. Are there any strategies in place that targets urban sprawl?

   - What do they mean and who shall follow them?

7. Is the city's structure adapted to handle the expected population growth? Or are more extensive structural changes necessary?

8. As the town expands, does the area you govern, plan for, expand as well?

9. What is the difference between town plans and urban structure plans? Do you have a copy of the strategy documents that you use in your work?

10. Is there a regional structure plan in place? Do you work with the HIRLUP?

11. What kind of decisions could you manage on your own here in the council compared to what needs to go through the government/minister? Other stakeholders?

Key informants

1. First, I would like to know more about you and X.

2. Could you please tell me about Namibia's strategic spatial planning, especially in towns and peri-urban/rural areas?

3. Is governance a part of Namibian strategic planning? In what way?

4. What role do formal and informal governance spaces play in shaping SSP?

5. How do towns and regions work with population growth in towns causing urban sprawl and urbanization affecting rural areas?

6. Who has the power to create and implement change within the planning system?

7. Do you have any tips on what I should think about while conducting my research? Something to be extra aware of? Do you have any ideas on whom to interview?

8. Do you have any recommendations on rural planning literature, land governance, or post-colonial theory?

9. Could you tell me about policies and especially the meaning of the urban and regional planning act together with the already existing policies?