



Integrated Land Management Institute

ANCESTRAL LAND

Introduction

- Ancestral land refers to 'land of ancestors'.
- That is the land occupied by ones' forebearers for generations and left something behind of value for current and future generations.
- There are usually contestations as to which ancestors the land belongs because of the history of internal migration and of displacements by stronger nations (tribes).
- This historical internal migrations and displacements are basically frozen in time shortly after the colonial occupation as migration became restricted and homelands were created.
- Now reflecting at the period before colonial occupation, where in time shall we put a cut-off date to determine among those that lost land which of them owned which land? At which point in history can we say the San, Nama, Damaras and Hereros owned which land? Is this date important in any case?
- These questions did not find answers in 1991. Hence, it was because the potential overlap between ancestral land and counter-claims that the First National Land Conference decided to put less emphasis on ancestral lands and rather address land reform through the resettlement programme.

What is Ancestral Land?

- Space of origin; culturalised; space of life-sustenance
- Sacred/ religious/ spiritual spaces
- Burial grounds

Factors that has contributed to the loss of Ancestral Lands

- Internal displacements / migrations prior to colonial occupation
- German expropriation orders of 1905 (Hereroland) and 1907 (Great Namaqualand)
- Bantustanisation of the 1920-60s

Openings for intervention

Differentiate between the following:

- Redistributive Land Reform Programmes:
 - Settlement Projects.
- Restorative Land Reform Programmes:
 - Resettlement Projects.

History of Migration and Occupation (South-West Africa)

Group	Ancestral Land Loss
San	Lost Ancestral Land
Damara	Lost Ancestral Land
Namas	Lost Ancestral Land
Hereros-Mbanderus	Lost Ancestral Land
Himba	Did not Lose Ancestral Land
Aambo	Did not Lose Ancestral Land
Tribes of Kavango	Did not Lose Ancestral Land
Tribes of Zambezi	Did not Lose Ancestral Land
Basters	Did not Lose Ancestral Land
Tswana	Did not Lose Ancestral Land

When does it become Ancestral Land?

- Is it when some of the above are in place?
- Is it when duration exceeds one or several generations?
- And in whose ancestral land are you?

Namibia Land Reform Programme

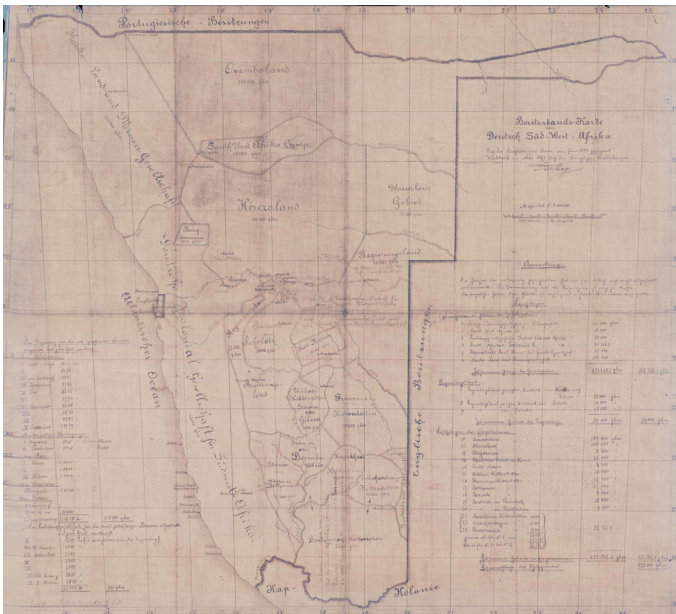
- The programme is distributive in nature and in favour of the previously-disadvantaged group of the population.
- Land is bought from 'whites' and given to 'blacks' treating all 'blacks' in the same category irrespective of the history of land dispossession.
- The land reform programme has turned a blind eye to ancestral land claims. However, this is no longer a viable option.

Acknowledgment

This fact sheet was developed by Prof Mutjinde Katjiua, Department of Land and Property Sciences (DLPS), NUST. He can be contacted at mkatjiua@nust.na

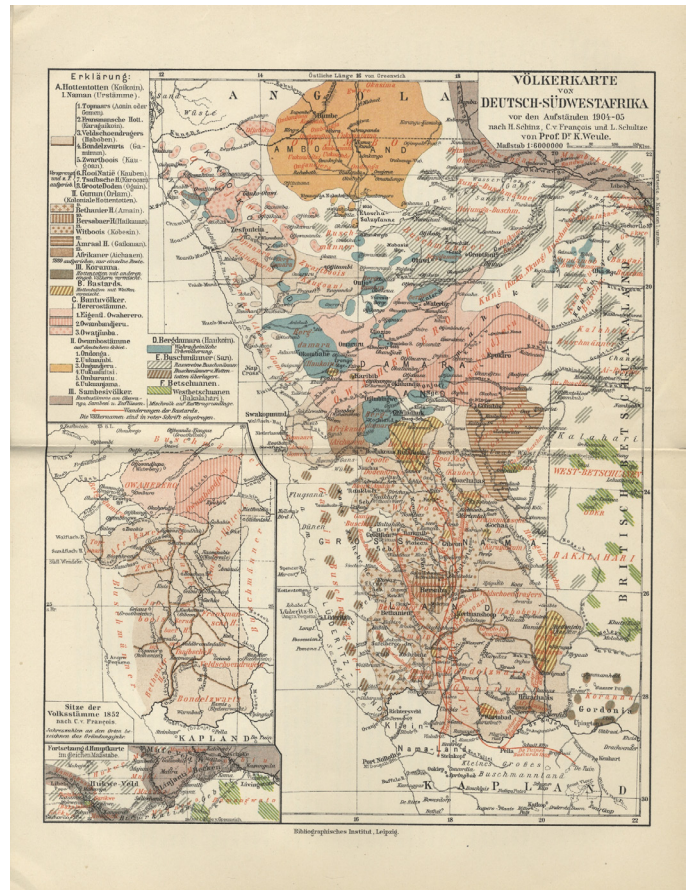
This fact sheet was produced on the occasion of the 'Short Course for Journalists on Land Matters' held on 7 September 2018. Other fact sheets that were developed for this course focus on communal land, urban land, housing, land reform, and informal settlements. They can be downloaded at: <http://ilmi.nust.na/>

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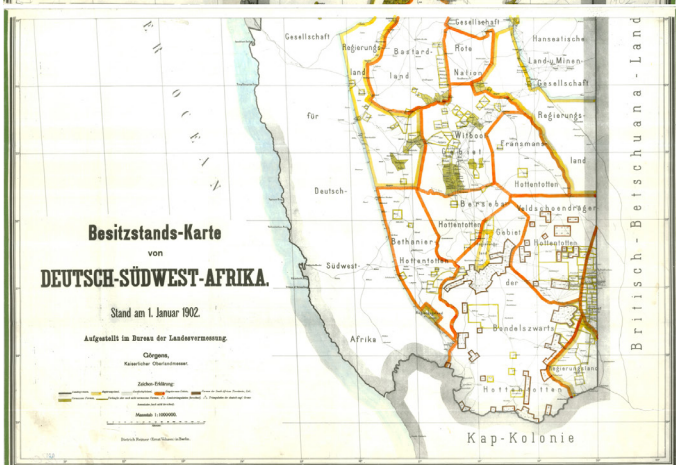
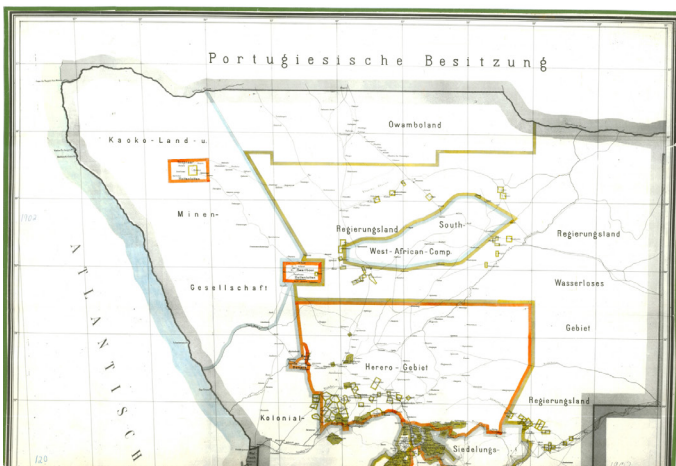
Map 1

Cadastral map of South West Africa, Drawn in May 1887 in Windhoek by the Royal Land Surveyor Dürbling after the Langhans Map of June 1894.



Map 2

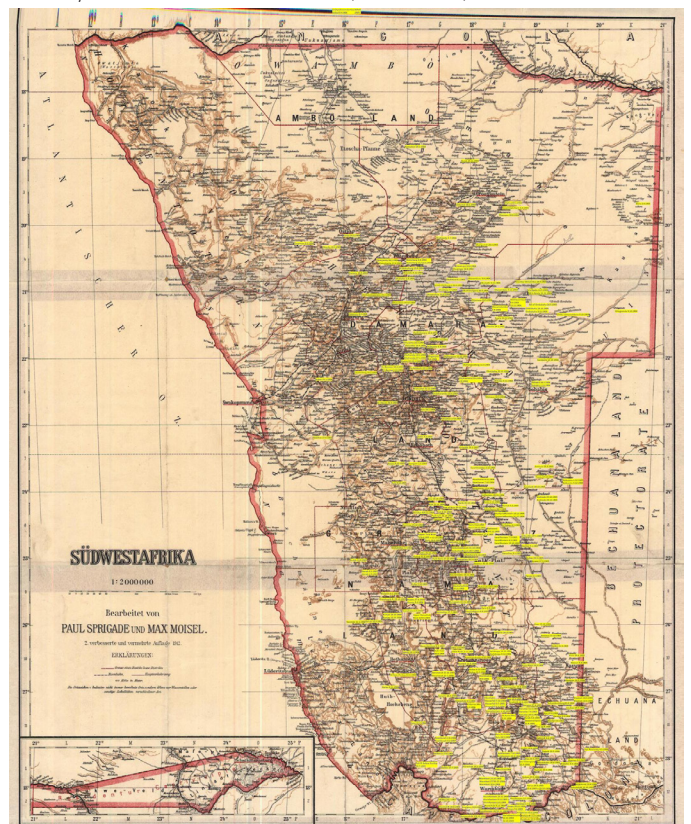
Ethnographic map of South West Africa before the 1904-05 uprisings drawn by Prof. Dr. K. Weule after H. Schinz, C. v. Francois, and L. Schulze



Map 3

Cadastral map of South West Africa As of 1 January 1902, Prepared at the Office of the Land Surveyor Görgens, Royal Land Surveyor.

Key - (Top, left to right: territorial border, government land, corporate land, natives' territories, farms from the South African Territories, Ltd.; Bottom, left to right: surveyed farms, sold but not yet surveys farms, calculated land triangulation, not yet calculated triangulation of the German-British border commission)



Map 4

South West Africa, Prepared by Paul Sprigade and Max Moise. Second improved and expanded edition, 1912.

Key - (Top) Borders of a District

(Middle 1, left to right) Railway, main traffic route

(Middle 2) 410 'Height in meters'

(Bottom) The place symbol 'o' doesn't always indicates an inhabited place, but often only water points or similar localities of different sorts.

Battles of the 1904-1908 war indicated by place and date by Werner Hillebrecht (in yellow).

Contact

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