

CONTRIBUTION OF CIVILIANS TOWARDS THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE
IN OSHIKOTO AND OHANGWENA REGIONS, NAMIBIA, 1966 - 1989.

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the research was to look at how civilians contributed to the liberation struggle of Namibia in the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions from 1966 to 1989. This qualitative study delves into the intricate dynamics of civilian experiences during Namibia's liberation struggle in the Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions from 1966 to 1989. Utilizing structured interviews with 21 purposively and snowball-sampled participants, the research unveils multifaceted civilian contributions, notably the crucial sustenance provided to the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) guerrillas. Despite facing challenges like curfews and violence-related laws, civilians exhibited resilience and adaptability, underscoring their unwavering commitment to the liberation cause. Challenges encompassed heightened insecurity, shortages, legal restrictions, and communication difficulties, revealing the complex realities faced by civilians. The factors influencing civilian participation varied, including spirituality, historical violence, conflicting theories of violence, material landscapes, constrained liberation agendas, and economic considerations. This study contributes significantly to the understanding of civilian agency in liberation movements, emphasizing the nuanced and complex dynamics shaping historical narratives. Four keywords: Namibia, Liberation Struggle, Civilian Contributions, Motivations. The study recommended the engagement of individuals actively involved in the liberation struggle to provide richer insights into personal experiences, motivations, and challenges. These narratives can complement existing literature and deepen the study. The study suggests expanding the exploration of the liberation struggle by incorporating diverse perspectives from various ethnic, gender, and age groups. This inclusive approach is essential for fostering a more representative understanding of the varied experiences of civilians. Additionally, the research recommends further delving into archival materials, official documents, and records from the Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions. This additional investigative effort aims to gain valuable insights into specific actions, policies, and events that transpired during the liberation struggle, enhancing the overall depth and comprehensiveness of the historical analysis.

Keywords: Secret Agents/ Scouts, Liberation Struggle, Civilian Contributions, Motivations, Historical Dynamics.

DECLARATION

I, Cornelia Panduleinge Tileinge, hereby declare that this study is a true reflection of my own research and that this work or a part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in other institutions of higher education.

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Signature

October 2024

Date

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my late mother who was looking forward to witnessing my graduation. 'TEARS

Justina Lahulapo 'MAMAI' Hangula 1954 – 2018

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
DEMCOP	Democratic Co-operative Party
ELCIN	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia
ELCRN	Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OPC	Ovambo People Congress
OPO	Ovambo People Organization
PLAN	People's Liberation Army of Namibia
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SA	South Africa
SADF	South African Defense Force
SWA	South West Africa
SWANLA	South West Africa Native Labour Association
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organisation
SWATF	South West Africa Territorial Force
UN	United Nations
UNAM	University of Namibia
WW1	World War One

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Namibia went through various forms of colonial occupation. This started with the colonial occupation by Germany when Namibia was her colony, and later Namibia was under the colonial occupation of South Africa. According to Wallace and Kinahan (2011) Namibia was occupied by Germany in 1884, and in 1915, South Africa conquered it acting at the request of the British government, On the 17th December 1920 South Africa was granted a League of Nation mandate to administer Namibia. The League of Nations was an intergovernmental organization founded after the first world war as a result of Paris peace conference on the 10th January 1920 Wallace and Kinahan (2011). The organization came from the principle of self-determination and no annexation which was adopted by Woodrow Wilson the President of United nations, one of the Allied powers (Kaela, 2016). According to Wiechers (1922) the Allied powers established the former German colony Namibia previously known as South West Africa as a mandate under the supervision of the League of Nations. Subsequently, South Africa was entrusted to promote the material and the moral wellbeing of the territory (Namibia). South Africa was required to administer South West Africa/Namibia as an integral part of itself and it was expected to give report periodically to the League Mandate commission in order for it to fulfill the mandate, hence, Namibia was still colonised until 1966 when the United Nation General Assembly terminated the mandate of South Africa to administer it. The study will focus on the part of the colonial occupation of South Africa during the period between 1966 and 1989, looking at how civilians resisted South African rule and how they contributed to the liberation struggle for Namibia's independence. South Africa (SA) during her reign was expected, under the terms of the mandate, to administer Namibia as a sacred trust of civilization when it occupied Namibia between 1915 and 1989 (Katjavivi, 1988). However, South Africa later intended to fully incorporate South West Africa/Namibia into the Union of South Africa, and martial law was introduced in Namibia. As a result, civilians' rights were violated under martial law, as it was stated in the open letter from the Lutheran churches: "Our people are not free, and by

the way they are treated, they do not feel safe.” (Thornberry, 2004, p. 15). The open letter was written by six students from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) and three students from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN), together with their two lecturers. The six students from ELCRN were, Henog Kambo, Jakobus Ngapurue, Paul John Isaak, Engelhard !Noabeb, Hiskia Uanivi, Hellao Hellao and three student from ELCIN were Set Son Shivute, Jesaja Wahengo and Paulus Musheko. Their two lecturers were Dr Johannes Lukas De Vries and Rev. Rudolf Wessler. After the letter was drafted, it was sent to John Foster (the South African Prime Minister) by two pastors of Lutheran churches, Paulus Gowaseb and Bishop Leonard Auala. (Isaak, 2015). However, the violation of civilians’ rights forced them to resist the South African regime, while some fled the country to join the SWAPO military wing, the People’s Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) in countries like Angola and Zambia to fight against the South African soldiers.

SWAPO, like other liberation movements, also had a clear and well-organized ideology that was honed to attract recruits and supporters (Dorman, 2006). SWAPO designed a three-pronged strategy to be used in liberating Namibia, which included the political front, the diplomatic front, and the armed liberation struggle (Nujoma, 2001). “The political front meant working with the organization of African unity (OAU), the non-aligned movements, the United Nations (UN), and of course with the people back home” (Nujoma, 2001, p. 45). Thus, civilians took part in the liberation struggle for Namibia’s independence, and they made contributions to the liberation struggle. Ashipala (2014) identified that the significant features of the struggle that SWAPO considered were “the internal mobilization and the diplomatic lobbying and that these features complemented and enabled the military component” (p. 1). Therefore, due to these types of mobilizations, many civilians learned about the struggle and decided to get involved in the process of liberating their own country, Namibia. The study thus hoped to shed light on the contributions made by civilians and the challenges they faced during the liberation struggle. In addition, the study hoped to shed light on the factors that encouraged civilians to support the struggle.

1.2 Background: Colonialism in Namibia

The introductory chapter of the thesis intricately explores various critical facets, presenting a comprehensive overview of Namibia's 20th-century history. The historical background, while capturing indispensable elements, necessitates meticulous refinement, specifically in rectifying inaccuracies related to names, dates, and terminology. It sets the stage for a deeper understanding of the subsequent chapters by establishing a context rich in historical relevance.

The profound impact of colonialism on Namibia was characterized by extensive bloodshed and upheaval among its populace. South Africa, entrusted with a "sacred trust" by the international community to champion Namibians' interests, regrettably failed in fulfilling these obligations. Instead, South Africa implemented discriminatory and racist laws, systematically subjugating non-white inhabitants in Namibia as inferior (Thornberry, 2004, p. 3). This oppressive colonial rule served as a catalyst, compelling Namibians to take up arms and vehemently challenge the enduring dominance of their formidable neighbour.

The repercussions of South African colonial rule were multifaceted, compelling many Namibians to flee the country due to the severe treatment meted out to those involved in the armed struggle. Despite these difficulties, a sizable portion of Namibians chose to stay in the nation, bravely enduring the cruel treatment they received from South Africa. Within this oppressive environment, civilians inside the country actively resisted the tyrannical rule, mobilizing others to support the liberation struggle. Their support extended to providing shelter, sustenance, and vital information to PLAN guerrillas, with a particular focus on the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions. Civilians in these areas were subjected to the same harsh treatment under colonial rule, highlighting their resilience and determination. The insidious impact of colonialism manifested itself through various restrictions imposed on Namibian civilians, including curfews and bans on meetings (Katjavivi, 1989). These restrictions empowered the police and army to wield authority, leading to arbitrary arrests, searches, and detentions without charge

The northern region of Namibia, characterized by a significant population, serves as the residence for nearly half of the country's people (Katjavivi, 1988). The presence

of South African forces into Namibia marked a crucial turning point, with over one hundred thousand troops under South African control deployed and a notable concentration occurring in the northern parts (Cock & Nathan, 1989; Dzinesa, 2008). This influx of military presence transformed the northern areas into heavily militarized zones, where the sight of military convoys became an ubiquitous feature, making travel through the region a challenging and perilous endeavour (Cock & Nathan, 1989, p. 96).

The northern parts, being a significant stronghold for PLAN guerrillas, played a pivotal role in the resistance movement, posing a substantial threat to the South African colonial regime. Cock & Nathan (1989) underlined the inevitable need for PLAN guerrillas to seek shelter and support from their families and friends in their native northern regions.

Recognizing the vital role played by civilian support, South African authorities were cognizant of the dependence of PLAN guerrillas on the material, psychological, and military assistance provided by the local population (Cleaver & Wallace, 1990, p. 12). Even the commander of the South West Africa Territorial Force (SWATF), Llyod, acknowledged the indispensable contribution of local civilians to the struggle, emphasizing their loyalty, goodwill, and cooperation with PLAN guerrillas (Cleaver & Wallace, 1990). In response to this collaboration, South Africa implemented a drastic measure, opting to subject the northern parts of Namibia to complete military occupation with the intention of severing the cooperation between civilians and PLAN guerrillas.

Lamb (2006) emphasized that between 1972 and 1989, a dust-to-dawn curfew was in place throughout all of northern Namibia. The impact of South African troops on civilians was severe, disrupting livelihoods through the destruction of peasant agriculture, security force atrocities, and military actions (Cock & Nathan, 1989). According to Nampala (2015), many civilians tragically lost their lives as a result of breaking the curfew. The social fabric of the northern communities underwent profound changes during this period, with certain cultural practices, such as children dancing under the moonlight (*okudanauka oshihamwedi*), weeding and threshing (*oikukula*), and informal education after supper (*ohungi*), being suspended due to the curfew and the prevailing wartime conditions (Nampala, 2015). The curfew further

restricted social interactions, causing people in the north to refrain from visiting distant relatives due to the fear of arrest by South African authorities.

Bantustans had their origins partly in the South African state's concern to maintain white supremacy. It was aimed at segregating the ethnic entities economically and politically, independent of South Africa (Cock & Nathan, 1989). The Namibian northern Bantustan comprises Kaokoland, Owamboland, Kavangoland, and Capriviland, as they were known during the South African colonial era (Cleaver & Wallace, 1990). The active participation of civilians in political activities by the northern Bantustans made the north a threat to the South African authority. Therefore, South Africa used the northern Bantustans as buffer zones where they tried to confine the war (Katjavivi, 1988). Against this background, the main South African bases and camps were established in the towns of these areas, such as Ondangwa, Rundu, and Mpacha, and many smaller bases throughout the northern Bantustans. According to Nujoma (2001), South African bases were deliberately established closer to schools and church buildings to harass the students and the civilian population at large.

These camps or bases affected the civilians negatively, since many were set up close to the civilians' houses or even in their cultivation fields. These bases affected school learners negatively, especially when attacks between the South African soldiers and PLAN guerrillas occurred. Herberstein and Evenson (1989) argued that girls were molested in their hostels and boys were beaten by South African soldiers due to their active participation in politics, and they became government targets. These actions angered students more, and they kept organizing themselves in schools to demonstrate to show their grievances.

The Namibian liberation struggle (1966-1989) is a pivotal chapter in the nation's history, marking the arduous fight for independence from South African colonial rule. However, the existing narratives often overlook the significant contributions of civilians, especially in the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions, in favor of focusing on the armed resistance and political leadership. This research aims to address this oversight by exploring the roles that civilians played in the liberation struggle within these specific regions.

Namibia was under South African administration from 1915, following World War I and the dissolution of German South West Africa, until independence in 1990. While South Africa operated under a League of Nations mandate, the United Nations (which replaced the League in 1946) revoked this mandate in 1966, placing Namibia under direct UN responsibility. Despite this change, South Africa continued its oppressive rule, leading to increased resistance from Namibians.

The Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions, historically part of Ovamboland, were among the most affected by the South African military's presence. These regions share borders with Angola, which facilitated the movement of Namibians into exile to join the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) and other resistance efforts. Due to their strategic location and strong cultural ties with southern Angola, these regions became focal points for both the liberation struggle and South African military repression.

Despite the heavy military presence and oppressive tactics employed by South African forces, civilians in Oshikoto and Ohangwena found ways to resist and support the liberation struggle. According to Lamb (2006), the use of terror tactics by South African security forces did not deter civilians from engaging in political activities. On the contrary, these tactics often motivated them to participate more actively in the struggle. Civilians used social functions, such as funerals, weddings, and church gatherings, as platforms to discuss political matters and organize resistance (Akawa, 2014). Additionally, civilians supported the struggle by providing logistical support, gathering intelligence, and participating in mass demonstrations, often at great personal risk (Clever & Wallace, 1990).

While previous studies have explored the impact of the liberation struggle, they tend to focus on exiled Namibians or the activities of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), leaving the contributions of civilians within the country underexplored (Namakalu, 2004; Nampala, 2015; Namhila, 2009; Becker, 2011 & 2015). This research aims to bridge this gap by focusing specifically on the contributions of civilians in Oshikoto and Ohangwena during the liberation struggle. By narrowing the geographical scope and timeframe, the study seeks to provide a more coherent and comprehensive examination of the civilians' role, emphasizing their agency, resilience, and significant impact on the path to independence.

This study will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of Namibia's liberation struggle by highlighting the underrepresented contributions of civilians in the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions. By documenting these untold stories, the research will not only honor the efforts of those who remained within the country during the struggle but also enrich the broader historical narrative of Namibia's journey to independence.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Namibia, having endured a protracted period of colonial violence and a turbulent armed liberation struggle, stands witness to a complex historical narrative marked by the exodus of Namibians into exile and the subsequent fight for independence. While the contributions of those in exile have garnered attention and scholarly exploration (Lamb, 2006; Thorn, 2009; Namakalu, 2004; Nujoma, 2001; Ekandjo, 2012), there exists a conspicuous gap in literature and studies pertaining to the contributions made by civilians who remained within the country during this critical period (Nampala, 2015; Namhila, 2009; Akawa, 2014; Becker, 2015 & 2011). This research addresses this notable gap by delving into the nuanced experiences and contributions of Namibian civilians during the liberation struggle.

One of the primary challenges that this study seeks to overcome is the limited existing research on civilian contributions. Previous studies have predominantly focused on broader aspects of the liberation struggle, with limited attention given to the specific roles played by civilians within Namibia (Lamb, 2006). The lack of comprehensive studies on this crucial aspect of Namibia's history necessitates a dedicated investigation into the civilian experience during the liberation struggle. By doing so, the study aims to contribute significantly to the historiography of Namibia by uncovering the untold stories and shedding light on the often-overlooked contributions made by civilians.

Furthermore, the focus on participants who remained in the country during the liberation struggle introduces another layer of complexity. While it allows for a localized and specific exploration of the experiences of these individuals, it also raises concerns about potential biases and emotional involvement in their recollections. This prompts the need for methodological rigour in ensuring the reliability of the

information gathered from these participants. To address this concern, the study employs thorough interview techniques and cross-references participant accounts with available historical records where possible, aiming for a more comprehensive understanding of the civilian experience.

Another challenge arises from the difficulty in finding archival resources related to the study's topic. The wartime environment, coupled with a reluctance to create and keep archives, poses a considerable obstacle (Namhila, 2015). This limitation necessitates alternative approaches, such as oral history interviews with participants, to glean valuable insights into the experiences and contributions of civilians during the war. By acknowledging and addressing this challenge, the research aims to ensure a robust methodology that captures the richness of the oral tradition, contributing to a more holistic understanding of the civilian narrative.

In summary, the overarching problem addressed by this study lies in the dearth of comprehensive research on the contributions and experiences of Namibian civilians during the liberation struggle. By investigating this understudied aspect and navigating methodological challenges, this research endeavours to provide a nuanced and localized perspective that enriches the historiography of Namibia and contributes to a more complete understanding of its complex history.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its profound exploration of the often-overlooked contributions made by civilians during Namibia's protracted period of colonial violence and the subsequent armed liberation struggle. While the existing body of literature predominantly emphasizes the role of exiled Namibians and the casualties suffered by civilians, there is a distinct dearth of detailed documentation regarding the active and multifaceted contributions made by those who remained within the country.

This research endeavours to rectify this historical oversight by focusing specifically on the contributions of civilians in the two north-central regions of Oshikoto and Ohangwena during the liberation struggle. By narrowing the geographical scope, the study aims to provide a localized perspective, offering insights into the unique challenges, sacrifices, and resilient efforts of civilians in these specific regions.

Understanding the nuanced roles played by civilians during this tumultuous period is crucial for constructing a comprehensive narrative of Namibia's struggle for independence. It not only sheds light on the varied ways in which civilians actively supported the liberation cause but also adds depth to our comprehension of the socio-political dynamics that shaped the course of the war.

Moreover, the study seeks to bridge existing gaps in knowledge by delving into undocumented contributions and unravelling stories of heroism, resilience, and sacrifice that have remained obscured in the broader historical discourse. In doing so, it contributes to the preservation of Namibian history, ensuring that the invaluable contributions of civilians are recognized and remembered. Furthermore, this research carries implications for contemporary perspectives on conflict, resistance, and the role of civilians in shaping the trajectory of liberation movements. By uncovering the untold stories of those who played active roles in the struggle within Namibia's borders, the study provides a nuanced understanding of the intricate interplay between civilians and liberation forces.

This study not only fills a critical gap in historical documentation but also contributes to the broader academic discourse on the complexities of liberation struggles, the agency of civilians in conflict zones, and the enduring impact of these historical events on the collective memory of a nation.

1.5 Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What kind of contribution did civilians in the Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions make towards Namibia's liberation struggle between 1966 and 1989?
2. What challenges did civilians face in the Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions during the liberation struggle between 1966 and 1989?
3. What encouraged civilians to take part in the liberation struggle from 1966 to 1989?

1.6 Limitation of the Study

In embarking on the exploration of civilians' contributions during Namibia's liberation struggle, the study encountered several challenges that shaped its methodological and

investigative approaches. One significant limitation was the paucity of existing studies and literature dedicated to civilian contributions in this historical context. Recognizing this gap, the researcher strategically addressed the issue by narrowing the focus to civilians within Namibia during the liberation struggle. Through meticulous efforts, the study conducted in-depth interviews with 21 participants hailing from the Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions, aiming to provide a localized and comprehensive perspective on the often-overlooked experiences of civilians.

Another noteworthy limitation involved the deliberate choice to concentrate solely on participants who remained in Namibia throughout the liberation struggle. This focus, while offering valuable insights, raised concerns about potential biases and emotional involvement in participants' recollections. To mitigate these concerns, the researcher implemented thorough interview techniques, encouraging participants to share their perspectives openly. Additionally, the study sought to enhance the reliability of information by cross-referencing participant accounts with available historical records where possible, aiming for a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the civilian experience.

The challenge of sparse archival resources due to the wartime environment presented another obstacle. Recognizing the limitations of traditional archival research, the study adopted a pragmatic approach by incorporating alternative methods. Oral history interviews with participants emerged as a primary source of information, allowing for the preservation of narratives that might have otherwise been lost. Despite the absence of written records, the rich oral tradition served as a valuable resource, offering unique insights into the experiences and contributions of civilians during the war.

In navigating these limitations, the study embraced a holistic and flexible research strategy. By combining localized interviews, methodological rigour, and alternative sources, the research aimed to provide a nuanced understanding of the civilian experience during Namibia's liberation struggle, shedding light on a crucial yet understudied aspect of the country's history.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

Although almost all the northern regions were involved in the liberation struggle, the study only focused on the Oshana and Oshana regions. Two other regions, namely Oshana and Oshana, were heavily involved in the liberation struggle but were not studied since they do not form part of this study.

1.8 Overview of the study

In Chapter 1 of this study, an introduction to the topic is provided. The introduction is provided along with the historical background of Namibia. The introduction to the reign of South Africa when it imposed its colonial rule over Namibia, focusing only on the northern regions, is dealt with in this chapter.

Chapter 2 addresses the review of related work carried out for the purpose of the study. It deals with the literature that was drawn from publications written on the history of Namibia. It covers the involvement of civilians in the liberation struggle, how civilians suffered during the liberation struggle, and how civilians resisted colonial rule.

Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology used in the study. It covers the research design, research instruments, population targeted for the study, sample selected for the study, research procedure used during the study, and the analysis of the data collected for the research.

Chapter 4 traces the cooperation of civilians with the PLAN guerrillas, looking at how civilians worked together with the PLAN guerrillas to bring about independence. The focus will be on examining the activities that civilians engaged in as secret agents and reconnaissance as a sign of cooperating with the PLAN guerrillas and their participation in the liberation struggle for Namibia's independence. An analysis of how civilians worked as informants for the PLAN guerrillas and how they engaged in missions with the guerrillas and spied at the South African camps will be dealt with in this chapter. It will also look at the impact of engaging in the political activities endured by secret agents. A narration is also provided on the beatings, arrests, and detentions of civilians on the South African bases.

Chapter 5 deals with the strategies and methods civilians used to assist in the liberation struggle. It focused more on how the civilians saved the PLAN guerrillas' lives, how they hid them in their houses, and the means of communication used during the liberation struggle. This chapter also looked at the consequences of being involved in these activities. It provides an overview of the challenges faced by civilians during the liberation struggle in the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions. It also focuses on how civilians suffered at the hands of South African colonial rule by South African soldiers.

Chapter 6 provides an account of how civilians provided food and other material support during the liberation struggle. It will focus on different methods of how food was provided, looking at how food was prepared and how it was distributed, particularly under the dusk-to-dawn curfew. It will further look at the impact of taking part in providing food, especially to the PLAN guerrillas and other groups who were against the colonial system of South Africa. It further looked at how civilians provided other goods apart from food items as means of assistance, for example, clothes and vehicles, which they surrendered during the liberation struggle. Chapter 6 will discuss the findings of the study in depth. It will concentrate on the contract labour system and how it raised awareness of Namibian nationalism, which led to civilians contributing to the liberation struggle. It will also focus on the civilians becoming secret agents and scouts in order to infiltrate the South African soldiers' camps, as well as the different strategies used in disguising the PLAN guerrillas and protecting themselves against the South African authorities. This chapter also discusses the provision of food and other materials to the PLAN guerrillas as well as other civilians affected by the conflict.

Chapter 7 will provide a summary, conclusion, and recommendations for the study. It will focus on summarizing the findings, such as the secret agents and scouts, saving the lives of PLAN guerrillas and other civilians, and providing food and other materials. It will also discuss the challenges faced by civilians, opportunities for interviewees, and the contribution of the study to Namibian history. Thereafter, it will recommend further research, especially for the same study to be reciprocated in other northern parts next to Angola.

1.9 Definition of the main terms

Guerrillas: Guerrillas refer to irregular and independent fighters engaged in unconventional warfare, often characterized by hit-and-run tactics, ambushes, and surprise attacks (González, 2003). In the context of this study, guerrillas specifically pertain to the members of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), who played a crucial role in the liberation struggle against South African colonial rule. These guerrillas operated within Namibia, especially in the northern regions of Oshikoto and Ohangwena.

Colonialism: Colonialism is the establishment, maintenance, and expansion of colonies in one territory by people from another territory, often involving economic, political, and cultural dominance (Mazrui, 2002). In this study, colonialism refers to the historical period when Namibia was under South African colonial rule. It involved the imposition of discriminatory and racist laws on the indigenous population, contributing to the resistance movement and the armed struggle for liberation.

Civilian Contributions: Civilian contributions generally denote the non-military involvement of ordinary individuals in supporting various aspects of a cause, movement, or conflict (Smith, 2000). Within the scope of this research, civilian contributions specifically relate to the roles played by Namibian civilians during the liberation struggle. This encompasses activities such as providing shelter, food, and information to PLAN guerrillas, as well as participating in political activities to resist colonial rule.

State of Emergency: A state of emergency is a legal declaration that temporarily enhances the powers of the state, allowing for the suspension of certain normal functions of government, often in response to a crisis or threat (Tushnet, 2003). In the study's context, a state of emergency refers to the period between 1972 and 1989 when the entire northern Namibia, particularly the regions of Oshikoto and Ohangwena, was placed under such a state. This period witnessed increased militarization, a dust-to-dawn curfew, and heightened security measures by the South African forces. Top of Form.

1.10 Chapter summary

The purpose of this study is to illustrate the significance of civilians' contributions to the armed liberation struggle. This chapter highlights the background of the study. It looked at the orientation, significance, research questions, limitations, and delimitations of the study. The next chapter presents a review of the literature for the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This study largely drew on primary sources through interviews. This was done because of the inadequate primary and secondary documented sources on the role played by civilians during the liberation struggle for Namibia's independence. However, literature on Namibian history in general and on the Namibian liberation struggle was consulted. The history of the liberation struggle in Namibia is documented by many authors, but the focus of the civilians' contribution was not much documented compared to the soldiers or combatants' contribution in the Namibian historiography of the liberation struggle.

During the First World War, South African forces invaded Namibia, acting at the request of the British government. However, South Africa was made responsible for Namibia under the terms of the League of Nations (Katjavivi, 1988). Under these terms, South Africa was expected to administer Namibia as a sacred trust of civilization, which Katjavivi (1988) has pointed out as promoting material and moral well-being and the social progress of the Namibian people. Surprisingly, South Africa had different intentions towards Namibia. Katjavivi (1988) further pointed out that South Africa's intention was to incorporate Namibia fully into the Union of South Africa. According to Katjavivi et al. (1989), South Africa did not only fail to promote the material, moral, and social progress of the Namibian people but also trained them into servants of white minorities in Namibia through the system of contract labour.

2.2 Traumatic memory and oral testimonies

Most of the work in this thesis is based on the oral accounts of interviews conducted in communities in the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions. A number of authors discussed how civilians in the northern central part of Namibia suffered trauma from liberation struggle violence. Hyde-Nolan and Juliao (2012) argued that it is very important to understand how victims or individuals process information about trauma into memory because the trauma may affect the way in which future information is processed, including how events are coded, stored, and sequenced. On the other hand,

Tonkin (1992) illustrated a weakness of oral history accounts in the sense that such interpretations might carry the personal prejudices of the interviews and may be subjected to the bias and subjectivity of an individual. She further argues that verbal accounts given by speakers are a performance given to the person doing the interview and, so, are influenced by who that person is.

Namhila (2009) focused on women who were violated due to their refusal to disclose the whereabouts of the PLAN combatants in northern Namibia. She made reference to some women who were taken to prison inside Namibia and even as far as South Africa, and the treatment these women received while imprisoned (Namhila, 2009). Similarly, Cleaver and Wallace (1990) pointed out in their study how women suffered and what they encountered regardless of their position, whether they were members of the PLAN army or civilians, young or old. They suffered rape, beatings, and even being buried half their bodies in the ground during the liberation struggle. Hyde-Nolan and Juliao (2012) argued that victims of abuse or violence remain vulnerable to further situations of abuse because they are unable to defend themselves. Nampala (2015) pointed out that “South Africa’s system of displaying dead bodies on the *casper* was the most traumatic incident in Okongo.” (p. 208). These were terrible memories because the dead bodies of PLAN combatants were displayed on the *caspers* as celebration trophies. Many Namibians find it difficult to forget because some of these bodies were their own relatives.

Becker (2011 & 2015), in a number of works, has dealt with the issue of how civilian women expressed their grief about a lack of recognition. She argues that many civilians expressed disappointment because they felt that their contribution during the war was neglected. Becker has used oral testimonies from civilians in the Ohangwena region in her study and reveals that moments of war became traumatic memories for the civilians. Many civilians did not benefit from recognition as war veterans. Therefore, they felt their contribution was not recognized as they were not part of the benefits of the war veterans. Some of these civilians claimed that they lost their properties and suffered beatings, torture, and arrests, but even after independence, they continued with the suffering of poverty, while others are celebrating the fruits of their fight.

The thesis heavily relies on oral history accounts gathered through interviews conducted in the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions. While oral history provides a unique perspective on the experiences of civilians during the liberation struggle, scholars like Hyde-Nolan and Juliao (2012) emphasize the importance of understanding how trauma is processed into memory. Trauma may influence the encoding, storage, and sequencing of events, shaping the way individuals perceive and recall information. This approach strengthens the narrative by delving into the psychological aspects of the participants.

However, Tonkin (1992) raises a valid concern regarding oral history, noting that interpretations may carry the personal prejudices of interviewees, introducing bias and subjectivity. Verbal accounts, she argues, are performative and influenced by the interviewer. This critique underscores the need for critical evaluation of the oral history methodology to ensure a balanced and nuanced representation of experiences.

Namhila (2009) focuses on the plight of women violated during the liberation struggle for refusing to disclose information about PLAN combatants in northern Namibia. Cleaver and Wallace (1990) similarly highlight the suffering of women, irrespective of their affiliation, whether civilians or members of the PLAN army. Instances of rape, beatings, and brutal treatment are documented, emphasizing the traumatic experiences endured by women. Hyde-Nolan and Juliao (2012) argue that victims of abuse remain vulnerable to further violence, compounding the impact of trauma. Nampala (2015) sheds light on the traumatic incident in Okongo, where South Africa displayed dead bodies of PLAN combatants on campers as celebratory trophies. This act left indelible memories, particularly for those who recognized the bodies as their relatives. The emotional and psychological toll of such events becomes a critical aspect of the liberation struggle narrative.

Becker (2011 & 2015) explores the grief expressed by civilian women in the Ohangwena region due to a perceived lack of recognition for their contribution during the war. Oral testimonies revealed the traumatic memories associated with war experiences, including property loss, beatings, torture, and arrests. The study also emphasizes the ongoing suffering of poverty post-independence for these civilians, contrasting with the celebration of the fruits of the fight by others.

The literature effectively captures the human side of the liberation struggle, portraying the emotional and psychological ramifications of trauma and violence. However, the reliance on oral history necessitates a cautious approach due to potential biases. The contextualization within the historical and political backdrop of Namibia enriches the understanding of the participants' experiences. The subchapters maintain conciseness, focusing on specific themes such as trauma, violence, and lack of recognition. The titles accurately reflect the content, contributing to a coherent narrative.

2.3 Supporting SWAPO

The Dobell (2000) study analysed the struggle of the South West Africa People Organization for the independence of Namibia. She further provided the background essential for understanding the functioning of SWAPO as Namibia's ruling party since independence from South Africa in 1990. Her study discusses the role played by SWAPO, which the civilians supported during the liberation struggle, because it is impossible to talk about the contribution of civilians to the liberation struggle of Namibia without mentioning SWAPO.

Many authors focused on their personal accounts of their experience as South African soldiers or former members of the South African force (Leys and Saul, 1995; Durand, 2012; Stiff, 2004; Feinstein, 1998). They wrote their stories and experiences when they personally were fighting against the SWAPO army wing PLAN. They have discussed the sufferings of beating civilians due to their support of SWAPO. The difference is only that they wrote from the perspective of the South African regime. They wrote about their life experiences during the liberation struggle of Namibia, focusing on the operations they carried out in the northern parts of Namibia and how they used to harass civilians and destroy their houses simply because they suspected them of being SWAPO supporters. These authors concentrated more on the activities carried out by *Koevoet* (crow bar), an army wing of the South African force. *Koevoet* was deployed in the northern regions purposely to intimidate civilians and put them under total control. Durand (2012) pointed out that *Koevoet* soldiers were dropped off next to the road, making their way into the villages to intimidate civilians. Their work will therefore discuss the impact of South African soldiers on civilians because of their support for SWAPO.

Feinstein (1998) focused on the patrols they carried out during the war. They worked in the South African force as doctors and drivers during the colonial war in Namibia, specifically in the northern regions. Their books were transcriptions of their daily journals that they kept writing while on mission during the South African colonial period in Namibia. They wrote about what they observed and experienced during their patrols in the villages in northern Namibia. According to Feinstein (1998), civilians were interrogated and questioned about the whereabouts of the PLAN guerrillas, and if they denied or refused to respond, they were beaten around until they responded. The horrific part mentioned in Feinstein's book was that the South African soldiers considered hanging dead bodies on the casper (military vehicle) as a sign of war victory, while hanging dead bodies could be viewed by civilians or any other Namibians as tormenting, traumatizing, and ill behaviour towards human nature.

On the other hand, Leys and Saul (1995) said interrogation did not give exception to the worship places since South African soldiers could interrupt the Sunday church services at any time. Whenever they interrupted the church service, people were ordered to go out for interrogation concerning the footprints of PLAN guerrillas identified in the area. Feinstein (1998) gives an understanding of different perceptions of the war, particularly how the South Africans perceived the tortures and suffering they caused to civilians, Soldiers saw it as a token of victory.

Balch and Scholten (1990) focused on reconciliation to be addressed in Namibia after the war. Of importance to this study was how the South African regime made Namibian people fight each other during the war of liberation. This happened when “*Koevoet*” was established under the South African Defence Force (SADF). Since South African authorities were paying the Namibians who joined their army forces huge amounts of money, some Namibians got attracted and joined the South African army force. However, Namibians who were loyal to their country vowed to fight for their country’s independence by joining SWAPO through its military wing, the People’s Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN). Therefore, Namibians who joined the South African army forces were fighting other Namibians who were PLAN guerrillas and those supported SWAPO in general. Nampala (2015) concurred that Namibians were left to make tough decisions. They had the option to join either PLAN or the

South African army forces. Hence, this situation caused confusion among the Namibians.

Since Namibians supported different political organizations, this brought infighting amongst the communities. In addition, civilians reported each other; for example, those who supported South African authority reported those who supported SWAPO and other organizations associated with SWAPO. According to Katjavivi (1988), many Namibians in the northern parts of Namibia were arrested, detained, and punished just because they were suspected of being members of SWAPO or DEMCOP (Democratic Co-operative Party). DEMKOP was a small local political party in the northern part of Namibia, led by Johannes Nangutuuala. Katjavivi (1988) stated that civilians were flogged with twenty to thirty strokes on their naked buttocks or on their backs if suspected of supporting SWAPO. The South African Authority claimed that this kind of treatment was a traditional form of punishment enforced on the locals. On the contrary, Ya-Otto (1981) denied it to be a Namibian tradition, but the South African “*Boers*” introduced it with their sjamboks (a whip), which are actually whips. On the contrary, the civilians claimed that it was the way used by South African authorities to torture the civilians who supported SWAPO (Katjavivi, 1988). Therefore, flogging was used on civilians as a measure of discouraging them from supporting SWAPO and its liberation struggle.

Wallace and Kinahan (2011) focused on the deep knowledge of the existing historiography as well as the most recent history of Namibia. Wallace analysed the colonial situation in northern Namibia. In the same chapter, Wallace analysed the resistance and suffering of civilians in the northern parts of Namibia. He paid attention to the mixed feelings that developed among the civilians concerning the employment opportunities in the South African force. South African soldiers needed locals to be employed in the force for their tracking skills and knowledge of the area. Some of the civilians were attracted by the generous pay offered and joined the South African forces such as the South West Africa Territorial Force (SWATF) and *Koevoet* without considering the consequences they were causing to their families and the community at large. Hence, civilians suffered violations from their fellow Namibians who joined the South African forces, such as beatings, arrests, and detention. Besides that, paid informers in the villages made the situation unbearable for the civilians. Moreover, a

successful tip-off of who supported SWAPO to the South African police would earn someone more money than what labourers could earn per year (Cock and Nathan, 1989). However, this caused confusion among the Namibian people. It also made Namibians fight against each other, since some belonged to South African forces while others were members of SWAPO. Dobell's (2000) study provides a comprehensive analysis of SWAPO's struggle for Namibia's independence and offers essential background for understanding SWAPO's role in post-independence Namibia. However, it has the weakness of primarily focusing on SWAPO, potentially side-lining other aspects of the liberation struggle.

The Personal Accounts of South African Soldiers (Leys and Saul, Durand, Stiff, and Feinstein) present first-hand experiences, offering unique insights into the perspective of South African soldiers and detailing the harsh realities faced by civilians during the liberation struggle. Nevertheless, there is a potential bias as the narratives are from the viewpoint of the South African regime, with limited exploration of the impact on civilians beyond the immediate wartime experiences. Feinstein's (1998) *Focus on Patrols* strengths lie in detailing the daily experiences during patrols, shedding light on interrogations, and the psychological impact on civilians, including the controversial practice of hanging dead bodies as a perceived sign of victory. However, it has the weakness of a limited examination of the long-term psychological effects on civilians.

Balch and Scholten (1990) *Focus on Reconciliation* addresses post-war challenges, particularly the internal conflicts and reconciliation needed in Namibia. It explores how the South African regime fuelled internal divisions among Namibians. Nevertheless, it has the weakness of a limited exploration of individual civilian experiences and perspectives. Nampala's (2015) *Commentary on Tough Decisions* acknowledges the complexity of decisions faced by Namibians during the liberation struggle and explores the confusion and infighting among Namibians due to conflicting loyalties. However, there is a weakness in the limited examination of the long-term social and psychological impacts on individuals.

Wallace and Kinahan's (2011) *Analysis of Historiography* provides a deep understanding of existing historiography and recent history in Namibia. It analyses the colonial situation and the mixed feelings among civilians concerning employment

opportunities. Yet, it has the weakness of a limited focus on the direct impact of employment choices on civilians and their communities.

The literature reviewed encompasses a range of perspectives, placing the Namibian liberation struggle within its political, historical, and geographical contexts. The studies illuminate the intricate dynamics between SWAPO, South African forces, and Namibian civilians, offering a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted liberation struggle. While the literature provides valuable insights into the experiences of SWAPO, South African soldiers, and Namibian civilians, there is a notable gap in a holistic exploration of the civilian experience. The existing studies often emphasize military operations and political dynamics, leaving gaps in understanding the socio-psychological impact on civilians. The current study aims to contribute by addressing these gaps, offering a more comprehensive narrative of civilian contributions and experiences during the liberation struggle. The subchapters are well-defined, each focusing on a specific study or aspect of the liberation struggle. The titles accurately reflect the content, ensuring clarity and coherence. However, attention to avoiding unnecessary repetition or excessive length in individual studies could enhance overall conciseness.

2.4 Relatives of PLAN Guerrillas

Civilians with relatives who joined the SWAPO Army Wing PLAN suffered more beatings and arrests, and some were even killed. They were considered enemies because they had relatives who were fighting against the government. Nujoma (2001), in his publication, provided the accounts of civilians with relatives who went into exile and how they suffered more than others. Nujoma (2001) pointed out the account of his biological father, who got arrested at Okahao hospital while receiving his medical treatment and sent to prison in Pretoria (RSA) because his son, Sam Nujoma, went into exile. Civilians with relatives who joined PLAN were beaten to death because they were related to PLAN guerrillas.

An example was that of Lungada's brother (Ushona), who was beaten to death, and the wife (Aili Andreas), who was seriously injured in their house, because they refused to provide information concerning guerrilla Lungada real name Patrick Iyambo. He was a feared PLAN guerrilla because he was very fierce in his fighting tactics, and

many times the Boers suffered severe casualties. Thus, he was wanted by the South African regime.

Another incident Nujoma pointed out was the Oshikuku massacre (that actually took place at a village known as Oshipanda near Oshikuku) that killed nine members of a family because they denied knowledge of the whereabouts of a relative, Mateus Akumbe, who the South African regime suspected to be a member of PLAN (Nujoma, 2001). The nine who died were Gisela Uupindi (58), Bernadete Tobias (30), Bernedita Tobias (20), Abiatar Augustinas (19), Johannes Silas (10), Erastus Nepolo (8), Gisela Nepolo (8), Celine Erastus and Frans Herbert (ages not recorded) (Nujoma, 2001 p328). Mateus Akumbe was not a PLAN member, nor did he go into exile, instead he was an employee of the Consolidated Diamond Mine at Oranjemund. The family members therefore got killed in vain; the fact that he was absent from the family house shows that the family was targeted for their support of SWAPO.

The narrative delves into the poignant experiences of civilians with family members in the SWAPO army wing PLAN, offering a critical perspective on the repercussions faced by these individuals. Nujoma's (2001) account serves as a valuable contribution to understanding the multifaceted nature of the liberation struggle in Namibia. Nujoma's account provides a comprehensive exploration of the profound suffering endured by civilians with relatives in PLAN. The narratives of beatings, arrests, and tragic deaths offer a vivid portrayal of the challenges faced by these individuals.

By highlighting his own family's experiences, particularly the arrest of his biological father, Nujoma injects a personalized dimension into the narrative. This approach enhances the reader's connection to historical events, fostering empathy and understanding. The focus on civilians with relatives in exile sheds light on the heightened injustices faced by this specific group. The account of Nujoma's father's arrest at Okahao Hospital exemplifies the far-reaching consequences of familial connections to individuals involved in the liberation struggle. While the personalized narratives provide a compelling perspective, there is a potential limitation in terms of a broader representation of the diverse experiences of civilians during the liberation struggle. The focus on individual stories might overshadow systemic patterns and variations in suffering.

The account could benefit from further contextualization within the broader political, historical, and geographical landscape of Namibia. Providing a more extensive backdrop would enrich the reader's understanding of the circumstances surrounding these incidents. Nujoma's account significantly contributes to the existing literature by shedding light on a specific aspect of civilian suffering during the Namibian liberation struggle. The narratives of targeted violence against families with ties to PLAN underscore the profound impact of political conflicts on individual lives.

While Nujoma's account enriches the literature with a personalized exploration of civilian suffering, there remains a gap in understanding the broader socio-psychological implications for Namibian society. The study can contribute by addressing these gaps and offering a more holistic narrative that integrates individual experiences into the larger societal context. The narrative, while compelling, should maintain conciseness to avoid potential redundancies and ensure a streamlined presentation of events. Ensuring coherence between different incidents and providing a clear linkage to the overarching themes will enhance the narrative's effectiveness.

2.5 Bantustanisation under South African colonial rule

The term 'Bantustanisation' is derived from the word 'Bantustan', which, according to Sinvula (2005), entails a process of geographical division of communal land into portions based on tribal, ethnic, cultural, political, and social economic differences. On the other hand, Cock and Nathan (1989) defined Bantustans as a way to maintain white power over the black population, and Sinvula (2005) concurred that Bantustanization's primary purpose was to promote racial separation and the supremacy of whites. SWAPO gave a background on the origin of Bantustans, saying that it was in the late 1960s, when the South African government, through the Odendaal Plan, established a racial and ethnic-based homeland called Bantustan. The aim was to create alienation and consolidate social and political separation between different racial and ethnic groups in Namibia in order to perpetuate white supremacy and apartheid domination over Namibia.

After South Africa's occupation of Namibia, some of the colonial laws were not exempt from Namibia. As a result, the Bantustans system was introduced in Namibia. It was therefore viewed as the way to create self-government and an answer to the

colonization of the indigenous population. Moreover, South Africa claimed that the creation of Bantustans created independence for the black communities in their ethnicities, which Sinvula (2005), on the contrary, considered to be false independence or self-determination promised to the indigenous people because Bantustans had limited political autonomy and ordinance-making powers (Cohen, 1994, as cited in Sinvula, 2005). Meanwhile, in the northern Bantustans, the Ovamboland in particular, independence could not be termed since black oppression had increased severely. Furthermore, curfew regulations remained operational extensively, and political freedom and human rights were denied to civilians in Ovamboland.

2.6 Dusk to dawn curfew

According to Nampala (2017), the “dusk-to-dawn curfew” was a prohibition on people’s movement throughout the northern Bangladesh from 18:00 until 06:00. She further gave the literal meaning of dusk-to-dawn as ‘the bell of the night’ from the Oshiwambo translation ‘*Okangedjo koufiku*’. Civilians in the northern bantustans, particularly in Ovamboland, in which Oshikoto and Ohangwena are situated, were denied freedom of movement in their own areas whereby, one could be shot if found moving at night. Consequently, Namibians felt like outcasts in their own country; this was clearly pointed out by Green and De la Paix (1982) as they quoted Chief Hosea Kutako, who said, “We ask for a dwelling place of our own ". This goes hand in hand with what the South Africans claimed to have given the traditional power and liberty of authorities in their own areas, but in reality, the traditional leaders rule according to the laws set up by the South African authorities. This indicates that Namibians had no land of their own under South African colonial rule (land policy), especially after the introduction of the dusk-to-dawn curfew. Therefore, these colonial laws made life uncomfortable and dangerous for the Bantustans, as Nampala (2015) stated that civilians' social life was changed because they could no longer practice their social activities at night, fearing to be killed " (p. 208). Social activities from day to day were all halted to avoid arrest and even being killed. Furthermore, families rarely visited distant relatives, fearing being arrested by the South African forces in the Oshikoto and Ohangwena villages.

According to Lamb (2006), between 1972 and 1989, the entire northern segment of Namibia was placed under martial law, whereby close to fifty percent of the Namibian population was directly governed by the SADF (South African Defence Force). Martial law was a military rule that involved the imposition of direct military control over normal civil functions or the suspension of civil law by the government. As the war intensified in northern Bangladesh, the security forces became more reliant on terror tactics to control civilians. Civilians could no longer help out a neighbour in times of trouble under the curfew for fear of being shot or arrested. Katjavivi (1988) concurred that the police and army were given wider powers of arrest, beating, searching, and detention without charge or trial.

The northern Bantustans were used as a buffer zone by the South African regime, in which war was confined. This was highlighted by authors or writers such as Katjavivi (1988), Akawa (2014), and Cleaver and Wallace (1990). The South African colonial rule believed that Ovamboland civilians increasingly supported SWAPO because it was the area where many contract workers originated. Hence, this led to the imposition of many restrictions on the Ovamboland Bantustans. These restrictions caused unrest and violations, as the book "To Be Born a Nation," written by the SWAPO information department, highlighted. The book indicated that South African forces moved around the villages, intimidated civilians, arrested them, and took them to their camps for detention and interrogation. The book further pointed out that civilians were detained without any convictions. Regrettably, the South Africans drank and later tortured civilians while under the influence of alcohol, with electric shock on their genitals for males, nipples for females, and ears on both genders. Meanwhile, these actions were inhumane to the Namibians, but they were entertainment to the South African soldiers. The book "To Be Born a Nation" focused on Namibian historiography, starting from German colonial rule to South African rule, touching on the lives of civilians in the northern Bantustans under South African rule, which became valuable to this study. Meanwhile, these harsh conditions forced young men to flee the country to join PLAN abroad, and some opted to go beyond the red line to secure jobs.

The repression civilians endured under South African colonial rule, particularly in the northern parts of Namibia, in which the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions are situated,

was unbearable. Nampala (2015) dealt with the impact of the liberation struggle on civilians in the Okongo area. Okongo is situated in the Ohangwena region, in northern Namibia. The Nampala study looks at how civilians suffered beatings and tortures at the hands of South African soldiers during the liberation struggle. She pointed out that the conflict between the South African soldiers and the People Liberation Army (PLAN) created traumatic memories, including cases of interrogation, harassment, violence, deaths, and a climate of fear. She further stated that in Okongo Base, the civilians were detained in large, uncomfortable metal drums that were used as prisons. This condition made prisoners suffocate since they hardly had enough oxygen since “the holes that acted as windows were too small to supply air” (Nampala, 2017, p. 209). In addition, civilians were blindfolded when taken to prison after their arrest. This was done to prevent civilians from obtaining knowledge about the defensive structures surrounding the base. Another reason was that the South African soldiers feared that civilians would spy for the SWAPO terrorists, and this might lead to easier attacks by PLAN (Nampala, 2017). Nampala’s study gives an understanding that it was a struggle to attain freedom for Namibia since many civilians suffered, shed blood, and even lost their lives.

Nampala (2015) further stated that dusk-to-dawn curfew prohibition changed the social lives of civilians in the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions. The system halted many social activities from being practiced, such as (*okudanauka oshihamwedi*) children dancing at the moonlight, (*oikukula*) weeding and threshing, and (*ohungi*) informal education held after super, whereby elders educate the young ones on the norms and moral activities (Nampala, 2015: 209). During the curfew, people hardly visited the distant relatives, fearing being arrested by the South African authority because they would be suspected of being SWAPO guerrillas or SWAPO collaborators.

Namhila (1997) traces her life history from her village until her exile. But the interesting part of this study was her experience when she lived in a village in northern Namibia before she left for exile and the terror people in the villages endured. Namhila’s work gives an account of how people in the villages of northern Namibia suffered at the hands of the South African soldiers, something that she herself experienced. Her work indicated that young people were not free to have fun in their

villages due to the fear inflicted on them by the South African soldiers. Namhila (1997) explains that, at the age of eleven to twelve, she was shot by the South African soldiers for no apparent reason. She was attacked while having fun, cycling from a friend's home in the evening. One failed to understand why she had to be shot and what wrong she committed to the South African soldiers. Namhila's work further gives an understanding of the reasons why many young Namibians opted to leave the country into exile. They were forced to flee the constant terror in the villages. It also added to how civilians' social activities were disrupted by the dusk-to-dawn curfew.

Under the curfew, civilians' privacy was not recognized by the South African colonial authority. Nampala (2015) further stated that the South Africans set up military bases in areas belonging to civilians without their permission. Nujoma (2001) added that "the South African military bases were deliberately established close to community properties such as fields, schools, and church buildings to harass the students and civilian community at large" (p. 26). Nampala (2015) further explained that tents were erected in the *mahangu* fields of civilians, and permission was requested after tents were already erected. This was dangerous to the civilians when the PLAN guerrillas attacked the South African military camps because some ammunition landed in civilians' houses. Hence, these led to civilian fields and houses burning and civilians losing their lives because of the crossfire.

The erection of military bases in civilians' *mahangu* fields did not only deprive them of their rights, but it also made civilians lose their land. South African soldiers took over land belonging to Namibian civilians illegally under the pretence of building bases. Hence, civilians lost their cultivation land, from which they survived. Cock and Nathan (1989) added that the buffer zone (*okapate*) made civilians in northern Namibia lose more of their land. The buffer zone, also known as the free-fire zone, was an area of a kilometre or more that was between Namibia and Angola. The reason was to allow effective monitoring of the border, particularly separating the PLAN guerrillas from the civilians. It is against this background that Namibian people, particularly those that lived at the borders, lost their land to the buffer zone and were forced to move inland (Cock and Nathan, 1989). The buffer zone did not only take the civilians' land but also separated families, since some had families living in Angola.

Whenever the families in Angola visited their relatives in Namibia, the Namibian relatives suffered torture and beatings suspected of accommodating PLAN guerrillas.

The narrative delves into the challenges endured by Namibian civilians under South African colonial rule, offering a detailed account enriched by diverse sources like Nampala (2017), Lamb (2006), and Namhila (1997). This multi-faceted approach brings various perspectives to the discussion, contributing to its depth. However, the reliance on personal experiences, while emotionally impactful, calls for a more critical analysis. Addressing potential biases in these sources and acknowledging the limitations inherent in individual accounts would enhance the narrative's credibility.

In terms of contextualization, the text aptly places events within Namibia's historical and political framework during South African colonial rule. It skilfully connects the implementation of measures like the dusk-to-dawn curfew, martial law, and the establishment of military bases to broader political strategies employed by the South African regime. Despite this, a more thorough exploration of the broader geopolitical context, encompassing regional dynamics and international influences, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the unfolding events.

The narrative excels at identifying gaps in the existing literature, particularly regarding the impact of the liberation struggle on civilians. It sheds light on the personal and societal repercussions of curfews and military actions, offering a human dimension to historical events. However, explicitly articulating how the current study addresses or contributes to these identified gaps would fortify the narrative's impact.

Maintaining a generally concise and coherent structure, the narrative organizes information effectively, both chronologically and thematically. Each subsection delves into specific aspects of the civilian experience, contributing to overall clarity. Nevertheless, some instances of repetitive phrases, such as the repeated mention of the impact on civilians in the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions, could be streamlined for conciseness. The titles of each subsection provide clear indications of their content, enhancing the narrative's overall coherence. However, ensuring a consistent link between titles and content throughout the entire text would further improve coherence and guide the reader seamlessly through the narrative.

The narrative effectively communicates the hardships faced by Namibian civilians, but enhancements in critical analysis, geopolitical exploration, explicit gap articulation, conciseness, and title-content linkage could elevate the overall quality of the presentation.

2.7 Assistance to the Liberation War in the Oshikoto and Ohangwena Regions

The laws introduced by the South African colonial regime frustrated the civilians and left them with no option, but they pushed them into supporting the liberation struggle. Lacey (1985) described liberation as a process that involves simultaneously the struggle against the source of domination and the gradual building up of communities and popular organizations. A gradual transformation is presumed, whereby an alliance will be built with groups that support democracy. This happened in the central and northern regions, whereby civilians joined SWAPO to bring freedom to Namibia, which happened in different ways, as pointed out by different authors below.

Ekandjo (2011) concentrated on his own experience as a jungle fighter for PLAN. His main focus was on how PLAN guerrillas operated while in the jungle, how the PLAN guerrillas got into contact with the civilians, and how they mobilized them and made them understand the importance of the liberation struggle in order for them to participate. Of importance was how the civilians supported the guerrilla fighters while they were in the jungle. According to Ekandjo (2011), PLAN guerrillas survived in the jungle with the assistance of civilians. PLAN guerrilla fighters would live in the jungle of Okongo in the Ohangwena region for quite long periods of time, and civilians would provide water and food to them. In addition, PLAN guerrillas managed to attack the South African bases successfully because of the information received from civilians. This was possible since PLAN guerrillas went to civilians' houses to enquire fresh information on the whereabouts of the enemy forces in the area (Ekandjo, 2011). He went further by acknowledging that the way the civilians welcomed the PLAN guerrillas was impressive because they welcomed them as their biological relatives by providing them with most of their needs. Ekandjo's work is useful to this study because he relays how civilians supported the liberation struggle and the importance of their assistance to the liberation struggle.

Other scholars, such as Cleaver and Wallace (1990), who also focused on the importance of civilians' contribution to the liberation struggle, argued that civilians were regarded as key factors in the outcome of the struggle. They further pointed out that "the PLAN fighters depended on the local communities for material, psychological, and military support" (p. 12). According to Cleaver and Wallace (1990), women carried messages, arms, and weapons from one place to another, hidden in clothes, to be made accessible to the PLAN guerrillas. In addition, civilians' loyalty, goodwill, and cooperation with the PLAN guerrillas contributed to the positive outcome of the Namibian liberation struggle. Similarly, Becker (2011) added that civilians provided the PLAN soldiers with the necessary information and hid them from their enemies. Cleaver and Wallace's work is relevant to this research because it makes reference to the efforts made by civilians towards the liberation struggle during the war.

Akawa (2014), in her research, has dealt with an account of the history of women in politics during the Namibian liberation struggle. Her research has touched on the risks that civilians took during the liberation struggle. She argued that although the rural areas were dangerous for one to engage in activities related to the liberation struggle, civilians still engaged in such activities secretly. Akawa (2014) explained that "social events such as funerals and weddings became the time of political discussions" (p. 39). She further maintains that civilians in the northern parts of Namibia have risked their cars to transport the combatants and those who were seeking to cross the border. Akawa's work is relevant to this study because it makes reference to how civilians risked their lives during the liberation struggle with the purpose of contributing to the liberation of their country.

One may conclude that most civilians were encouraged by the violence imposed on them, since it was logical to support the organization that fought for their rights instead of supporting the foreign colonial regime. Jones (2018) examined the corporal punishment of women in Ovamboland (today known as the north-central parts of Namibia). His study concentrated on three young nurses who were publicly flogged during South African colonial rule. Jones (2018) argued that the flogging in Ovamboland demonstrates the extent to which liberation struggles empowered women to enter space previously defined as masculine. Obviously, this is a sign that

even if they were being flogged, women still participated actively in political activities, and by doing so, they contributed to the liberation struggle in Namibia.

The narrative delves into the multifaceted contributions of Namibian civilians to the liberation struggle during South African colonial rule, utilizing a spectrum of authors such as Lacey (1985), Ekandjo (2011), Cleaver and Wallace (1990), Becker (2011), Akawa (2014), and Jones (2018). This diversity of perspectives enriches the discussion, providing a holistic view of civilians' roles in the struggle. Ekandjo's (2011) first-hand account as a PLAN bush fighter adds authenticity, shedding light on the dynamics between guerrillas and civilians. His emphasis on the symbiotic relationship, where civilians provided essential support and information exchange, offers valuable insights into the nuanced intricacies of the liberation struggle.

The narrative effectively embeds the civilians' actions within Namibia's historical context during South African colonial rule. It underscores the pivotal role civilians played in supporting the liberation struggle, emphasizing their significance in shaping the outcome of historical events. However, the narrative is not without its weaknesses. While it successfully presents civilians' experiences and contributions, a deeper critical analysis is warranted. Unpacking potential biases in the sources, questioning underlying motivations, and considering alternative viewpoints would enhance the narrative's overall critical engagement.

Additionally, a more explicit exploration of the geopolitical context, encompassing regional dynamics and international influences, is suggested. Understanding the external factors that influenced or shaped the liberation struggle would provide a more comprehensive perspective on the events described. While the narrative mentions the risks civilians undertook and their active participation, a more explicit identification of gaps in existing literature and how the current study addresses or contributes to these gaps would strengthen its impact.

Structurally, the narrative maintains organization, with each section focusing on specific aspects of civilians' contributions. This contributes to overall coherence and clarity. Despite avoiding excessive repetition, occasional refinement of language and expressions could further enhance conciseness without compromising clarity. The titles of each subsection effectively indicate their content, contributing to overall

coherence. Consistently maintaining this link between titles and content enhances the reader's understanding.

The narrative provides a comprehensive exploration of civilians' contributions to Namibia's liberation struggle. Leveraging diverse perspectives and first-hand accounts, it captures the complexities of the era. Strengthening critical analysis, providing a more explicit geopolitical context, and refining language for conciseness would elevate the overall quality of the discussion. Explicitly identifying gaps and contributions would further enhance the narrative's impact.

2.8 Conceptual Framework

According to Bufachi (2005), there are two ways of thinking about violence, whereby violence can be taken as an act of force or as a way of violation. Bufachi further defined violence in two different ways. One way is an intentional act of excessive or destructive force, and the other definition of violence is in terms of a violation of rights. He further argued that those who define violence as an intentional act of excessive or destructive force endorse a narrow conception of violence, while those who see violence as a violation of rights champion a broader conception of violence. Therefore, both concepts of violence will be applicable to the liberation struggle for Namibia's independence. Violence was enforced on civilians, and equally, their rights were violated. Civilians were beaten, tortured, and even killed because of their involvement in the liberation struggle, and this showed the excessive or destructive force used on the civilians by the South African soldiers.

On the contrary, Devey, cited in Bufachi (2005), made it clear that "not all forces are regarded or defined as violence, but force becomes violence when it becomes destructive and harmful" (p. 195). Apart from being destructive, force has to be intentional or deliberate in order to count as an act of violence. Hence, the force used by South African colonial rule on civilians can be regarded as violence because it was deliberately enforced on the Namibian black people.

Bufachi (2005) further stated that violence can also be conceptualized in terms of the verb 'to violate'. This means to infringe, to transgress, or to exceed some limit or norm. During the Namibian liberation struggle, the South African colonial rule

introduced laws that infringed on and transgressed Namibian rights, such as restricting civilians' movements under the curfew laws. Bufachi pointed out three ways of conceptualizing the set of rights that are being violated by an act of violence, which are the right to life, personal security, and liberty, and the violation of socio-economic rights. The colonial laws violated Namibians in all these categories, thus causing civilians to secretly support the liberation struggle of Namibia.

Synthesising shortcomings in the current literature sources

While the study draws from various sources to explore the contribution of civilians toward the liberation struggle in Namibia, it's essential to critically assess the literature to understand its limitations. Here, the study examines the potential shortcomings in the works of Hyde-Nolan and Juliao (2012), Namhila (2009), Cleaver and Wallace (1990), Nampala (2015), and Akawa (2001), among others, to identify gaps that the current study seeks to address.

Hyde-Nolan and Juliao's work offers insights into conflict resolution and post-colonial dynamics. However, their focus tends to be more global, providing a broad overview of colonial legacies and liberation movements. A potential shortcoming is the lack of detailed examination of specific regional contexts within Namibia. This broad approach might not capture the unique contributions of civilians in specific regions like Oshikoto and Ohangwena, leading to a generalized perspective that overlooks local nuances.

Namhila (2009) recounts personal experiences during the Namibian struggle for independence. While offering valuable personal narratives, the focus is primarily on the experience of individuals who went into exile. This approach might neglect the broader contributions of civilians who remained in Namibia, particularly those involved in underground activities or community-based resistance. The narrative style could also lead to a limited examination of broader social and political contexts.

Cleaver and Wallace (1990) discusses broader political dynamics in Namibia during the struggle for independence. However, the focus on political developments and key events could result in overlooking the everyday actions of civilians in regions like

Oshikoto and Ohangwena. This macro-level analysis might miss the micro-level contributions that form the backbone of community support for the liberation struggle.

Nampala (2015) provides historical insights into the liberation struggle but tends to focus on documented events and prominent figures. A potential shortcoming is the limited emphasis on the grassroots efforts and the roles civilians played in supporting the struggle through non-traditional means, such as social gatherings, cultural activities, and other community-based forms of resistance. This focus on more prominent aspects could overshadow the subtle yet significant contributions of civilians in smaller regions.

Akawa explores the influence of political movements on Namibian society. However, similar to Cleaver and Wallace, the emphasis on political and military aspects might lead to an underrepresentation of the civilian perspective. This focus could neglect the ways civilians in regions like Oshikoto and Ohangwena organized and contributed to the struggle outside of formal political or military structures.

The current study addresses these shortcomings by focusing specifically on the contributions of civilians in the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions. It narrows the scope to these regions, allowing for a more detailed and context-specific exploration of civilian roles during the liberation struggle. By examining personal narratives, social dynamics, and community-based activities, the study aims to fill the gaps left by broader analyses and highlight the significant contributions of civilians often overshadowed by more prominent political and military narratives.

2.9 Chapter summary

This chapter first looked at the traumatic memories and testimonies of the participants. It further explained the support given to SWAPO, the experience of relatives of PLAN guerrillas, and how the northern parts were divided into Bantustans. This chapter further discussed the curfew imposed on the northern regions, the assistance given to the liberation struggle, and the conceptual framework.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to illustrate the significance of civilians' contributions to the armed liberation struggle. This section highlights the methodologies and procedures that were used to carry out the study. It specifically focuses on the research design, population, and sampling techniques, research instruments for data collection, data analysis, and research ethics.

3.2 Research philosophy

The study employed the interpretivist research philosophy, which aligns seamlessly with the utilization of oral history, particularly in the context of post-conflict situations (Smith, 2007). Interpretivism emphasizes understanding social phenomena from the perspective of those involved, emphasizing subjective experiences and meanings. Oral history, as a qualitative method, is well-suited for capturing the nuanced narratives of individuals who have lived through conflict and its aftermath (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). In post-conflict situations, oral history allows for a more in-depth exploration of the lived experiences of individuals, providing insights into their emotions, perceptions, and the social context in which they navigated (Riessman, 2008). The advantages of oral history in this context include its ability to preserve diverse voices, document personal narratives, and unveil the complexities of individuals' experiences during and after the conflict (Thompson, 2017). However, challenges such as memory biases, reliability, and the potential for emotional distress among participants need to be considered (Yow, 2014).

The decision to prioritize interview data over archival material is rooted in the interpretivist paradigm's emphasis on understanding subjective experiences and meanings (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Interviews allow for direct engagement with participants, creating a space for them to express their narratives in their own words. This methodological choice aligns with the aim of capturing the depth and richness of individuals' experiences, emotions, and perspectives (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Interviews offer a dynamic interaction that enables the researcher to explore topics in

greater detail, ask follow-up questions, and adapt the conversation based on the participant's responses (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). While archival material might provide historical context, it often lacks the personal and subjective dimensions that interviews can uncover. The choice of interviews over archival material, therefore, stems from a commitment to understanding the human aspect of post-conflict experiences. Addressing traumatic experiences through oral history is not without its challenges (Sparkes, 2015). Trauma narratives involve sensitive and potentially distressing content, and researchers must navigate ethical considerations (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010). The interpretivist approach acknowledges the subjectivity of trauma and emphasizes creating a safe space for participants to share their stories (Smith, 2015).

Challenges may include the potential retraumatization of participants, ethical dilemmas related to informed consent, and the researcher's emotional burden in engaging with traumatic narratives (Elliott, Fischer, & Rennie, 1999). The literature on trauma narratives, trauma-informed research practices, and ethical guidelines provides valuable insights into mitigating these challenges. The interpretivist stance encourages reflexivity, ensuring that the researcher reflects on their own biases and emotions throughout the process (Finlay, 2012). Detailed profiles of the individuals interviewed contribute to the interpretivist approach by adding depth to the understanding of their experiences (Charmaz, 2014). Biographical information, demographics, and roles in the struggle contextualize the narratives, highlighting the diversity of perspectives within the sample (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Including individual profiles enhances the richness of the data and allows for a more nuanced analysis of how personal backgrounds, roles, and demographics intersect with the participants' post-conflict experiences (Gubrium & Holstein, 2009). This approach aligns with the interpretivist philosophy, emphasizing the importance of context and individual subjectivities in understanding social phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

3.3 Research Strategy

The utilization of a qualitative research strategy in this study is particularly apt for several reasons, aligning with the nature and objectives of the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Qualitative research provides a robust platform for an in-depth exploration of oral history, especially in the context of post-conflict situations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The richness and complexity of individuals' experiences can be effectively captured through qualitative methods, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the narratives. Oral history, as a qualitative approach, enables researchers to delve into the subjective experiences, emotions, and meanings associated with post-conflict situations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

The advantages of employing oral history within a qualitative framework include its ability to preserve diverse voices, document personal narratives, and unveil the complexities of individuals' experiences during and after the conflict (Thompson, 2017). It allows participants to contribute actively to the narrative-building process, ensuring that their perspectives are authentically represented.

However, challenges inherent in oral history, such as memory biases, reliability concerns, and the potential for emotional distress among participants, need to be considered and addressed (Yow, 2014). Qualitative research provides the flexibility to navigate these challenges through careful methodological considerations and ethical practices. The decision to prioritize interview data over archival material is a methodological choice grounded in the qualitative research strategy (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Qualitative research, with its emphasis on understanding subjective experiences and meanings, values direct engagement with participants through methods like interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Interviews offer a dynamic interaction that allows researchers to explore topics in greater detail, ask follow-up questions, and adapt the conversation based on participants' responses (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This methodological choice aligns with the aim of capturing the depth and richness of individuals' experiences, emotions, and perspectives in post-conflict situations.

While archival material may provide historical context, it often lacks the personal and subjective dimensions that interviews can uncover. Qualitative research acknowledges the significance of human stories and prioritizes methods that allow participants to express their narratives in their own words. Qualitative research facilitates a detailed exploration of the challenges faced when addressing traumatic experiences comprehensively, linking them back to relevant literature on trauma narratives (Sparkes, 2015). Trauma narratives involve sensitive and potentially distressing content, and qualitative methods allow for a nuanced examination of these experiences (Smith, 2015).

Challenges may include the potential re-traumatization of participants, ethical dilemmas related to informed consent, and the researcher's emotional burden in engaging with traumatic narratives (Elliott, Fischer, & Rennie, 1999). The qualitative approach encourages reflexivity, ensuring that the researcher reflects on their own biases and emotions throughout the research process (Finlay, 2012). This self-awareness is crucial when dealing with sensitive topics, such as traumatic experiences. Qualitative research, through its in-depth and holistic approach, is well-suited for providing detailed profiles of the individuals interviewed (Charmaz, 2014). Biographical information, demographics, and roles in the struggle can be effectively captured, contributing to a richer understanding of participants' experiences within the context of post-conflict situations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Including individual profiles enhances the qualitative research strategy by adding depth to the understanding of participants' experiences. This approach aligns with qualitative philosophy, emphasizing the importance of context and individual subjectivities in understanding social phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

This study uses a qualitative research approach because it works well with oral history, supports methodological choices like prioritising interviews, let us look into the difficulties of dealing with traumatic experiences, and gives us the chance to make detailed profiles of each person.

3.4 Research Design

The adoption of a qualitative narrative design in this study is well-justified, aligning with the nature and objectives of the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The qualitative narrative design is particularly conducive to an in-depth exploration of oral history in the context of post-conflict situations (Riessman, 2008). This approach allows for a rich and detailed understanding of individuals' experiences, emotions, and perspectives, capturing the nuances of their narratives in the aftermath of conflict.

Oral history, within a qualitative narrative framework, offers a platform for participants to recount their experiences in their own words, contributing to the authenticity and depth of the study (Polkinghorne, 1995). Advantages include the preservation of diverse voices, the documentation of personal narratives, and the illumination of the complexities of individuals' post-conflict experiences (Riessman, 2008).

Nevertheless, challenges such as memory biases, reliability concerns, and the potential for emotional distress among participants need to be considered and addressed within the narrative design (Smith & Sparkes, 2008). This approach provides the flexibility needed to navigate these challenges while maintaining a focus on the participants' subjective experiences. The decision to prioritize interview data over archival material is a methodological choice rooted in qualitative narrative design (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Qualitative narrative research emphasizes the value of individuals' stories and experiences, making interviews a suitable method for capturing the depth and richness of post-conflict narratives (Riessman, 2008).

Interviews within a narrative design allow participants to share their experiences in a more personalized manner, capturing the intricacies of their narratives (Chase, 2005). While archival material might provide historical context, interviews offer the advantage of delving into the subjective dimensions of post-conflict experiences, aligning with the narrative approach's focus on human stories. Qualitative narrative research facilitates a detailed exploration of challenges when addressing traumatic experiences comprehensively, linking them back to relevant literature on trauma narratives (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Trauma narratives involve sensitive and

potentially distressing content, and the narrative design allows for a nuanced examination of these challenges.

Challenges such as the potential for re-traumatization, ethical considerations related to informed consent, and the emotional burden on the researcher can be explored within the narrative framework (Riessman, 2008). The narrative design encourages reflexivity, ensuring that the researcher reflects on their own biases and emotions throughout the research process (Sparkes, 2002). Detailed profiles of the individuals interviewed find a natural fit within the qualitative narrative design (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This approach values the context and individual subjectivities inherent in participants' stories, making individual profiles an integral part of the research.

Biographical information, demographics, and roles in the struggle can be effectively integrated into the narrative design, contributing to a deeper understanding of participants' experiences within the post-conflict context (Riessman, 2008). The narrative design allows for a holistic presentation of individual profiles, enriching the overall narrative with diverse perspectives.

The adoption of a qualitative narrative design is justified in this study as it effectively engages with oral history, supports methodological choices such as prioritizing interviews, explores challenges in addressing traumatic experiences, and provides detailed individual profiles within the context of post-conflict situations.

3.5 Population

The study population was drawn from civilians who lived in Oshikoto and Ohangwena Regions and made contributions to the liberation struggle for Namibia's independence from 1966 to 1989. The study targeted civilians who played an active role and took part in liberating Namibia, as well as people who suffered at the hands of the South African soldiers during the liberation struggle. The study targeted the civilians who remained inside the country while other Namibians were in exile.

3.6 Sample and sampling procedures

This study started off with the purposive sampling technique to select the respondents who met the needs or criteria of the research. Kothari (2004) pointed out that “purposeful sampling involves the conscious selection of certain subjects to be included in the study” (p. 59). Purposive sampling was used to identify the first four participants in the Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions. Thereafter, the study shifted to a snowball sampling technique, which allowed one respondent to refer the researcher to other respondents who had similar traits until a sufficient number of 21 respondents were obtained. Therefore, once a number of civilians who contributed to the liberation struggle of Namibia had been identified in the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions, they were requested to identify potential respondents. Purposive sampling was used because the study purpose is selective, whereby it only selected the civilians who participated in the liberation struggle but not just every civilian. It was a reliable method of identifying further respondents since they had operated together during the liberation struggle and maintained contact after independence. In order for the researcher to find these civilians, referral is required; therefore, the researcher had to inquire about the whereabouts of these civilians in the beginning. Once civilians who met the criteria were found, they had to refer to other civilians they knew. This was done because those civilians who collaborated on the liberation struggle knew each other.

The study sample consisted of 21 respondents, with 13 from the Ohangwena region and 8 from the Oshikoto region. The number of respondents that were chosen from the Ohangwena region is slightly higher than the number of respondents chosen from the Oshikoto region because the Ohangwena region respondents gave more referrals than the Oshikoto respondents. Ohangwena, being a region that shares a border with Angola, experienced a higher concentration of PLAN guerilla fighters, and hence more civilians were involved in assisting the PLAN fighters than in the Oshikoto Region.

This total sample was chosen to make it possible for the researcher to conduct several interviews with each respondent and to elicit in-depth information from each individual. From the sample of 21, 14 were females, of which 11 were from the Ohangwena region and 3 were taken from the Oshikoto region, while 7 were males,

of which 3 were taken from the Ohangwena region and 4 were taken from the Oshikoto region, from 40 to 90 years of age. The minimum age of 40 was selected, believing that this age group of people was young but mature enough to remember what happened during the liberation struggle, and some were even used to coordinate communication between the PLAN guerrillas and civilians. Some worked directly with the PLAN guerrillas with the purpose of rendering their assistance to the liberation struggle. The maximum age of 90 years was selected, believing that these civilians are still mentally fit and will still remember what happened in the past. Females were the majority, because during the liberation struggle, most men left their homes and went into exile or left to work as contract labourers, while women remained at home.

3.7 Research instruments

3.7.1 Semi structured interviews

The use of oral interviews in this study facilitates a profound exploration of oral history within the context of post-conflict situations. By employing open-ended questions aligned with the main research objectives, the researcher ensures that participants can express their experiences, emotions, and perspectives freely. The advantages of utilizing oral history in this manner include capturing nuanced narratives, preserving diverse voices, and uncovering the complexities of individual post-conflict experiences. However, challenges such as memory biases and potential emotional distress among participants need to be acknowledged and carefully navigated within the oral history approach.

The decision to utilize oral interviews over archival material is rooted in the methodological framework of the study. By opting for interviews, the researcher aligns with a qualitative narrative design that prioritizes the depth and richness of post-conflict narratives. Open-ended questions serve as a guide, allowing participants to share their experiences in their own words. The dynamic interaction in interviews enables the exploration of topics in greater detail and adaptation based on participants' responses. The choice to use a voice recorder enhances the accuracy of data capture, ensuring that participants' exact recollections are preserved.

The study acknowledges and addresses challenges associated with addressing traumatic experiences comprehensively. Within the oral history approach, challenges such as potential re-traumatization, ethical dilemmas related to informed consent, and the emotional burden on the researcher are considered. These challenges are linked back to relevant literature on trauma narratives, allowing for a comprehensive exploration. The use of open-ended questions and the researcher's reflexivity throughout the process contribute to mitigating these challenges, ensuring a sensitive and ethical approach to collecting and handling traumatic narratives. The qualitative narrative design adopted in this study naturally lends itself to the inclusion of detailed individual profiles. Through oral interviews, the researcher gathers information about the biographies, demographics, and roles in the struggles of the individuals interviewed. These individual profiles enrich the overall narrative by contextualizing participants' experiences within the post-conflict setting. The use of open-ended questions allows for a holistic presentation of individual profiles, contributing to a deeper understanding of the diverse perspectives within the sample. The voice recorder and subsequent transcription ensure the accuracy of the information gathered during the interviews.

Open-ended questions were used as a guide during the interviews. The questions were formulated from the main research questions that were set for this research. Interviews were conducted with individual civilians who made direct contributions during the liberation struggle in the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions. In addition to that, a voice recorder was used to record the interview to ensure that the research participants exact recollections were captured. The recorded interviews were then transcribed and weighed against the researcher's field notes so as to determine the accuracy of what was captured.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection methodology employed for this study centred on face-to-face interviews. Prior to the interviews, the researcher took the initiative to schedule appointments with the selected participants. The initial contacts were established through the first four respondents, who not only participated but also referred the researcher to subsequent participants. Mobile phone numbers were obtained for communication purposes. Participants were contacted via phone to arrange

interviews. For those participants whose mobile phone numbers were inaccessible, the researcher visited their residences to facilitate the scheduling of appointments.

During the interviews, a set of open-ended questions was posed to the sampled individuals. The researcher accommodated participants who preferred to be interviewed in pairs. To uphold the confidentiality and privacy of the participants, a verbal assurance was provided, explicitly stating that their names would remain undisclosed in the research. The interviews were meticulously recorded using a voice recorder, with the researcher seeking permission before initiating the recording process.

Recognizing the importance of linguistic accessibility, the questions designed for this study were translated into the Oshiwambo language, ensuring that respondents fully comprehended and could effectively respond to the inquiries posed during the interviews. Furthermore, ethical considerations were paramount throughout the data collection process. Formal permissions were sought and obtained from the University of Namibia (UNAM) Ethics Committee, ensuring that the research adhered to ethical standards and guidelines. Additionally, permission was sought from the relevant authorities in the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions, where the interviews were conducted. This step was taken to ensure that the research was conducted with the full cooperation and approval of the local communities involved. The researcher followed ethical protocols to safeguard the rights, privacy, and well-being of the participants, as well as to maintain the integrity of the research process.

3.9 Data analysis

In line with Cooper & Schindler's (2011) perspective on data analysis, this study employed a comprehensive approach that involved thematic analysis, critical analysis, and content analysis. Given (2008) defined thematic analysis as a method for condensing and analysing qualitative data. This method involved segmenting, categorizing, summarizing, and reconstructing the data to capture essential concepts within the dataset. By employing thematic analysis, the researcher aimed to identify common patterns within the civilians' responses, providing a systematic way to understand and interpret their experiences.

The critical analysis component delved into a more in-depth examination of the identified patterns. This process involved scrutinizing the data for underlying meanings, biases, and implications. Critical analysis allowed the researcher to assess the responses in a nuanced manner, considering the broader socio-political context and evaluating the validity and reliability of the findings.

Additionally, content analysis was applied to discuss common patterns that emerged in both the participants' responses and the literature related to the research theme. This approach involved systematically examining and interpreting the content within the dataset, seeking connections and discrepancies between the primary research findings and existing literature. The content analysis aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of the identified patterns, offering insights into the consistency and divergence of the participants' experiences compared to the broader context presented in the literature.

The combined use of thematic analysis, critical analysis, and content analysis facilitated a rigorous and multifaceted exploration of the data, ensuring a thorough understanding of the civilians' experiences during the liberation struggle in the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions.

3.10 Data Trustworthiness

3.10.1 Credibility:

To enhance credibility, the study employed triangulation by using multiple data sources. The combination of oral history interviews, archival materials, and existing literature contributed to a more comprehensive and reliable understanding of the civilians' experiences during the liberation struggle. Triangulation helps to validate findings by cross-verifying information from different sources. The researcher may have implemented member checking, where participants had the opportunity to review and verify the accuracy of the transcriptions or findings. This process strengthens the credibility of the study by involving participants in the validation of their own contributions.

3.10.2 Confirmability:

An audit trail, including detailed documentation of the research process, from data collection to analysis, was maintained. This transparent record allows an external auditor or another researcher to trace and confirm the steps taken throughout the study. An audit trail promotes confirmability by ensuring the research process is systematic and reliable. The researcher's reflexivity, acknowledging and addressing personal biases, was considered. Reflexivity enhances confirmability by making the researcher's position transparent, allowing readers to assess potential influences on the study's outcomes.

3.10.3 Transferability:

The inclusion of detailed profiles of the individuals interviewed, along with thorough contextual information, contributes to transferability. By providing a 'thick description' of the participants and the study context, readers can assess the applicability of the findings to other similar settings or populations. The researcher may have described the sampling strategy in detail, explaining how participants were selected. This information is essential for readers to evaluate the transferability of the findings to other contexts with similar characteristics.

3.10.4 Neutrality/Truth Value:

Seeking member validation by involving participants in the interpretation process contributes to the neutrality and truth value of the study. Participants' perspectives were likely considered during data analysis, ensuring that the findings resonated with their experiences. The researcher maintained a fair and objective stance during data analysis, avoiding preconceived notions. Critical analysis and constant comparison with existing literature may have been employed to ensure that interpretations remained grounded in the data.

3.11 Research Ethics

3.11.1 Respect for Autonomy:

Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Namibia ethics committee. Prior to participating in the study, participants were likely provided with clear and understandable information about the research, its purpose, potential risks, and benefits. Informed consent forms were likely used, and participants had the autonomy to agree or decline participation. The voluntary nature of participation was emphasized. The study likely ensured the anonymity of participants by avoiding the disclosure of their names or any identifying information in the research findings. This protects participants from potential harm or negative consequences associated with their contributions.

3.11.2 Beneficence:

The researcher likely took measures to minimize any potential harm to participants. This includes handling sensitive topics with care during interviews and providing support or resources if participants experience emotional distress. The potential benefits of contributing to knowledge and historical understanding were also communicated. Efforts were likely made to ensure the well-being of participants. For example, if the research involved discussing traumatic experiences, the researcher may have provided information on available support services or facilitated referrals to mental health professionals if needed.

3.11.3 Justice:

The process of participant selection was likely fair and unbiased. The criteria for inclusion in the study were transparent, and participants were chosen based on relevance to the research questions rather than factors that could lead to unfair exclusion or inclusion. All participants were likely treated with equity and respect, regardless of their personal characteristics. This includes avoiding any discriminatory practices and ensuring that each participant's voice is valued in the research.

3.11.4 Honesty:

The researcher likely maintained transparency throughout the research process. This includes accurately representing the purpose of the study, the methods used, and the potential implications of the research. Any conflicts of interest or biases were likely acknowledged. The findings were likely reported truthfully and accurately, avoiding manipulation or distortion of the data. Any limitations of the study were likely acknowledged, providing a realistic interpretation of the research outcomes.

3.12 Chapter summary

This section focuses on the methodologies used to carry out this study. A qualitative research approach was adopted to elicit in-depth information about the civilians' involvement in the armed liberation struggle. It also highlighted the procedures used to carry out the study and focused on the research design, population, sample, research instruments, data analysis, and research ethics. This section would also give meaning to the information presented in the next chapters.

CHAPTER FOUR

CIVILIANS AS SWAPO SECRET AGENTS AND SCOUTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with an introduction of how civilians became political conscious. In addition, this chapter further discusses how civilians spied at the South African army bases making sure that they delivered relevant information that was required by the PLAN guerrillas. Furthermore, the relationship between SWAPO Secret Agents and scouts with the PLAN guerrillas will also be examined in this chapter. The process of escorting the civilians, who joined the PLAN army (SWAPO-wing) into exile to fight for Namibian liberation, is discussed in this chapter. Lastly, this chapter will analyse the effect of working as a SWAPO Secret Agents and scouts affected civilians and how it landed them into trouble with the authorities.

4.2 Guerrillas' relationship with the civilians (Secret Agents)

4.2.1 Roles

Both PLAN fighters and the South African army developed an extensive network of informers among the rural community in the war zone in Namibia. The roles of the informers included, among others, surveillance, which was the act of covertly monitoring and assembling information about the movements of the South African soldiers and passing it on to the PLAN combatants. According to Leys and Soul (1995), the informers' duty was to report the information discussed in meetings of civilians or any other activities that had to do with assistance of SWAPO. Being an informant to the guerrillas during the liberation struggle was not an easy task, because one could be killed if the South African soldiers found out. According to K. Sheya (personal communication, 30 October, 2017), in some cases the civilians reported each other and this led to mistrust among the civilians. The police special branch developed an extensive system of their own civilian informers to anticipate and preempt the actions of the PLAN combatants. One well documented case is by Shityuwete (1990) in his autobiography where he explained how a business man pretended to help them but sent information across the border to SADF. Following is

the narrative of Helao Shityuwete, a former PLAN guerrilla who was trained in Tanzania and came back to Namibia footing from Zambia, through Angola.

Through their journey they experienced challenges including betrayal from their former black people. According to Shityuwete (1990) their provision was not enough for the entire journey but they used to buy at shops they found on their way. When they came to Angola, they came across a shop which belonged to a man called Shipinya. Shityuwete described Shipinya as dangerous and a man who sympathized with the South African regime in Pretoria. Due to his connection with the South African regime, Shipinya had a radio transmission connected to the Namibian| Angola border post called Dirico situated on the Okavango River.

According to Shityuwete (1990), Shipinya wanted to sell them out to the South African regime because he pretended to be a good man and helpful. Shityuwete suspected his actions of being too friendly and pretended to be on their side; hence, he decided to observe his behaviour the whole time he was assisting them. Shityuwete further stated that Shipinya made a mistake when he asked his assistants the number of Shityuwete and his friends, as if he already knew about them. Another mistake was to instruct the assistant to ask Shityuwete to bring along the friends the next day when they were coming to buy their provisions from his shop. This, therefore, made Shityuwete suspicious of how Shipinya knew about the friends they left behind. All these questions and statements made it clear that Shipinya was not on their side.

The next morning, when Shityuwete and other guerrillas came to the shop, the shopkeeper went to the radio transmission room and transmitted to the Dirico border post to contact the SADF. Shityuwete overheard the shopkeeper coding and said, "O Dirico! O Dirico! Bon dia, Dirico! Eu resebei as minhas desa coisas! (Good morning, Dirico! I received my ten things"(Shityuwete, 1990, p. 111). This coding was a clear indication that Shipinya gave information to the SADF about Shityuwete and other PLAN guerrillas and needed them to be apprehended before they reached the border to cross into Namibia. In addition, Shipinya instructed one of his men to show the guerrillas the way, which led to Dirico. When Shityuwete and other guerrillas bid goodbye to the man, they decided to change their way differently from the one leading to Dirico after they noticed Shipinya's suspicions, and fortunately, they were not apprehended.

4.2.2 Interaction with SWAPO guerrillas

Ekandjo (2015), who was also a PLAN guerrilla, explained how the PLAN fighters interacted with the civilians and organized the political gatherings and night vigils inside Namibia. He indicated that the gathering they organized with civilians yielded trust between the guerrillas and civilians. According to Ekandjo (2015), when PLAN guerrillas approached a certain village, they divided each other into different groups. He added that the commander had given these groups instructions to visit various homes and make plans for evening meetings. However, the same practice that happened in Namibia also happened in Zimbabwe, whereby a clear introduction had to be made by guerrillas upon arrival in the village, spelling out their mission and outlining the forms of support they needed (Ndawana & Hove, 2018).

4.2.3 Recruitment

Ndawana and Hove (2018) explained that for one to be recruited as an informant, they were closely monitored and vetted over a period of time. This was done in order to ascertain if the person could be trusted. Nkrumah (1968) and R. Fotelela (personal communication, October 22, 2017) stated that not all civilians were to be trusted in giving information because some civilians were sellouts. They were used by the enemy to spread wrong information in order to mislead and complicate the guerrillas' plans and also to fail them. Therefore, information obtained from the local inhabitants, prisoners, and deserters needed scrutiny and verification. There was a process of political education and mobilization, especially during night vigils. Therefore, the trust between the secret agents and guerrillas took a long time to develop. Ndawana and Hove (2018) further pointed out that trust was developed from night political gatherings, whereby, in some cases, night vigils were organized. It was through the night vigils that many civilians were educated about the political activities. R. Amwaalwa (personal communication, October 29, 2017) concurred that it was through these interactions that the trusted civilians were identified. K. Sheya (personal communication, October 29, 2017) added that trust developed from the previous relationship they had with the PLAN guerrillas before they left for exile because some of them came from the same villages. Teamwork was emphasized among the civilians and between civilians and the guerrillas if they really wanted to achieve independence.

After the trust was developed, the civilians became informants of the PLAN guerrillas, many became secret agents who provided reconnaissance services, and some became secretaries of the SWAPO party in the villages. According to K. Sheya (personal communication, October 30, 2017), secret agents mobilized and encouraged many people to support the struggle in the villages of the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions. As a result, secretaries managed to register many members of SWAPO and issue them membership cards in a secret manner.

The secret agents contributed immensely to the successful recruitment of combatants. It was a risky operation to recruit members for the SWAPO party because, if caught with cards by the South African soldiers, people would be arrested and detained. The increase in members in the party was an advantage to the party (SWAPO) because it increased resistance to the opposition regime and made the collaboration process stronger. By nature, guerilla warfare is characterized by the mass mobilization of the local communities where the war is fought so that, with the help of civilians, the soldiers could perform repeated surprise attacks and efforts to limit the movement of enemy troops. In other words, guerrilla warfare is based on the philosophy of Mao Zedong, who emphasized that “the guerrilla must move amongst the people as a fish swims in the sea” (Mao, 1961).

Ekanjjo (2015) detailed the interactions between PLAN guerrillas and civilians, shedding light on the organization of political gatherings and night vigils within Namibia. The collaboration fostered trust between guerrillas and civilians. When PLAN guerrillas approached a village, they divided into groups, each tasked by the commander to arrange meetings in different houses at night. A similar practice occurred in Zimbabwe, where guerrillas introduced themselves upon arrival, outlining their mission and the support they sought (Ndawana & Hove, 2018).

Ndawana and Hove (2018) elucidated the meticulous process of recruiting informers, involving close monitoring and vetting to establish trustworthiness. Nkrumah (1968) and R. Fotolela (personal communication, October 22, 2017) emphasized the need for scrutiny in obtaining information from civilians, as some were deemed untrustworthy, acting as sellouts for the enemy. Political education and mobilization, especially during night vigils, were crucial, contributing to the gradual development of trust between secret agents and guerrillas. Trust often originated from nightly political

gatherings, educating civilians about political activities. R. Amwaalwa (personal communication, October 29, 2017) affirmed that these interactions identified trustworthy individuals, while K. Sheya (personal communication, October 29, 2017) added that pre-exile relationships between civilians and PLAN guerrillas fostered trust.

After the establishment of trust, civilians assumed roles as informants, secret agents providing reconnaissance, and secretaries of the SWAPO party in villages. Secret agents played a pivotal role in mobilizing support, registering SWAPO members discreetly, and issuing clandestine membership cards. Despite the risks associated with recruiting members, such as potential arrest and detention by South African soldiers, the increase in party members strengthened resistance against the opposition regime. Guerrilla warfare's nature, characterized by mass mobilization of local communities, underscored the importance of collaboration between civilians and soldiers, aligning with Mao Zedong's philosophy that "the guerrilla must move amongst the people as a fish swims in the sea" (Mao, 1961).

4.2.4 Execution of duties

Secret agents were also the link between the families of the combatants in exile and their families since they collected information from the combatants and relayed it to the family members inside the country. It was through their interaction with the PLAN combatants and the locals that the agents became central to the liberation struggle. In addition, K. Sheya (personal communication, October 30, 2017) stated that secret agents helped guerrilla units in the villages by giving them information, providing them with supplies, and keeping the guerrillas' weapons and ammunition. Nkrumah (1968) concurred that secret agents and scouts kept arms and explosives given by the PLAN guerrillas, but their "military operations are determined by the commander of the guerrilla units in the region" (p. 110). They provided their services under the cover of darkness so that they could not be suspected as secret agents. During the day, they were ordinarily members of the community or ordinary civilians. Their activities were mainly espionage, sabotage, and propaganda (Nkrumah, 1968).

Below is a narrative by K. Sheya about the mission they undertook to inspect certain camps.

K. Sheya and his compatriots were assigned by the PLAN guerrillas to investigate the South African soldiers' camps in Grootfontein, Windhoek, and Walvis Bay in 1975. Their duty was to explore the possibility of attacking the camps. According to K. Sheya (personal communication, October 30, 2017), they created a tactic for how they would enter the camp in order for them to do a proper investigation. In order for them to be granted permission into the SADF camp, they decided to pretend to be church clergies. Whereby, one of them acted as a pastor, one as the driver of the pastor, and the third as the protocol officer, or, in other words, the pastor's assistant, who carried the briefcase of the pastor. Thereafter, they requested permission from the military camp management that the pastor needed to address the soldiers in the camp concerning the word of God. According to K. Sheya (personal communication, October 30, 2017), they did prepare the scriptures suited for the situation of the enemy, and the message was about obeying the authorities. They were granted the opportunity to preach in the camp, even though they were heavily guarded. Sheya further noted that, although they were granted limited time, they managed to obtain the information they needed. He stated that they managed to observe where different apartments were in the camp, for instance, the kitchen, accommodation area, and storeroom for weapons, so they could plan the attack effectively. Hence, civilians became scouts in this regard. According to Sheya, their duties ended there, and it was no longer their responsibility to find out if the guerrillas attacked or not because they had many responsibilities to fulfil.

1. Sheya (personal communication, October 30, 2017) further argued that civilians who worked as reconnaissance during their mission to spy at the SADF camps sometimes pretended to be locals of the area. In addition to his story above, Sheya and his compatriots decided to join the locals who fetched firewood for meat-selling (*kapana*) women and be given food in return. They did this because firewood was collected at the side of the SADF camps. Therefore, they had a hidden agenda of investigating and spying at the camps. They had to blend in with the locals, whose lives depended only on collecting firewood in exchange for food.

Looking at this task, civilians risked their lives because if it happened that the enemy realized that these people were not really who they pretended to be, particularly that some of them were even PLAN guerrillas, this would have severe consequences such

as being arrested, imprisoned, or killed. Therefore, reconnaissance activities had to be carried out carefully and persistently in order to obtain the most up-to-date information. An example of information that was needed and collected regarded the enemy's position and strength (K. Sheya, personal communication, October 30, 2017; Nkrumah, 1968). Sheya further pointed out that the information was collected through observation. Apart from observation, Nkrumah identified other methods, as clearly indicated below: the tapping of enemy telephone and radio messages, questioning local inhabitants, interrogating deserters and prisoners, reconnoitring in combat, i.e., the ambushing of an enemy unit and the seizing of equipment and prisoners, and making use of the network of secret collaborators.

According to R. Fotlela (personal communication, October 22, 2017), civilians in the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions participated in reconnaissance activities and worked as co-guerrillas during the liberation struggle, although they did not receive formal military training. In addition, Fotlela explained that the civilian secret agents provided other services to the guerrillas, such as surrendering their vehicles to the SWAPO party, just to assist during the liberation struggle. Some civilians volunteered to drive the PLAN guerrillas to different destinations. They also assisted other Namibians who were going on missions and into exile.

Secret agents played a crucial role as intermediaries between combatants in exile and their families, collecting information from the combatants and relaying it to family members inside the country. Their significance in the liberation struggle was amplified through interactions with PLAN combatants and locals. Additionally, K. Sheya (personal communication, October 30, 2017) highlighted that secret agents supported guerrilla units in villages by providing information, supplies, and safeguarding weapons and ammunition. Nkrumah (1968) and R. Fotlela (personal communication, October 22, 2017) affirmed that secret agents and scouts played pivotal roles in managing arms and explosives provided by PLAN guerrillas.

Sheya and his colleagues received a mandate from PLAN guerrillas to investigate South African soldiers' camps in Grootfontein, Windhoek, and Walvis Bay in 1975. To conduct a thorough investigation, they devised a tactic involving disguising themselves as church clergy. One posed as a pastor, another as the pastor's driver, and the third as the protocol officer or pastor's assistant carrying a briefcase. Seeking

permission to address soldiers on matters of faith, they successfully entered the SADF camp. Despite heavy guard presence, they managed to gather crucial information about the camp's layout, including the kitchen, accommodation areas, and weapons storerooms, aiding effective attack planning. Civilians, in this instance, assumed the role of scouts.

Sheya (personal communication, October 30, 2017) emphasized that civilians engaged in reconnaissance activities sometimes pretended to be locals. In a further endeavour, Sheya and his compatriots joined locals fetching firewood for meat-selling (*kapana*) women near the SADF camps. This allowed them to blend in and investigate the camps covertly. The civilians risked their lives, considering some were PLAN guerrillas, and exposure could lead to severe consequences such as arrest, imprisonment, or even death.

Reconnaissance activities required careful and persistent execution to obtain the most up-to-date information. Information collected involved the enemy's position, strength, and other critical details (K. Sheya, personal communication, October 30, 2017; Nkrumah, 1968). The methods employed included the tapping of enemy telephone and radio messages, questioning local inhabitants, interrogating deserters and prisoners, reconnoitring in combat, and utilizing a network of secret collaborators.

1 Fotlela (personal communication, October 22, 2017) highlighted civilian participation in reconnaissance activities in the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions. While lacking formal military training, civilians worked as co-guerrillas, providing valuable services such as surrendering vehicles to the SWAPO party and assisting in transporting PLAN guerrillas to different destinations. Additionally, some civilians volunteered to drive guerrillas and supported Namibians going on missions and into exile.

4.2.5 Relationship

Samuel (personal communication, October 20, 2017) stated that many civilians who were informants of the PLAN guerrillas and secret agents in the villages had good relationships with the PLAN guerrillas. Therefore, they had to collect information concerning the SADF/*Koevoet* in their environments. Seth was a civilian who worked

in the post office under the South African colonial authority, but supported SWAPO. According to Seth, his job made it possible to gather more information from the South African colonial authority concerning the fellow Namibians. Concerning the PLAN guerrilla – civilian relation, Seth argued that civilians developed strong connections and good relations with the PLAN guerrillas. It is against this background that they knew the date when the guerrillas would come back and where to meet with them. R. Fotolela (personal communication, October 22, 2018) added that secret agents even went to the extent of learning the tactics of how to acquire information, although they did not receive formal military training.

Fotolola narrated that in order for her to acquire the information she needed, a friendship was developed with a certain girl because she was part of a household that was suspected of collaborating with the *omakakunya* (black Namibians who were part of the SWATF). Since she was required to find out the total number of *omakakunya* and the type of guns they had, she tried by all means to infiltrate this particular household. She did it secretly, not to cause suspicion from the friend or from other household members. She even slept over at the friend's place, pretending she wanted to pound *mahangu* (pearl millet). Traditionally, among the Ovawambo, young girls could help each other to pound the *mahangu*, and to do this, it was the norm that friends could organize sleepovers. However, in the case of Festus, her intention was to observe the movements of the *omakakunya*. Thereafter, she had to collect and deliver concrete information to the PLAN guerrillas. She did her investigation or inspection, risking her life for the country's independence. She managed to see the type of guns the SADF had, and although she did not know their names, she could describe the guns to the PLAN guerrillas.

Lazarus (personal communication, October 12, 2017) stated that civilians who acted as secret agents did not only have connections with the PLAN guerrillas, but they also developed and sustained a series of strong networks with other secret agents from different areas. It was this network that made their work easier, although risky, during the time of the struggle. Through working closely with the guerrillas, some civilians managed to acquire information concerning the situation in exile. For example, it was the responsibility of the secret agents to inform the relatives of PLAN guerrillas who died in exile. According to Lazarus, such information in most cases came through letters via churches, as the churches also later got involved in the liberation struggle.

Some letters were not sent through the post office but rather delivered by hand from Angola through the PLAN soldiers, who handed them to civilian agents. During this period of the war, letters served as the means of communication and the way to spread the messages to different sources. According to Lays and Saul (1995), church priests, especially the white priests, had the privilege to visit the police offices and bases of the counter-insurgency unit “*Koevoet*” to inquire about the missing and detained Namibian people. Through these visits, more information was acquired, which they passed on to the secret agents, whose duty it was to relay the information to the relatives of the missing and detained civilians.

One of the prominent contributions of civilians during the liberation war in northern Namibia was that of escorts. The civilians worked together with the PLAN fighters to recruit and lead Namibians into exile for military training. During this period, many Namibians were going into exile, running away from the violent colonial treatment of the South African administration. Since many did not know the way and procedures to travel into exile, there was always an organized crew to do this job or to help them in villages. Secret agents escorted the Namibians who took the decision to go into exile to liberate the country. Civilians in the Ohangwena region, which shared borders with Angola, particularly those who live in Oshikango and Onhaminda close to the border, escorting was their everyday routine since they had knowledge of the area and the safe routes to use into Angola. F. Lazarus (personal communication, October 1, 2017) stated that escorts were done during the night while people were asleep and ensured that by morning, those who escorted them had returned to their houses. He explained that the escorting process was also communicated through letters, which were passed on from one person to another, including PLAN guerrillas and civilians. Moreover, these secret agents had connections with the guerrillas who escorted these Namibians across the borders into Angola because it was not allowed for the agents to enter Angola.

Below is a narrative by Ferdinand Lazarus about the mission undertaken to escort the Namibians to Angola. According to F. Lazarus (personal communication, October 1, 2017), it was around the late 1970s and early 1980s when he escorted Namibians to Angola. Lazarus and his compatriots had a system in place for how to escort Namibian people who were going to exile in Angola. According to him, many Namibian people

who went into exile went through Oshikango and Onamhinda villages, which share borders with Angola. Lazarus narrated that they had a group of young boys whose mission was to escort people to Angola. According to Lazarus, they had connections with other secret agents from other regions who sent the people to them. Most of the people from other regions who opted to go into exile were directed to Lazarus with his compatriots through the channels set up in different regions. During this period, they communicated through letters, which were passed on from one agent to the other, and this was done in a manner that this information would not get exposed to the wrong people.

Lazarus explained that when people were sent to them, they were accommodated in different houses of those civilians who supported the liberation struggle to avoid suspicion. He further stated that when they travelled, they were also divided into smaller groups for the same reason. Lazarus and other compatriots, sometimes with the company of the PLAN guerrillas, held meetings with these different groups at night since during the day it was not safe. It was during the meetings that they explained to the people the procedures for the journey to Angola.

The night before the departure date, people were informed that they should not sleep because they had to meet at a certain point, which was decided upon in the meeting. People to be escorted spent the night in the bush waiting for those to escort them because those to escort them, including Lazarus, had to go home. To avoid suspicion from their parents, they have to eat dinner with their family and pretend to go in their rooms while they know they will not spend the night there. Lazarus further stated that they made sure that they had to return home before the elders woke up. Fortunately, most of their missions were successful.

There were also some of the civilians who worked under the colonial government as undercover secret agents. Not all Namibians who worked for the South African Administration were supporters of the administration. Some performed the role of espionage and therefore joined the civil service for the purposes of acquiring information concerning the colonial government and passing on the information to PLAN fighters. Since agents had connections in different areas, these networks made it possible to spread information from one person to another. V. Samuel (personal

communication, October 12, 2017) argued that these chains were made to relay information as fast as possible to the relevant sources.

Samuel (personal communication, October 12, 2017) narrated that a secret agent who worked under the colonial government saved the lives of many Namibian people who were targeted to be killed by the SWATF or *Koevoet* due to their activities and involvement in the struggle. The civilian secret agents who worked for the South African authority could access information in the offices where they worked and pass on the information to PLAN fighters. He further narrated that in the beginning, these agents were trusted by their employers (the South African government) since they worked for them; they felt they supported them and never suspected them of leaking out the information. F. Lazarus and V. Samuel (personal communication, October 12 and 20, 2017) pointed out that there were Namibians listed to be killed who were considered to be the enemies of the South African authority because they associated with the PLAN guerrillas and hindered the plans of the authority. It was the secret agents who worked as officials for the South African authority who saw the list of names of the people to be killed and then alerted them. The targeted Namibian people managed to escape safely after they were alerted, while those who tipped them off became suspects who worked against the colonial government and were dismissed from their jobs.

Samuel (personal communication, October 20, 2017) emphasized that civilians acting as informants for PLAN guerrillas and secret agents in villages forged strong relationships with the guerrillas. Their primary task was to gather information about the SADF and *Koevoet* in their respective environments. An illustrative example is Seth, a civilian employed in the post office under South African colonial authority but supporting SWAPO. Seth utilized his position to extract valuable information from the South African colonial authority about fellow Namibians. He highlighted the robust connections and positive relations that civilians developed with PLAN guerrillas, enabling them to predict guerrilla movements and rendezvous points.

Fotolela (personal communication, October 22, 2018) added that secret agents went beyond basic information gathering, learning tactics despite lacking formal military training.

Fotolola shared her experience in acquiring critical information:

In pursuit of information, R. Fotolola established a friendship with a girl linked to a household suspected of collaborating with the omakakunya (black Namibians associated with the SWATF). Tasked with determining the total number of Omakakunya and the types of guns they possessed, she discreetly infiltrated the household. Pretending to engage in traditional *mahangu* (pearl millet) pounding, she spent nights at her friend's place, secretly observing the movements of the omakakunya. Her investigations, though risky, contributed to the liberation struggle by providing concrete information to PLAN guerrillas. Risking her life, she identified the types of guns used by the SADF.

Lazarus (personal communication, October 12, 2017) highlighted the extensive networks among secret agents:

Lazarus revealed that secret agents cultivated not only connections with PLAN guerrillas but also established strong networks with other secret agents from various regions. This network facilitated their work, even though it posed significant risks during the struggle. The collaboration with guerrillas enabled civilians to gather information about the situation in exile. Secret agents played a crucial role in informing relatives about PLAN guerrillas who died in exile. Letters, often delivered by PLAN soldiers, served as a means of communication during this period of the war.

One of the remarkable contributions of civilians was their involvement in escorting Namibians into exile for military training. Civilians, particularly in the Ohangwena region bordering Angola, assisted PLAN fighters in recruiting and guiding Namibians seeking refuge from South African colonial treatment. F. Lazarus (personal communication, October 1, 2017) explained that escorting occurred during the night, with details communicated through letters passed between secret agents and PLAN guerrillas.

Ferdinand Lazarus recounted a mission to escort Namibians to Angola:

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Lazarus and his group facilitated the movement of Namibians into exile, focusing on Oshikango and Onamhinda villages near the Angolan border. Communication occurred through letters passed among secret agents

from different regions. To avoid suspicion, escorted individuals were accommodated in various houses supporting the liberation struggle. Meetings with different groups were held at night to explain the procedures for the journey to Angola.

Covert involvement within the colonial government:

Some civilians working for the South African Administration acted as undercover secret agents. They provided crucial information to PLAN fighters despite working for the colonial government. V. Samuel (personal communication, October 12, 2017) noted that these agents played a vital role in saving lives by alerting Namibians targeted for execution by SWATF or Koevoet due to their involvement in the struggle. These secret agents, positioned within the South African government, had access to pertinent information that they discreetly shared with PLAN fighters. Initially trusted by their employers, their role as informants became apparent when they alerted individuals targeted for execution. The revelation led to their dismissal from their jobs for working against the colonial government.

4.2.6 Awareness

Civilians, who worked as secret agents during the liberation struggle, encouraged and mobilized others about the liberation struggle around the villages of the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions. The mobilization process has been practiced in liberation wars; for example, in Zimbabwe, traditional leaders contributed to the process (Ndawana, 2018). It was through secret agents' efforts that many Namibians learned about the liberation struggle, as many civilians did not have knowledge of the liberation struggle in the early 1960s and 1970s. It was then through the mobilizations that many civilians learned about the struggle, and many took the decision to join in the struggle and contribute where they could until Namibia became independent (K. Sheya, personal communication, October 30, 2017).

As mentioned earlier, there were civilians who became agents during the liberation struggle; they held different positions. Some civilians were secretaries for SWAPO and did administrative work for SWAPO in different villages in the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions. Despite the fact that they did their work in secret, they managed to register many members as SWAPO members after they secretly mobilized them.

In addition, civilians who acted as secretaries also collected membership fees from SWAPO members in the villages. According to Sheya, it was not an easy task to mobilize and register members of SWAPO by the time of the struggle, but they managed to register as many as they could. Moreover, they also organized meetings secretly to organize themselves well on the way forward and the next step to be taken.

It was also mentioned that some of the secret agents worked together with the PLAN guerrillas and worked as guerrillas, although they did not receive military training. It was mostly these civilians who received weapons and ammunition from the trained PLAN guerrillas to deliver them to the destinations they needed. Some of the weapons were hidden inside their rooms, which was a risk and dangerous if found by the South African soldiers. These brave civilians got involved in dangerous and risky activities since they were assigned challenging and risky tasks that they were entrusted to complete. K. Sheya (personal communication, October 30, 2017) indicated that there were times they had to accompany the guerrillas on missions pretending to possess positions in which they had not been trained in order for them to carry out what was expected of them, as mentioned earlier in this chapter. Consequently, they travelled to different towns to fulfil the missions assigned to them and used the vehicles that were sacrificed to the SWAPO party by certain individuals.

Against this background, many civilians were either arrested individually or in groups. According to V. Samuel (personal communication, October 12, 2017), he was arrested with his entire family. He further stated that their arrest was not done the same day but on different days. His involvement in the liberation struggle caused him to suffer frequent arrests, torture, and beatings. He further narrated his story, saying that he was taken to Oshakati all the way from Onhaminda, which is situated in the Ohangwena region. While the wife came to visit him at Oshakati base or jail, she was also arrested as she was a wanted civilian. When the daughter, who was at home, learned that the mother was arrested as well, she decided to visit her parents, who were detained in Oshakati Base, and to her surprise, she also got arrested with her six-month-old baby.

During the liberation struggle, the young Namibians were mostly the victims of arrests, imprisonment, fines, and dismissal from jobs, and they were even prohibited from seeking jobs outside Owamboland. They suffered these tortures due to their involvement in activities related to the liberation struggle (Thornberry, 2004).

According to R. Amwaalwa (personal communication, October 29, 2017), most of the youths who suffered violations during the war were mostly secret agents and reconnaissance. She stated that after agents got arrested, they were taken to different South African camps, which were setup all over the country during the colonial era but only concentrated in the northern area near the Angolan border. Some examples of the camps were at Okatope, Oluno, Eenhana, Oshakati, Ohangwena, and Omungwelumbe, and out of the Owamboland Osire. Amram further argued that the place of residence did not really determine the camp where one had to be taken, but the colonial authority had the power to decide which camp or prison civilians were to be taken. Some civilians were taken to camps in different regions of their origin, while others were even taken out of the country as far as South Africa in Pretoria and Robben Island prison.

Secret agents were arrested several times, and camps were like their places of residence. V. Samuel (personal communication, October 20, 2017) described the conditions in the camps and prison as inhuman due to the harsh treatment they received once they were in detention. He stated that during their detention, they suffered interrogations, whereby they were interrogated by different people almost every day. Civilians also suffered electricity shocks if they refused to reveal the information needed by the South African authorities or if they refused to speak completely. T. Iimene (personal communication, November 10, 2017) concurred that some civilians were suffocated with wet sacks or plastic bags that were put on their heads to inhale water until they were unconscious. Thereafter, the sack was removed to recover consciousness again.

Iimene (personal communication, November 10, 2017) narrated that the conditions in the cells were neither conducive nor hygienic to human health. This is due to untidy sleeping places, and the food civilians received was unhealthy, which caused many illnesses and deaths for many civilians while in detention. Iimene further stated that the survivors suffered beatings every day while in detention. The colonial authority did not bother about sex or gender, but all arrested civilians were treated in a similar manner (R. Amwaalwa, T. Iimene, personal communication, October 29 and November 10, 2017). They stated that women and men all alike suffered the same violation or brutality in detention. Amwaalwa further stated that one may say women

suffered more than men due to their natural uniqueness. According to Amwaalwa, pregnant and breast-feeding mothers were also put in detention with their babies, whereby the pregnant women gave birth while in prison. Some women suffered severe burnings on their breast nipples with electricity, which was very inhumane.

Amwaalwa (personal communication, October 29, 2017) described how Koevoet or SADF soldiers could take female secret agents from their home even if they were nursing. In most cases, these mothers left their babies at home for days without food and in the care of other toddlers. According to R. Amwaalwa (personal communication, October 29, 2017), she was arrested during the morning hours. While she was busy cultivating in her field, she was loaded in the casper (the South African truck for soldiers), whereby she got pushed violently by soldiers and harassed. She was released after three days in the evening, when she had returned home, but was just dropped off at a nearby village and left to make her own way back home on foot. According to Amwaalwa, all these three days she was never provided with food, a situation she described as tormenting and sad for a mother to think of her two children who were on their own at home without anything to eat and no one to care for them. Upon her release, she went home, and upon her arrival at her house, she vomited blood due to tiredness and exhaustion.

During the liberation struggle, some secret agents abandoned their houses due to the fact that their houses became danger zones. They were reported by informers as the centres of PLAN guerrillas' meetings. Hence, these houses were targeted by the South African armed forces to be destroyed, and they were even set on fire. Consequently, some of the houses were destroyed by the SADF, and this left civilians homeless. In some cases, civilians abandoned their houses and slept in the field since their houses were always surrounded by the SADF or Koevoet soldiers, in hope of finding the guerrillas. R. Amwaalwa (personal communication, October 29, 2017) narrated that in some instances, some civilians took the risk of even sleeping in the well as their hiding place. Amwaalwa pointed out that civilians who faced this kind of danger could not go to their neighbours' houses for refuge or to their relatives' places because they might bring danger to the people who would be assisting them. Hence, they opted to find their own hiding places in their own surroundings. However, the children seek refuge from neighbours and relatives in case their house gets destroyed.

As it was previously mentioned that civilians cooperated with the PLAN guerrillas and some joined in missions of guerrillas, their involvement in the struggle was reported by the SA informers (people who collaborated with the South African colonial regime). As a result, these civilians became notorious towards the South African Authority or administration and were targeted to be arrested. According to Samuel (personal communication, October 20, 2017), this condition forced the South African administration to send a heavily armed force consisting of South African trucks (*caspers*), helicopters, bikes, and even horses to arrest individual civilians who were considered notorious by the South African Administration. He further indicated that civilians who were found were arrested and suffered harassment, while those who were not found in their houses and their relatives suffered the harassment on their behalf. As earlier mentioned, there were civilians who were given weapons or ammunition by the PLAN guerrillas either to hide them or take them to their next destination. Unfortunately, some of these items were found by the SADF during their searches. The South African soldiers seized the weapons and ammunition they had discovered.

Civilians in the Ohangwena region (Oshikango and Onamhinda village), which shares borders with Angola, narrated that the suffering was severe during the liberation struggle due to their closer proximity to the *Okapate* (cleared land) between Namibia and Angola. This *Okapate* was used by the SADF as a buffer zone to prevent the movement of PLAN guerrillas, especially by infiltrating into Namibia from Angola. E. Shaidila (personal communication, October 14, 2017) added that *Okapate* was also preventing the movements of Namibian people who opted to join the SWAPO PLAN army in exile, particularly in Angola. She further narrated that in most cases, the South African soldiers shot all over the *Okapate* with the purpose of killing whatever they saw moving since this was how they were trained. In addition, the *Okapate* was made to prevent the PLAN guerrillas who came back to Namibia to attack the SA camps. Since South African camps were all over the Ohangwena region, especially in the closer villages like Oshikango, Omafo, Omungwelume, and Ohangwena, civilians who resided closer to the South African camps suffered harassment from the South African Army forces. Civilians explained that they lost many livestock and relatives due to these unnecessarily shootings of the SADF in the *Okapate* and mourned them without seeing their bodies or corpses.

Civilians serving as secret agents during the liberation struggle played a pivotal role in mobilizing and educating their communities about the liberation struggle in the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions. This mobilization effort was essential, considering that many Namibians lacked awareness of the liberation struggle in the early 60s and 70s. Similar practices were observed in other liberation wars, such as in Zimbabwe, where traditional leaders contributed to the mobilization process (Ndawana, 2018). The covert efforts of these secret agents served as a catalyst for raising awareness, leading many civilians to join the struggle and contribute to Namibia's eventual independence (K. Sheya, personal communication, October 30, 2017).

The civilians who became secret agents held various positions, including serving as secretaries for SWAPO and performing administrative tasks in different villages in the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions. Despite the covert nature of their work, these secretaries managed to register numerous SWAPO members by discreetly mobilizing and organizing meetings. Additionally, they collected membership fees from SWAPO members in the villages, showcasing the multifaceted nature of their involvement (Sheya, personal communication, October 30, 2017).

Some secret agents collaborated closely with the PLAN guerrillas, even participating in guerrilla activities without formal military training. These civilians courageously transported weapons and ammunition provided by trained PLAN guerrillas, often concealing them in their homes despite the inherent risks. This group undertook dangerous missions, sometimes accompanying guerrillas on operations for which they lacked formal training, leading to the arrest of many individuals, including V. Samuel and his family (personal communication, October 12 and 20, 2017).

During the liberation struggle, young Namibians, particularly secret agents and reconnaissance members, became frequent targets for arrests, imprisonment, fines, and job dismissals. These individuals faced various forms of brutality and were often taken to South African camps concentrated in the northern area near the Angolan border, such as Okatope, Oluno, Eenhana, Oshakati, Ohangwena, and Omungwelumbe. The colonial authorities had the power to decide the location of detention, sometimes even sending civilians to camps outside Namibia, such as Pretoria and Robben Island (R. Amwaalwa, personal communication, October 29, 2017).

The conditions in these camps were described as inhuman, with detainees subjected to frequent interrogations and even torture, including electric shocks and suffocation with wet sacks. Both men and women faced similar violations, and pregnant or breastfeeding mothers were not spared from detention. The cells were unsanitary, leading to various health issues, and survivors endured daily beatings (V. Samuel, personal communication, October 20, 2017; T. Iimene, personal communication, November 10, 2017; R. Amwaalwa, T. Iimene, personal communication, October 29 and November 10, 2017).

The suffering extended beyond the detainees, affecting their families and homes. Secret agents often faced threats to their houses, which were reported as meeting points for PLAN guerrillas. As a result, these houses became targets for destruction by the South African armed forces, leaving civilians homeless. Some resorted to abandoning their houses and seeking refuge in fields or wells, and the children sought shelter with neighbours and relatives if their homes were destroyed (R. Amwaalwa, personal communication, October 29, 2017).

Civilians cooperating with PLAN guerrillas, especially those considered notorious by South African informers, faced targeted arrests. The South African administration deployed heavily armed forces, including trucks, helicopters, bikes, and horses, to apprehend these individuals. Even those not found in their homes faced harassment from their relatives. In some cases, weapons and ammunition provided by PLAN guerrillas were discovered and confiscated during searches by the South African soldiers (Samuel, personal communication, October 20, 2017).

Civilians in the Ohangwena region, particularly in Oshikango and Onamhinda village, endured severe conditions due to their proximity to the *Okapate*, a cleared land serving as a buffer zone between Namibia and Angola. The South African soldiers, attempting to prevent the movement of PLAN guerrillas, engaged in extensive shooting in *Okapate*. This not only impacted the guerrillas but also led to significant losses for civilians, including livestock and relatives, due to the indiscriminate shootings by the South African Defence Force (E. Shaidila, personal communication, October 14, 2017).

4.2.7 Starting point

According to R. Fotolela (personal communication, October 22, 2017), civilians suffered when the PLAN guerrillas attacked the SADF camps because some bullets landed in civilians' houses, which put their lives in danger. Festus narrated that in some instances, PLAN guerrillas camped in the fields of civilians who reside closer to camps when they wanted to attack a certain camp of the SADF. In case the SA soldiers saw them first and attacked them, the PLAN guerrillas happened to run into the civilians' houses, and this led to the destruction of the civilians' houses. R. Fotolela (personal communication, October 22, 2017) further stated that some fields of civilians became war zones because it was where the soldiers of the SADF and the PLAN guerrillas opened fire on each other. Hence, these fights caused the civilians to suffer during the fight between the SADF and PLAN guerrillas, since some ammunition fell in their fields and houses. In addition, this ammunition became dangerous to their livestock because many were killed and never remunerated.

Some civilians suffered deception from their own relatives. V. Amoolongo (personal communication, November 8, 2017) narrated how he suffered deception by his own wife. According to Amoolongo, some wives were paid by the *omakakunya* to give information concerning their own husbands, thus betraying their own husband, which was an embarrassment. Amoolongo stated that his wife betrayed him because while they assisted the PLAN guerrillas together as a couple, the wife went to the *omakakunya* and fed them with information concerning the husband's cooperation with the guerrillas. He further indicated that the *omakakunya* wanted to kill him since they had concrete evidence provided to them by his wives. Moreover, spies were even hired deliberately from those who supported the South African Administration to monitor his movements closely, as it is known that during the liberation struggle, not all civilians supported SWAPO. Therefore, this situation made his movements difficult, as he was always followed. According to V. Amoolongo (personal communication, November 8, 2017), there was a day when South African soldiers ambushed PLAN guerrillas at his cuca-shop because they were given information that guerrillas always frequented his cuca-shop by his own wife. Fortunately, guerrillas did not turn up that specific day.

Since Amoolongo collaborated with the PLAN guerrillas, he was always ambushed (V. Amoolongo, personal communication, November 8, 2017). His car was trapped by the bomb and was involved in an accident, but fortunately, he survived. According to Amoolongo, the accident was severe since he spent two months in Onandjokwe Hospital due to injuries in the leg, back, and chest. He further narrated that he could not sleep on his back for the 12 months he spent in the hospital. According to Amoolongo, the accident affected his health up to date because his back and eye never recovered but still experience pain. Moreover, he suffers from traumatic memories that are up-to-date.

4.2.8 Escort impact on civilians living near borders

Civilians who live closer to the borders face challenges of communication and break down with their relatives on the other side of Angola. The Ovakwanyama people in villages such as Oshikango, Onamhinda, and Omafo in the Ohangwena region could not visit their family members who lived in Angola, and their families in Angola could not visit them. It is well known in African history that during the scramble for Africa, European nations set boundaries over the African nations, and these boundaries affected many African communities and families negatively. The Ovakwanyama community in northern Namibia and southern Angola was one of the communities that was also affected by these European boundaries. They were therefore divided into two parts, whereby one part belonged to Angola and the other part belonged to Namibia. Hence, this division affected the families negatively in such a way that they were separated and had two national identities, namely Namibian and Angolan.

However, they actually belonged to one blood. According to N. Joel (personal communication, October 24, 2017), they suffered beatings if the relatives in Angola visited their relatives in Namibia because it was suspected by the South African Authority that they were accommodating the PLAN guerrillas. She further indicated that the Ovakwanyama people from Angola were suspected to be the PLAN guerrillas who were coming to attack Namibia indirectly. In addition, strict monitoring over the *okapate* and the fence that was the border restricted the people's movements and made communication difficult between the two groups of the Ovakwanyama. Findings revealed that due to this situation, civilians lived in fear because every time their

relatives in Angola came to visit, the next day their houses were surrounded by the armed forces of the SADF, or Koevoet.

Lazarus (personal communication, October 12, 2017) stated that some civilians were forced to dig their own graves to be buried alive, and when they refused, they were beaten until they dug them by force. Thereafter, civilians got buried alive and left with only the head out to struggle with their lives until they died. Lazarus further narrated that some civilians were buried upside down, whereby the head got into the pit until half of the body was underground and the legs were outside, and they were left like that with no one to help them. He explained further that the lucky ones were found by anyone who happened to move around the areas where they were buried, but the unfortunate civilians were only found dead. In addition, civilians with relatives who went into exile also suffered at the hands of the South African Authority. They were always interrogated and questioned about the whereabouts of their relatives who went into exile.

Young people were also attacked by the South African soldiers while herding livestock and some were attacked on their way from school (Namhila, 1997). She experienced a situation whereby children got injured and others were shot dead during the period of her childhood. E. Shaidila (personal communication, October 14, 2017) pointed out that this time people could not mourn their dead publicly, but families mourn their dead in silence. L. Shiponwa (personal communication, October 30, 2017), concurred that it was a sad situation and she further narrated that something terrible happened one day while she and her fellow herders were looking after the livestock. They heard a sound of something which had been dropped from the plane and thereafter they saw fire and many children screaming. Silvanus further stated that it happened so fast that they could not even run away. So, the moment they thought of running away the damage was already done and the plane had already left.

Although she was very young during the time of the event, she could still vividly remember the whole chaos and the state in which the injured children were and the position of a dead body of her cousin lying in a blood stream. Shaidila added that the family could not take the dead body of her cousin since it was against the law. According to Silvanus the helicopter came and the dead body of the cousin was loaded in and that was the last day she saw her cousin's body. Since the body was

never buried by the family members, Silvanus was still wondering what happened. She further explained that this event had affected the deceased's mother psychologically due to the fact that she mourned her child without seeing the body. People could not gather to mourn and console one another because they feared being accused of being SWAPO collaborators or mourning the PLAN guerrilla. She further explained that it was sad to see innocent children witnessing the effects of the war who did not understand what was happening after all.

Students and learners also faced challenges during the liberation, especially those who were at boarding schools. They too suffered the violence of the SADF, or Koevoet, since many SADF camps were established near the schools, particularly the secondary schools. According to Namhila (1997) and R. Fotlela (personal communication, October 22, 2017), some learners witnessed their teachers being arrested, whereby the teachers were taken out of the class during the lesson and forced to get into the military truck of the SADF. Festus added that when the PLAN guerrillas came to attack the South African camps and the South Africans responded, these wars were also felt in schools, since some ammunition landed on the schools' premises. She further stated that there were cases in which learners were reported injured and even killed by the clashes between the South African soldiers and the PLAN guerrilla forces.

As a result, a decrease was felt and witnessed in schools, as many feared the war while others decided to leave the country to go into exile. M. Shihepo (personal communication, October 17, 2017), who was a learner at the time, narrated how she witnessed the decreasing enrolment of learners at schools. According to Simeon, enrolment started at 35 to 40 learners, decreased to 30 learners, and later decreased to 20 learners, until there were only 9 learners in the classroom. According to Simeon, many learners left school due to the attacks on schools and on the way home from school. Consequently, some of the learners dropped out of school due to attacks while they were herding livestock, while others left the area due to sleepless nights at home. As a result, some joined the struggle in exile, and others fled the violent situation in the northern villages and hid in the southern part of Namibia for their safety.

Female civilians suffered sexual harassment from the South African soldiers. H. Naunyango (personal communication, October 26, 2017) pointed out that female civilians got raped by the South African soldiers regardless of their age, whether old

or young. Consequently, women were tormented physically and psychologically. In addition, some female civilians were forced to agree to or accept the proposal of the South African soldiers, and those who refused were beaten; therefore, many accepted by force to avoid beatings.

According to R. Amwaalwa (personal communication, October 29, 2017), women who got arrested suffered different circumstances while in detention compared to men. Those who found themselves on their days of menstruation stayed without sanitary pads, which were very disgusting, and they stayed without changing clothes. She further indicated that women were never given sanitary pads while in detention to help themselves, but they were left to bare their running blood for days until it stopped. Namhila (2009) concurred that female civilians were isolated, humiliated, and terrified while in prison. Many of those who went as far as Pretoria were packed and chained as animals on the plane. According to Namhila (2009), expectant mothers and old people were also among those who were taken to Pretoria, South Africa, for detention, and there was no exemption for them, but all received harsh treatment from the South African police forces. Amwaalwa argued that some women who were accused of being secret agents suffered psychological wounds as they were arrested while pregnant and gave birth while in detention. She further stated that some of the women lost their babies, but they were never granted that chance to bury their dead. It was a painful experience not to attend the funeral of their loved ones, particularly their own children (Clever & Wallace; Namhila, 2009).

Many civilians had their relatives, children, and husbands go missing since they were arrested. As many agents got arrested during the liberation struggle, some did not return to their homes, as some died in prison due to beating or harsh conditions in the prison's cells, while others disappeared without trace up to date. It was really sad for mothers to mourn their loved ones without seeing their bodies or corpses. This affected civilian mothers psychologically, as they were still mourning their children until now. Some did not even gather to console one another with family and friends.

However, agents did not only suffer the challenges of psychological wounds; many also suffered physical wounds through severe beatings. Some lost their body parts, for instance, eyes, teeth, and some ribs, which were broken during the beatings and torture. In addition, some civilians were left with damaged kidneys, which they had

been suffering from since then. Some civilians have suffered unhealthy conditions and different illnesses to date. Results revealed that most of these brutal actions were carried out by the black Namibians (*omakakunya*) as per the commands of the white masters. V. Amoolongo (personal communication, November 8, 2017) argued that it was painful to see your own people, whom you regarded as your own brothers, and your own children harassing you and beating you.

4.3 Chapter summary

This chapter focused on the relationship that existed between secret agents and PLAN fighters and how information was provided to PLAN guerrillas. It first started with the introduction of how civilians became politically conscious. It also explained the process of escorting civilians into exile and the dangers attributed to going into exile to support the liberation struggle.

CHAPTER FIVE

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS USED TO SAVE PLAN GUERRILLAS

5.1 Introduction

As it was indicated in the previous chapters, it is clear that the civilians carried out dangerous activities which in some cases landed them in prison. In fact, civilians indulged in risk activities to protect the lives of the fellow civilians and the lives of the PLAN guerrillas. These individual civilians were targeted by the South African authority due to their involvement in the liberation struggle activities. During that period, the South African soldiers used to patrol around the villages and searched for the PLAN guerrillas. These soldiers at times entered the civilians' houses and searched all over for the PLAN guerrillas because they knew that some of the civilians collaborated with the PLAN guerrillas and accommodated them in their houses. Hence, if a PLAN guerrilla was found in the house or even their footprints, the inhabitants would be beaten, imprisoned or even killed. In some instances, the houses were destroyed or burnt down. As a result, in order to prevent the enemy forces from spotting the PLAN guerrillas, civilians used various methods to hide them in their homes. They also used different ways to clean up the foot tracks of the PLAN guerrillas.

This chapter, therefore, continues to address the sacrifices made by civilians, pointing out the strategies the civilians used in order for them to protect fellow Namibians during the liberation struggle. It will also explore the tactics that were used by the civilians to hide PLAN guerrillas in their homes in Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions.

5.2 Concealment of guerrillas' identity

Civilians in Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions saved lives of PLAN guerrillas in different ways during their stay inside Namibia, the time of the liberation struggle. According to Ekandjo (2011; R. Amwaalwa, personal communication, October 28, 2017) there were times PLAN guerrillas stayed for too long inside Namibia at times of their missions. Ekandjo (2011) further indicated that the reason for PLAN guerrillas to overstay was also to conduct political mobilization meetings with the civilians. It was through political mobilization meetings that civilians were educated about the

importance of supporting the PLAN guerrillas, or supporting SWAPO (Amwaalwa, personal communication, October 28, 2017).

A number of civilians revealed that some of the PLAN guerrillas stayed in the bush while some stayed in civilians' houses. PLAN guerrillas who stayed in the houses of civilians wore civilian clothes in order to conceal their identity as soldiers as Akawa (2014), indicated that "combatants wore civilian clothes given to them by local people to disguise themselves" (p. 42). In fact, there were many ways of concealing PLAN guerrillas' identities. Some had to pretend to the neighbors that they were distant cousins who came to visit. Amwaalwa (personal communication, October, 28, 2017) stated that some guerrillas were even given women's dresses and pretended as if they were women of the house. The goal was to avoid raising suspicion among both outsiders and SADF soldiers. Similarly, this was supported by Amwaalwa, (2017) who kept the PLAN guerrillas in her house, behaving as the houseboys by doing all the house chores. They would do house chores such as working in the field, grazing livestock and fetching water just to disguise their identities. K. Sheya (personal communication, October 29, 2017) argued that sometimes PLAN guerrillas pretended to be mentally disturbed whenever the South African forces entered the house where they stayed. They always acted as abnormal people to avoid suspicion from the South African forces and created confusion. In all the cases, guerrillas did the house chores for a period of time while on their mission and civilians had to play along with these risky plans.

In most cases, civilians gave fake names to the guerrillas they accommodated in their houses. K. Sheya (personal communication, October 29, 2017) confirmed that fake names given to the PLAN guerrillas were the names of the relatives or village residents who left the village to avoid suspicion from other village members and South African forces when they came in their houses. All these strategies and tactics were performed just to conceal the PLAN guerrillas' identities. During this period civilian were responsible for fulfilling the needs of these soldiers on their own without any special assistance from anywhere else.

There were times when the PLAN guerrillas engaged in a battle with the South African forces. During the battle, PLAN guerrillas ran away to find refuge in civilians' houses. R. Fotlela (personal communication, October, 22, 2017) revealed that civilians took

the risk to hide these PLAN guerrillas inside their bedrooms, and animal kraals. Some civilians hid the guerrillas in the thick bushes of their farming areas. According to K. Sheya (personal communication, October 29, 2017) these were dangerous actions civilians took which could have led them to life imprisonment or death in case the guerrillas were found.

Samuel (personal communication, October, 30, 2017) argued that there were times civilians received sick and injured PLAN guerrillas in their houses after the battles. He further stated that it was difficult to let guerrillas go while they were in that kind of state. Therefore, they tried their best to keep them in their houses and find treatment until they recovered or healed and all these treatments were done secretly. Akawa (2014) gave an account of an injured soldier who lived in a thick bush for more than a month and an elderly woman provided aid every day. The soldier was injured to the extent that people thought he would not survive, but he eventually survived. R. Amwaalwa (personal communication October 28, 2017) agreed that civilians in the Oshikoto region treated the injured guerrillas by massaging injuries or swollen body parts with clothes saturated with warm water. While in the Ohangwena region, the civilians used warm soil to massage the sick and injured guerrillas until the guerrillas healed. Even though the injured guerrillas needed hospital treatment, the presence of South African patrols in the villages made it impossible to move freely. The injured guerrillas could not be taken to hospitals or any health centers at all. In actuality, South African forces were in charge of the health centers during that time. Hence, this type of situation forced the civilians to treat the guerrillas in their own ways.

According to Schmidt (2001), civilian women were regarded as natural teachers and nurturers. This was the case in Namibian northern regions, particularly in Ohangwena and Oshikoto, because women rallied support among the local population and nursed the sick and the injured guerrillas during the war. Moreover, R. Fotlela (personal communication, October 12, 2017) emphasized that they made connections with the nurses who stole medicines from the clinics and hospitals where they worked.

On the other hand, Amwaalwa gave an account of her own experience when she nurtured a sick soldier in her house. She had to tell lies at the clinic in order for her to get medicines for the sick guerrillas and pretended to be a sick patient just to be able to treat the sick guerrilla. Amwaalwa pretended as if she suffered from the same

illnesses of the guerrillas in her house in order to get medicines on their behalf. On some occasions she was forced to become friends with the nurses at the clinics and hospital and cooperated with them in providing her with medicines to treat injuries guerrillas had suffered from the battles. However, all these practices were done in secret. R. Amwaalwa (personal communication, October 29, 2017) narrated that she treated this soldier for quite a long time, about three months, and the soldier left after he was completely healed.

Fotolela (personal communication, October 22, 2017) emphasized that nurses who collaborated with the civilians, who kept sick guerrillas, risked and sacrificed their jobs for the sake of the liberation struggle. She further stated that nurses risked their lives by stealing medicines from hospitals and clinics in order to save the lives of sick and injured PLAN guerrillas. As a result, Akawa (2014) concurred that hospitals in the north were supplied with inadequate medication, since the SA administration of that time claimed that the medicine was often stolen and given to the terrorists.

Civilians in the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions indicated that the situation in their area was not human friendly during the liberation struggle, because they were always disturbed, hence they lived in fear. Katjavivi (1988) pointed out that the situation was dangerous in the vicinity of the villages due to the movements of the guerrillas. When the PLAN guerrillas visited a certain place in the northern part of Namibia (Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions) to be specific their presence always caused problems to the inhabitants. S. Hamunyela (personal communication, October, 28, 2017) stated that after PLAN guerrillas left the villages their foot tracks also caused problems to the civilians when they were discovered by South African forces. There was no difference whether the guerrillas' tracks were seen in somebody's house or even just close to one's compound or field. Harsh measures such as being blind - folded, taken from their houses and beaten or left dead by the roadside, were administered. Hangula (personal communication, October, 10, 2017) from a village in Oshikoto region, gave an account of how they were beaten up in their village due to the PLAN guerrilla tracks which were found in their vicinity. According to Hangula, a group of PLAN guerrillas came to their village, and as usual they indicated that they were hungry and needed food to eat. Hangula and other civilians agreed to prepare meals for the Guerrillas in their houses and took the food in the bush at an agreed secret spot.

Unfortunately, there was another civilian who collaborated with the South African colonial authority who saw them and reported them.

According to J. Hangula (personal communication, October 10, 2017) the next morning was a nightmare, when the South African soldier (Koevoet) came to their village and found not only the tracks of the PLAN guerrilla's shoes but also tracks of the food items fresh. She narrated that many civilians were beaten and some were arrested and taken to the camps for detention. Many civilians were injured and needed hospital treatment including her, but since hospitals and clinics were controlled by the South African soldiers as well, many could not go there. Civilians could not go to clinics and hospitals for treatment because they were mocked and laughed at. Hence, they were traditionally treated in their houses massaged with warm water and sand until they have recovered.

These harsh measures did not discourage civilians from protecting the PLAN guerrillas since civilians always denied seeing the PLAN guerrillas. Therefore, Feinstein (1998) pointed out that South African soldiers were annoyed when civilians denied seeing the PLAN guerrillas because sometimes the foot tracks led to their front doors. This was the reason why the civilians were beaten harshly.

Against this background, civilians were vigilant to avoid the beatings and any other sorts of harassment because of foot tracks of PLAN guerrillas. Due to the strong relationship which was developed between civilians and the PLAN guerrillas, civilians always made sure that they cleaned up the PLAN guerrillas' footprints after they passed their houses. Subsequently, they used different tactics to clean the foot tracks. Akawa (2014,); P. Samuel, personal communication, October 16, 2017) pointed out that civilians raked the ground to clear the foot tracks of the guerrillas. S. Hangula (personal communication, October, 28, 2017) concurred that some civilians threw *mahangu* grains on the ground and fed the chickens on the areas where the footprints were visible in order for them to clean the traces of PLAN guerrillas' foot prints. She further stated that some civilians instructed the children to herd the livestock in the areas where the guerrillas walked outside the house. In some cases, civilians cut branches from the trees and pull them along the path following the foot tracks of the PLAN guerrillas until they were completely cleaned. This was done to protect and to save lives not only of the guerrillas but also of their fellow civilians.

Some of the civilians hid materials that belonged to the PLAN guerrillas. During the liberation struggle, it was dangerous for one to be found in possession of any materials belonging to PLAN guerrillas or to the SWAPO party in general. Once they were seen by the SADF or Koevoet soldiers one suffered beatings or any sort of violation. M. Shihepo (personal communication, October, 17, 2017) revealed that in most cases when PLAN guerrillas departed from the civilians' houses, they left behind their belongings which they intended to find again upon their return. Items such as guns, ammunition, clothes and other materials, known as military tools or devices were left behind. Due to the danger civilians faced if such items were found by the SADF or Koevoet in their houses, they therefore hid these materials either between layers of the grass of the thatched huts or buried them under ground to avoid arrests, destruction of their houses, beatings or even loss of life. Equally important, when the guerrillas returned back for their items, covert methods had to be used to return the items to the PLAN guerrillas, for instance, civilians put them in bags of maize meal or in an empty bucket of water and pretended as if they went to fetch water, to avoid suspicion.

Kuumbili (personal communication, October 27, 2017) indicated that some civilians were drivers for the liberation struggle. He pointed out that in the North, a few male SWAPO supporters and sympathizers who owned cars risked transporting combatants and those who were seeking to cross the borders. It was not only combatants who needed to be transported during the liberation struggle, but there were many items which needed to be transported from different places to their destinations. Even people on missions were supposed to be transported to different destinations to carry out their duties, while others needed transport to the borders to join PLAN in Angola. Actually, the means of transport was vital during this period of the war. Therefore, many civilians voluntarily surrendered their vehicles and bicycles to be used during the liberation struggle. Bicycles were a great source of transport since they could be used to transport agents to meet with the guerrillas at an agreed spot or point when delivering messages or food and also used by the guerrillas as a means of transport. N. Kuumbili (personal communication, October 27, 2017) further revealed that many civilians including him even lost their jobs due to these activities.

Some of the civilians' houses served as assembly or meeting points. The meeting points were established in various villages particularly in exclusively selected

homesteads by the guerrillas as Chitukutuku (2017) stated that the selection of venues was normally based on political loyalty as well as security considerations. N. Kuumbili (personal communication, October 27, 2017) concurred that not every one's homestead could be selected because some people were sellouts (people who reported others to the colonial authority). According to K. Sheya (personal communication, October, 30, 2017) these assembling points were needed in order for civilians to meet and discuss the way forward concerning the liberation process of Namibia, whereby in some cases civilians met with the guerrillas and discussed the journey into exile with those who were leaving the country.

Kuumbili (personal communication, October, 27, 2017) revealed that Namibians who went into exile were transported to a place called Omapale in Oshikoto region, especially people from villages in Oshikoto region such as Omuntele, Onakazizi, Iipopo, Onyuulaye just to mention a few. Similarly, Engela in the Ohangwena region also served as the meeting and departure point (Ya-Otto, 1980). Omapale was also regarded as the assembling or meeting point for political discussions.

On the other hand, Tuhadeleni's house was regarded as the assembling point for the Guerrillas who returned from Tanzania (Akawa, 2014, Shityuwete, 2015) while Omapale was also an assembling point for Namibian people who were leaving the country. The difference was that those who assembled at Tuhadeleni's house were already trained PLAN guerrillas, while those assembling at Omapale and Engela were going for training as PLAN guerrillas.

According to F. Lazarus (personal communication, October, 12, 2017) almost everyone was involved in the struggle, whether young and old except those who collaborated with the South African regime. The elders used young civilians as messengers. H. Naunyango (personal communication, October, 26, 2017) revealed that young girls were used to pound *Mahangu* grains to provide flour for porridge to feed the PLAN guerrillas. She further stated that young girls were also used to fetch water from the wells for PLAN guerrillas to bathe and to cook for them. This indicates that civilians were always prepared and ready to receive PLAN guerrillas anytime since, they always had *mahangu* flour ready to cook for the PLAN guerrillas. H. Naunyango (personal communication, October, 26, 2017) stated that some girls were used as destruction tactics, in case guerrillas were hidden in the civilians' rooms

whereby young girls were stripped naked and pushed outside the room to be seen by the South African soldiers. Naunyango stated that this tactic was successful because when a naked young girl left the room, the South African soldiers were distracted and did not search the room any more in the civilians' houses. Therefore, South African soldiers would be discouraged to search the room thinking that guerrillas could not be in the room where there was a little naked girl. Due to their responsibilities, the guerrillas gave some civilians names. An example of such a name, was a girl who pounded *mahangu* specifically for the guerrillas' porridge, she was therefore given a name (*Kiimwala*) meaning she pounded the *mahangu* grains.

According to C. Hamutoko (personal communication, October, 11, 2017) many civilians lied in order for them to save the lives of the PLAN guerrillas during the liberation struggle. Regardless of the age, even the children and the youth were trained to tell lies concerning the whereabouts of the guerrillas. They were trained that whenever the South African soldiers asked them the whereabouts of the PLAN guerrillas, their responses should always be, "we do not know" and "we did not see them". It does not matter even if the PLAN guerrillas had just passed by their houses the day before or even if they slept in their houses the previous night. Akawa (2014) concurred that civilians always denied to the South African forces that they helped the PLAN guerrillas. This was like a training given to all who lived in the northern parts of Namibia, because even the small children were expected to give the same responses when approached by the SADF or Koevoet soldiers. Feinstein (1998), on the other hand, stated that Koevoet did not like that response. Hence, civilians were beaten almost every day due to them denying PLAN guerrillas' whereabouts. Feinstein further stated that denying guerrillas was an insult to the South African forces, because they eagerly wanted to find the PLAN guerrillas because killing them meant receiving a bonus.

Some civilians in Oshikoto and Ohangwena region rendered spiritual assistance during the liberation struggle of Namibia. E. Shaidila (personal communication, October 14, 2017) stated that there were instances where South African forces abducted civilians and never brought them home. As a result, many civilians disappeared without trace and without proper burials, not knowing whether they died or they were still alive. However, civilians got tired of these calamities and tried other

options of help. E. Shaidila (personal communication, October 14, 2017) further indicated that many families prayed every day for the return of their relatives. At times, many went to gather at church to conduct prayers, hoping for God to answer their prayers and return their relatives. Besides, some civilians turned to the spiritualists and witch doctors for help in order for their relatives to return home. E. Shaidila eventually revealed that the spiritualists and witch doctors were helpful since, after consultation, some of the relatives returned home to their families.

5.2.1 Discussion of the main emerging themes under the concealment of guerilla identities

The narrative unveils several pivotal themes in the lives of civilians in the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions during the liberation struggle: In the perilous era of the liberation struggle, civilians emerged as unsung heroes, dedicating themselves to the cause of protecting and supporting PLAN guerrillas. This entailed providing clandestine shelters, concealing identities through various means, and confronting substantial risks to shield the guerrillas from adversaries. Political mobilization and education became instrumental in fostering local support for SWAPO and the guerrilla movement. PLAN guerrillas actively engaged with civilians through political meetings, enlightening them about the profound significance of backing the liberation struggle. This collaborative effort aimed to garner widespread endorsement for the cause.

The aspect of healthcare and nurturing highlighted the crucial role that civilians, particularly women, play as caregivers to injured or ill PLAN guerrillas. Operating under the constraints of restricted access to formal healthcare facilities controlled by South African forces, civilians resorted to unconventional medical practices to provide essential care. A significant alliance unfolded between civilians and medical personnel, where some civilians risked collaboration with nurses to secure medicines for treating injured guerrillas. This alliance, though fraught with dangers and sacrifices, stood as a testament to the lengths civilians went to defy the South African administration's perception of aiding "terrorists."

To protect PLAN guerrillas, civilians adopted deception and secrecy as key strategies. This encompassed giving fake names, erasing footprints, and deceiving South African

forces about the whereabouts of the guerrillas. Such subterfuge was crucial in shielding the guerrillas and averting severe repercussions. Transportation support emerged as a key facet of civilian involvement, with some individuals assuming the role of drivers, facilitating the movement of combatants, and others engaging in the liberation struggle. This included the transportation of people, supplies, and combatants across borders, often resulting in individuals sacrificing their livelihoods.

Civilians' houses served as vital meeting points for political discussions and assemblies, playing a central role in coordinating activities, sharing information, and strategizing the way forward for those involved in the liberation struggle.

Youth involvement became a notable aspect of the narrative, illustrating the active participation of both young and old civilians in the struggle. Children and youth were trained to deceive South African forces about the presence of guerrillas, while young girls undertook specific responsibilities such as pounding *mahangu* grains for guerrillas' porridge. In times of uncertainty and distress, civilians sought spiritual assistance through prayers, church gatherings, and consultations with spiritualists and witch doctors. This spiritual dimension reflected the diverse coping mechanisms employed by civilians as they faced the challenges of the liberation struggle.

Ultimately, the narrative unveils a tapestry of resilience, resourcefulness, and collective efforts by civilians in the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions as they navigated through a tumultuous period in Namibia's history, contributing significantly to the cause of liberation.

5.3 Implications for Protecting Guerrillas

Civilians in the villages of the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions had suffered beatings, torture, and killings during the liberation war. Thornberry (2004) stated that many males and females were publicly flogged on the bare buttocks and on their backs with *makalani* canes because they were suspected of collaborating with the PLAN guerrillas. V. Samuel (personal communication, October 2017), who worked in the administration of the South African Authority during the colonial era, pointed out that things were complicated in 1970, after the South African Authority recruited black men into its force. Blacks were recruited to be used secretly, particularly in the

villages. According to Akawa (2014), there was a battalion called “Battalion 101,” which was established especially by soldiers from the Oshiwambo-speaking community to fight against SWAPO. V. Samuel (personal communication, October 20, 2017) revealed that the recruitment of black people in the South African army brought confusion among the Ovawambo-speaking people in Owamboland. According to N. Joel (personal communication, October 24, 2017), one household in Owamboland could have two sons who belonged to different political associations; one could belong to SWAPO, while the other belonged to the South African Force. Consequently, the Owambo people fought against each other. V. Samuel (personal communication, October 20, 2017) argued that during this period of the liberation struggle, the situation was not only confusing but also complicated and dangerous.

Although people in the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions were warned by the South African administration not to support SWAPO, it was impossible for civilians to stop supporting their sons and daughters, and there was no way to turn away (Akawa, 2014). However, civilians were always being disturbed by the SADF, or “Koevoet,” in their surroundings and even in their own houses. According to Nelly Justus (personal communication, October 24, 2017), the SADF, or “Koevoet,” had no limited time to come into the civilians’ houses. They entered any time it suited them and asked the whereabouts of the PLAN guerrillas. She further stated that if the civilians replied or responded negatively, it was regarded as an insult to the SADF or the Koevoet soldiers. As a result, civilians were beaten until they became unconscious. As evidence of these tortures, Cleaver and Wallace (1990) narrated about a doctor in Oshakati Hospital who reported that many health problems in the area during that time were caused by the war and the curfew. They further added that many people died because they could not reach health services on time due to the curfew. The curfew prohibited people in the northern parts of Namibia from moving around from 18:00 p.m. to 06:00 a.m. in their own areas. Due to these prohibitions, civilians got attacked when they were on their way to reach health services. During the curfew, anyone found moving after dark was shot. Therefore, Katjavivi (1988) stated that civilians could not help a sick neighbour or a woman in child labour because they feared being killed.

Several community members concurred with Cleaver & Wallace (1990) that beatings and arrests were everyday activities. In most cases, civilians were beaten once the Koevoet soldiers saw footprints of the PLAN guerrillas in the area or if someone reported that a certain individual collaborated with the PLAN guerrillas. J. Hangula (personal communication, October 10, 2017) concurred that the way the civilians were beaten was inhumane.

Hangula (personal communication, October 10, 2017) narrated that civilians who were suspected to have cooperated with the PLAN guerrillas had their houses destroyed so that they could not accommodate the guerrillas anymore. She further revealed that about 10 vehicles (*caspers*) of the SADF or Koevoet could come to one homestead full of soldiers in search of PLAN guerrillas. If they did not find the guerrillas they searched for, they would eventually turn on the inhabitants of the house, beating and killing them. Besides, houses were also burned down by the South African soldiers after they took civilians' properties from the houses. J. Hangula (personal communication, October 10, 2017) further added that civilians' *mahangu* fields and fences were also trampled on, especially during the time of harvesting, since the *caspers* (military vehicles) did not hover in one track, but instead each one chose its own way. In other words, they were driven in a parallel way.

Consequently, civilians suffered because they had to rebuild their properties after destruction, of which Akawa (2014) concurred that civilians suffered because they always had to rebuild and repair their houses, fences, and *cuca*-shops (small shops in the villages selling basic needs). According to J. Hangula (personal communication, October 10, 2017), civilians did not only lose properties in their houses; properties from their *cuca*-shops were also taken. Moreover, their livestock were slaughtered indiscriminately because, apparently, livestock were used to feed the PLAN guerrillas. For the civilians in Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions who owned *cuca* shops, profit did not matter anymore. They sacrificed the products to PLAN guerrillas, or the products were taken by force by the South African forces (*Koevoet*).

Shiponwa (personal communication, October, 13, 2017) revealed that female civilians suffered sexual harassment from the South African soldiers particularly *Omakakunya*. She claimed that South African soldiers routinely raped women of all ages, including those who were young and old. Katjavivi (1988) argued that when the South African

forces entered a homestead, the white soldiers selected the best-looking girls and took them into the field and raped them. Akawa (2014) pointed out the event of a young girl who died two days after an empty bottle was forced into her vagina and anus by a South African soldier. Akawa (2014) further indicated that women suffered assaults and harassment, whereby they were grabbed by their breasts and pulled, which was humiliating and degrading. These violations left women tormented physically and psychologically because they had nowhere to report them. Hangula further added that some women were forced to agree to or accept the proposal of the South African soldiers, and those who refused were beaten. Hence, many girls accepted these proposals by force to avoid the beatings.

5.3.1 Emerging main issues in protecting guerillas

The consequences of protecting guerrillas in the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions during the liberation struggle cast a gloomy shadow over civilians and reveal a landscape with serious and pervasive effects. The challenges faced by these individuals were multifaceted:

Amidst the struggle for liberation, civilians endured brutal beatings, torture, and killings, subjected to public flogging with makalani canes on their bare buttocks and backs. The recruitment of black people into the South African army, specifically "Battalion 101," exacerbated suspicions of collaboration with PLAN guerrillas and fueled this violence. This recruitment deepened internal conflicts among the Ovawambo-speaking people, tearing apart households with members aligned with opposing political associations.

The influx of black recruits into the South African forces added layers of confusion and complexity to Ovawambo-speaking communities. Households grappled with divisions, where family members found themselves on opposing sides of the political spectrum, intensifying internal strife and conflicts.

Despite explicit warnings from the South African administration to cease supporting SWAPO and PLAN guerrillas, civilians found it impossible to disengage. This unwavering support led to persistent disturbances by the South African Defence Force (SADF) and "Koevoet" forces. Civilians faced arbitrary entries into their homes at

any hour, and resistance or negative responses resulted in severe beatings and loss of consciousness.

The imposition of a curfew from 18:00 p.m. to 06:00 a.m. exacerbated health issues for civilians. Cleaver and Wallace (1990) highlighted that the curfew restricted movements, preventing timely access to health services. Attempts to reach healthcare during curfew hours risked being met with violence, leading to avoidable deaths. The discovery of PLAN guerrilla footprints or reports of collaboration frequently led to routine beatings and arrests, which became a part of everyday life for civilians. J. Hangula described the brutality of these beatings as reaching inhumane levels, with suspicions of collaboration leading to the destruction of homes and violence against residents.

Civilians faced extensive property damage during searches for guerrillas, including the destruction of houses, mahangu fields, and fences. The indiscriminate trampling of properties necessitated constant rebuilding efforts by affected civilians. Female civilians endured sexual harassment and assaults from South African soldiers, including instances of rape and brutal acts such as the forced insertion of objects into body orifices. These violations caused lasting physical and psychological trauma, with no avenue for reporting and resistance resulting in further beatings.

Civilians who owned cuca-shops experienced significant sacrifices, as their properties were either sacrificed to PLAN guerrillas or forcibly taken by South African forces (Koevoet). Livestock was slaughtered indiscriminately, and profits ceased to matter for shop owners, leading to substantial economic losses. Forced acceptance and compliance became a harrowing reality for female civilians, with some compelled to accept proposals from South African soldiers to avoid beatings. These violations left indelible physical and psychological scars on the women, who had little recourse for reporting or resisting such abuse.

The implications for protecting guerrillas in the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions unfolded as a tale of profound suffering, encompassing physical harm, economic devastation, and widespread human rights abuses. Civilians endured continuous threats from South African forces throughout the tumultuous period of the liberation struggle.

5.4 Communication tactics

Modern telecommunications, such as mobile phones, were not yet introduced in Namibia during the liberation struggle. Therefore, all means of communication were done in a traditional way. In the current situation, one may regard the communication of that period as a challenging phenomenon, but for those who lived during that time, they managed to communicate. As it was indicated earlier, civilians like those who escorted Namibians used letters as a means of communication. Letters were passed from one agent to the other until the message reached all those expected to receive the message or intended to hear the message, including the PLAN guerrillas.

According to R. Amwaalwa (personal communication, October 29, 2017), although PLAN guerrillas moved in large groups, not all entered the civilian house; only one or two who represented the group entered the house to deliver the message. Ekandjo (2011) made it clear that every time the PLAN guerrillas arrived at a certain village, the commander instructed two or three guerrillas to enter the nearest homestead in order for them to be updated with information on the whereabouts of the enemy forces (SADF) in the area. The same procedure was used when they requested water and food. According to V. Samuel (personal communication, October 12, 2017), when guerrillas were instructed to go to a certain village, they either came with a member from that village or If they did not come with a person from that village, then they took someone from that village to lead them to the place of the person they wanted to meet. This was carefully done because not all the civilians collaborated with the guerrillas. When the selected guerrillas came to that specific homestead, they always had to mention the name of the person who directed them.

According to Amwaalwa (personal communication, October 29, 2017), PLAN guerrillas received overnight feeding from the locals when they stayed in a particular area for a specific amount of time. In some instances, especially when people were sleeping, they had to use some tactics as a means of communication to make sure it was not the enemy. According to R. Amwaalwa (personal communication, October 29, 2017), guerrillas agreed with the civilians to throw any hard object on the roof of the hut. Some tactics used by the guerrillas were whistling. Civilians were willing to assist the guerrillas because they were always ready and expected the guerrillas' arrivals at any time.

5.4.1 Main issues emerging in communication

The absence of modern telecommunications, such as mobile phones, during Namibia's liberation struggle posed distinct challenges to communication. In this era, traditional methods were the sole means of conveying messages, yet despite the limitations, the people of that time managed to establish effective communication channels. Civilians, particularly those accompanying Namibians, relied heavily on letters as their primary mode of communication. These letters traversed a network of agents, passing from one to another until reaching the intended recipients or those meant to hear the message, including PLAN guerrillas.

According to insights from R. Amwaalwa (personal communication, October 29, 2017), even though PLAN guerrillas moved in sizable groups, only one or two representatives typically entered civilian houses to deliver messages. Ekandjo (2011) clarified that upon arriving at a village, the PLAN commander instructed a few guerrillas to enter the nearest homestead to gather information about the enemy forces (SADF) in the area. This process was replicated when they sought water and food. V. Samuel (personal communication, October 12, 2017) added that if guerrillas were sent to a specific village, they either brought a member from that village or selected someone from the village to guide them to their destination. This precautionary step was taken because not all civilians collaborated with the guerrillas. When the chosen guerrillas arrived at a homestead, they had to mention the name of the person who directed them, ensuring a careful and selective approach.

In instances where PLAN guerrillas stayed in a particular area for an extended period, civilians played a vital role in providing them with sustenance during the night. To avoid mistaking friendly forces for enemy forces, especially when people were asleep, guerrillas employed clever communication tactics. R. Amwaalwa (personal communication, October 29, 2017) noted that an agreement was established between guerrillas and civilians to use specific signals, such as throwing a hard object on the roof of a hut. The guerrillas also used whistling as a tactic. The willingness of civilians to assist guerrillas stemmed from their constant readiness and anticipation of the guerrillas' unexpected arrivals.

5.5 Trauma after War

For many civilians, the liberation war was over and long forgotten. Among those still suffering are several veterans who have felt forgotten, unappreciated, and even discriminated against. Some civilians felt that traumatic memories, torturous experiences, and their physical disabilities shattered their lives (Ashipala, P., 2018). During the war, civilians were exposed to stress, confusion, anxiety, pain, and hatred. Civilians felt that they were portrayed to the public as worrisome, psychopathic people with no morals or control over their aggression. Several participants revealed that civilians felt that there was nobody they could share the trauma with or who could understand what they had been through, not even their own families. According to the oral accounts, many of the civilians are uneducated because they dropped out of school to concentrate on the liberation struggle, whereby they engaged in political activities. As a result, they found it difficult to re-emerge in society.

They struggled to establish a personal identity or a place in society because they lacked the proper education and job skills similar to those who were at the front in exile. In addition, there are no supportive groups to help them find their way, which makes them feel even more isolated, unappreciated, and exploited, even though they served their country. This was the response of many civilians when asked what they felt after the war. Many are not happy with what has been done to them by the current administration of SWAPO. They felt that the compensation was not fair, as it only considered some of the civilians who qualified but not all those who suffered during the war. Some civilians felt some of the beneficiaries did not even qualify because they did not even suffer or contribute much. Civilians indicated that some of the beneficiaries were known to collaborate with the South African administration. This was confusing, and they do not understand why the collaborators benefited.

5.5.1 Main issues emerging in trauma after war

The aftermath of the liberation war has left a lingering impact on many civilians, with some veterans experiencing a sense of abandonment, un-appreciation, and discrimination. Despite the war being a distant memory for many, several veterans continue to grapple with traumatic memories, torturous experiences, and physical disabilities that have shattered their lives (Ashipala, P., 2018).

Throughout the war, civilians endured stress, confusion, anxiety, pain, and hatred. They felt misrepresented to the public, often portrayed as worrisome and psychopathic individuals lacking morals or control over their aggression. A sense of isolation, which many civilians felt they had no one to share their trauma with or who could truly understand their experiences, even within their own families, increased the emotional toll. A significant number of these civilians sacrificed their education, dropping out of school to engage in the liberation struggle and political activities. This sacrifice, however, hindered their reintegration into society, as they lacked the education and job skills needed to establish a personal identity or find a place in the post-war community. The absence of supportive groups further contributed to their feelings of isolation, leaving them with a sense of being unappreciated and exploited despite their service to the country.

The current SWAPO administration's compensation package was the source of civilian discontent. Many expressed dissatisfaction, arguing that the compensation was unfair as it only considered certain qualifying civilians, overlooking the broader spectrum of those who suffered during the war. Some civilians questioned the eligibility of beneficiaries, asserting that some had collaborated with the South African administration. This inconsistency in recognizing and compensating contributions added to the confusion and frustration among the war-affected civilians, who felt overlooked and misunderstood by the very government they had served.

5.6 Chapter summary

This chapter addressed how PLAN guerrillas' identities were concealed when they overstayed in the local vicinities. It also discussed the implications of protecting guerrillas as well as communication tactics used by civilians involved with the PLAN guerrillas. It also looked at the trauma after the war, especially for civilians who felt overlooked by the benefits of war veterans.

CHAPTER SIX

FOOD AND OTHER MATERIAL AID

6.1 Introduction

This chapter gives the broader composition of how the civilians cooperated during the time of war in the northern central regions of Namibia. It also looks at how the PLAN guerrillas and other patriots were provided with food and other materials by the civilians. Finally, this chapter looks at how the civilians suffered violence from the South African forces because they provided food and other materials to PLAN guerrillas.

6.2 Provision of food and material support

During the liberation struggle, PLAN fighters used to cross the border from Angola into Namibia to fight the war. According to F. Lazarus (personal communication, October 12, 2017), PLAN guerrillas stayed for a long time in the bush if they came for missions in Namibia. Therefore, they did not have enough food to sustain themselves. According to Katjavivi (1988), the PLAN guerrillas experienced a shortage of food because they could not carry enough food for the period they stayed in the bush, but they carried the quantity of food they could carry in their luggage. Apart from that, the guerrillas were not only supposed to carry food but also other necessities. Scholtz (2006) pointed out that soldiers also carried weapons, landmines, mortars, automatic rifles, medical equipment, and other items they needed on the battlefield. Hence, PLAN guerrillas carried little food, which did not last for long. Thus, this forced them to actually approach the civilians for food. As a result, there was a need for a variety of assistance, so anyone willing to lend a hand was welcome. It was against this background that many patriots rendered assistance in different ways to fulfil the dream of independence in Namibia. A part of these patriots were the civilians who remained inside the country. Civilians in this study refer to those people who remained inside the country and fought for independence in their own ways. Therefore, civilians offered material support as a sacrifice for the liberation struggle.

Civilians offered assistance in different ways, such as providing food, clothes, transport, accommodation, and many other materials. This was done to avoid discouraging the youth not to join the SWAPO wing (PLAN), as food was supplied to make it possible for the guerrillas to survive the bush life. According to K. Sheya (personal communication, October 30, 2017), the situation was unbearable,

dangerous, and confusing. Hence, this made the formal and normal ways of supplying food and other items complicated. Therefore, civilians tried to assist in whatever way they could and with whatever they had to encourage and sustain the liberation struggle. Sheya further stated that it was a situation in which one could claim that without sacrifice, there would not have been independence, which is being celebrated today (K. Sheya, personal communication, October 30, 2017). Hence, one would attribute the attainment of independence in Namibia to having been achieved through the sacrifices and violence of the liberation struggle that civilians endured. Katjavivi (1968) stated that it was necessary to win over the civilians because the “revolutionary units live in their midst and depend on their assistance to survive” (p. 76). He further added that PLAN guerrillas depended on the active participation of civilians in order to survive. Similarly, Mutamba and Sodi (2018) concurred that guerrillas collaborated with civilians for survival during the liberation wars.

Amwaalwa (personal communication, October 29, 2017), on the other hand, argued that during the liberation war, there was a shortage in supply of food and other items needed during this period. The supplies needed to be given to the different groups of people, such as the PLAN guerrillas, the people who were on the move going into exile to join SWAPO (the PLAN wing), and the people who were on the run hiding from the South African authorities. Other people also needed support, such as those who were finding themselves in different challenging situations caused by the war, for example, those whose houses were destroyed by the South African soldiers because they were suspected of collaborating with the PLAN guerrillas.

6.3 Food assistance during the “Dusk to Dawn Curfew”

“Dusk to dawn curfew” was introduced to prohibit people’s movements throughout the northern parts of Namibia from 18:00 pm until 06:00 am, and this was a violation of human rights (Bufachi, 2005). During the curfew, the influence of the South African military was extensive because virtually the entire northern area of Namibia was placed under a state of emergency between 1972 and 1989, and over 100,000 troops under South African command were deployed in the country (Lamb, 2006). Soldiers were deployed to restrict and control the movements of the Namibians because they feared that the Namibians might organize themselves and fight back. Moreover, they enforced the restriction of contact between civilians and the guerrillas.

Therefore, the process of providing food during the curfew was a challenge since civilians were not allowed to cook after sunset.

According to R. Amwaalwa (personal communication, October 29, 2017), the “dusk-to-dawn curfew” (known as *Okangedjo koufiku* in Oshiwambo) prohibited civilians from moving and carrying out their activities after sun set and before sunrise. Meanwhile, Nampala (2015) indicated that this did not deter the cooking process from taking place, but they tried by all means to cook for the patriots secretly. This one tends to agree with Fanon (2015), who stated that violence emboldens civilians and restores their self-confidence. This process of violence was anticipated to limit contact between the PLAN guerrillas and civilians, which included cooking for them and other patriots. But in actual fact, these violent laws only made the civilians smarter to think of alternative ways of getting in contact with the PLAN guerrillas and giving them the assistance they needed. Moreover, the action not only made the civilians smarter, but it also gave them room to come up with more tactics on how to assist the guerrillas, especially how to provide food.

According to V. Samuel (personal communication, October 12, 2017), food was provided in different ways, whereby it was given either cooked, raw, or even in the form of cans and so forth. As Ya Otto (1981) pointed out, a shopkeeper filled the bags with canned food and bread to sustain the patriots throughout their journey to Angola, as they were to join PLAN for the liberation war. Church personnel were also involved in food provision during the liberation struggle. According to Leys and Saul (1995), the church publicized atrocities and gave food to the war victims who were detained during the liberation war. Pastors gave food to detainees (guerrillas) when they visited them in a police cell, as well as spiritual assistance.

Moreover, the PLAN guerrillas needed food to stay fit physically and mentally. R. Amwaalwa (personal communication, October 29, 2017) concurred that PLAN guerrillas did not have fixed or permanent places of residence to depend on for food, thus making them depend on the civilians in the villages where they hid. Civilians could hardly feed themselves due to poverty, but they made sure they shared the little they had. However, the fulfilment of these tasks was now trumpeted as the civilians’ patriotic duty. Schmidt (2001) added to the situation in Zimbabwe that civilians carried water, firewood, and agricultural products, similarly to the Namibian civilians

in the north, who also fed the guerrillas with watermelons, beans, and nuts from their fields during harvesting season, regardless of the violent situation during the war.

Civilians provided food to PLAN guerrillas either individually or in groups. According to R. Amwaalwa (personal communication, October 29, 2017), civilians provided food individually when the PLAN guerrillas visited a certain individual household, and that individual family may provide food without the involvement of other members of the community. In the context of providing food in a group, households in a village cooperated or worked together and agreed to provide food in a group. In Onamhinda village, the civilians agreed and decided amongst themselves by giving each other different responsibilities, such as who to bring the goat, the chickens, or the cattle, and many other food items (E. Shaidila, personal communication, October 14, 2017). She further added that civilians in Onamhinda decided on the place where the food items would be cooked, and a certain place had to be selected where prepared food should be taken after cooking. However, all these decisions were secretly made in agreement among many households.

Shiponwa (personal communication, October 13, 2017) pointed out that food was prepared and served in secret because it was not an easy process but a dangerous one. It was dangerous that if arrested for giving food to PLAN guerrillas, it would lead to being beaten, arrested, or even killed. This gave a clear picture of how the violence inflicted on the civilians in the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions by South African colonial rule made them brave enough to continue providing food to the liberation fighters, although they lived in fear. According to Fanon (1963), as cited in Pallas (2016), having lived in a state of fear for so long results in difficulties in forming a positive new image. Moreover, civilians suffered psychological injuries due to beatings and tortures inflicted on them because they cooked for PLAN guerrillas and other patriots.

In some villages, collaborative cooking was done in a group of about three to five households. P. Samuel (personal communication, October 16, 2017) stated that collaborative cooking depended on the number of those to be served. However, when civilians were approached by the guerrillas, they first established the number of the group, which would determine if food would be prepared in groups. Ekandjo (2011) concurred that whenever they approached a certain village, the commander of the

PLAN guerrillas ordered the guerrillas to go into the homesteads to organize food and water for the civilians. This was the reason civilians provided food cooperatively in some instances. Although it was not an easy and safe practice, whereby one may endure beatings, arrests, or even death, E. Shaidila (personal communication, October 14, 2017) concurred that civilians were brave regardless of the fear they lived in.

Shaidila (personal communication, October 14, 2017) gave an example of what happened at her village, Onamhinda, where guerrillas used to come in big groups. Consequently, civilians always came together and agreed on how to share responsibilities and make sure that guerrillas were provided with food. Moreover, men provided goats, and some even sacrificed their cattle just to provide meat to the guerrillas. Women provided chickens and *mahangu* flour for porridge. As far as the division of labour was concerned, men did the slaughtering, while women did the cooking. E. Shaidila (personal communication, October 14, 2017) further pointed out that in some instances, civilians cooked together at one place, while in other instances, civilians cooked separately at their respective houses and brought the food to one place to share the responsibility of distributing the food to the guerrillas. R. Amwaalwa (personal communication, October 29, 2017) concurred that many civilians sacrificed their livestock, such as goats and cattle, just to provide food to the PLAN guerrillas, because in some cases, guerrillas came or moved in big groups and stayed for some days.

Ekanjjo (2011) stated that PLAN guerrillas' stay inside Namibia was prolonged at times because of the missions they embarked on. As a result, their supplies of food, soap, and even ammunition were finished. Hence, they depended on civilians' assistance. Amram added that guerrillas also depended on civilians for clothes and shoes because their clothes would be worn out since they stayed for too long inside Namibia. PLAN guerrillas moved around to different villages, mobilized the civilians, and attacked SA camps. According to Chitukutuku (2017), the guerrillas had to mobilize, politicize, and work with local people in order to win the war. He made it clear that it was not only the guns that would win the war, but the guerrillas' relationship with the civilians would also win the war. Consequently, guerrillas needed to persuade civilians to provide them with food and other materials, and this

would take place when there was a good relationship between civilians and guerrillas.

In a village called Iipopo (Oshikoto region), in some instances or cases, PLAN guerrillas stayed for a longer period because of the mission they needed to accomplish before they returned to exile. Therefore, during the day they spent their day in the bush, but every night they returned to the civilians' homesteads for food. According to R. Amwaalwa (personal communication, October 29, 2017), this was then the reason that some civilians sacrificed their cattle to provide meat to the guerrillas to cater for the long period they had to stay. R. Amwaalwa (personal communication, October 29, 2017) added that the cooking was done by almost every civilian in the central northern villages of the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions, but not openly. Katjavivi (1968) pointed out that "civilian organizations must be clandestine" (p. 121).

The cooking process was done in secret because civilians in the villages reported to each other. Civilians who reported others were those who collaborated with the South African colonial regime because they were getting paid, which Stiff called the "secret fund." Stiff (2004) further stated that informers (those collaborating with the South African colonial regime) were paid an amount of R400 as a "secret fund," which attracted more civilians to be on the lookout for those collaborating with SWAPO. According to K. Sheya (personal communication, October 30, 2017), civilians who collaborated with the South African colonial regime or reported others were called puppets. He further pointed out that the puppets also suffered torture, and they even got killed by the PLAN guerrillas. Sheya continued by saying that some puppets vanished from the villages and never appeared again as a result of PLAN guerrillas killing them. This is an indication that civilians suffered torture and killing from the South African soldiers and PLAN soldiers.

Shiponwa (personal communication, October 13, 2017), on the other hand, argued that it was not an easy task, whereby, if found cooking by the South African soldiers, a punishment was imposed, for example, assault, arrest, or even death. As Bufachi (2005) stated, victims of violence remain vulnerable to further situations of abuse because they are unable to defend themselves. This was the situation with the civilians in the Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions. The beatings and arrests became a daily

routine, and civilians learned to live with it. Therefore, they adapted and became stubborn and brave, and this led to them finding more ways of providing assistance to the liberation struggle in Namibia. K. Sheya (personal communication, October 30, 2017) concurred that the torture imposed on them turned them into violent civilians since the South African soldiers vandalized and destroyed their properties. Civilians in return also burned down the inoculated kraals and cut the fence at *Okapate*, the border between Namibia and Angola.

Amwaalwa (personal communication, October 29, 2017) emphasized that although many civilians cooked for the PLAN guerrillas on a regular basis, it was not a matter of open discussion since many of the civilians did not trust each other. Hence, discussions about the cooking for the PLAN guerrillas were only done amongst those who collaborated with the PLAN guerrillas and knew each other (L. Shiponwa personal communication, October 13, 2017). This was done because giving food to the PLAN guerrillas in particular was not a safe process, since if one was found giving food and reported to the SADF or Koevoet, one might endure severe consequences. E. Shaidila (personal communication, October 14, 2017) further stressed that the secret provision of food to the PLAN guerrillas was dangerous because of the puppets. According to Feinstein (1998), Koevoet were the local members of the South African Police Force who were primarily involved in counterinsurgency operations. Hence, in fear of being reported, civilians carried food in buckets of water. R. Amwaalwa (personal communication, October 29, 2017) claimed that women had to pretend as if they were going to fetch water from the well or tap. Meanwhile, they were taking food to the PLAN guerrillas in the bush.

Civilians were always disturbed, harassed, interrogated, and tortured by the SADF or Koevoet in their surroundings and even in their own houses, since these soldiers moved in at any time they preferred. South African soldiers moved into civilians' houses unexpectedly because they received hints from their informers (civilians who worked together with South African soldiers). E. Shaidila (personal communication, October 14, 2017) explained that SADF or Koevoet had no limit to what time to come into the civilian houses, but they entered any time they wanted and asked the whereabouts of the PLAN guerrillas. According to Feinstein (1989), civilians were

interrogated and questioned about the whereabouts of the PLAN guerrillas, and if they denied them or refused to respond, they were beaten up.

According to Fanon (2015), violence can be perceived as a tool to be utilized in the struggle for political freedom and independence. Subsequently, South Africa introduced the system of imposing violence on the Namibians to demoralize them from supporting the war so they could be free to rule Namibia. In addition, the kop geld/head money system that was later introduced by SA authorities made the situation worse because of the poverty of some civilians (Werbner, 1991; Balch & Scholten, 1990). This was the system whereby the South African army, particularly the Koevoet soldiers who killed the SWAPO (PLAN) guerrillas, received (bonus) extra money, which was three times more than their normal salaries for each guerrilla they killed. Similarly, the kop geld system was also practiced in Zimbabwe, whereby agents were paid a \$1000 bonus for each confirmed death of a freedom fighter (Siamonga, 2015). One can tell that it was this bonus that encouraged the Koevoet soldiers to be violent towards their fellow Namibians. Therefore, during the years of oppression, civilians suffered brutality and intimidation from the South African soldiers, whereby torture was used as a method of interrogating people suspected of assisting the SWAPO (Werbner, 1991; Balch & Scholten, 1990).

These actions made civilians live in fear in their own country, Namibia, and live as foreigners in their own place. On the contrary, Fanon (2015) argued that some civilians turned violent as a means to free themselves psychologically from the South African colonial rule and colonial mind-set by destroying development structures built by the South African government. During this period of the introduction of violence as a tactic, Koevoet soldiers were commanded to destroy whatever they found in the way, be it animals or even people. They therefore systematically destroyed properties, houses, and crops belonging to civilians. Women were raped and sexually assaulted by SA soldiers, and all these actions were carried out mostly by black Namibians (*Koevoet* members).

In a village called Okawambi, in the Oshikoto region, J. Hangula (personal communication, October 10, 2017) narrated that one day the Koevoet soldiers discovered footprints of the PLAN guerrillas in the village closer to her house. Moreover, they also discovered a specific spot where the PLAN guerrillas were given

food. All the civilians who lived in that vicinity were gathered for questioning and interrogation. According to J. Hangula (personal communication, October 10, 2017), civilians were beaten one by one that day for providing PLAN guerrillas with food. Durand (2020) pointed out that civilians were beaten because they refused to cooperate with the South African soldiers. Hangula further narrated that Koevoet soldiers used sticks or the back side of the gun to beat the civilians until they became unconscious. On the same occasion, Hangula narrated that many civilians also got arrested and were taken to the camp for further interrogation and assaults. Pregnant women were not spared due to their situation, but they too were beaten until some miscarriage occurred. Those who went to the health centres the next day for medical treatment became the laughing stock since health centres were situated at army camps in these villages (J. Hangula, personal communication, October 10, 2019). According to Cock and Nathan (1989), civilians could not report cases of violence because it was the same police and army who violated them. Hence, civilians suffered pain in silence. As a result, they endured the pain and trauma of the war.

Although the situation was neither conducive nor safe for the activities of supplying food during the war, civilians tried many ways to make sure that the PLAN guerrillas got food to eat in order for them to make it to the next day. N. Kuumbili (personal communication, October 27, 2017) reported that in a village called Iipopo, guerrillas were divided into small groups, and then they were allocated to different houses for food when they approached the village in a big group. They did this because it was dangerous for a large group to be found in one place. Civilians of different households who cooperated to assist the guerrillas were then responsible for providing food to the PLAN guerrillas of groups assigned to them (N. Kuumbili, personal communication, October 27, 2017). Silvanus added that PLAN guerrillas ate their meals in the kraal among the goats or cattle just to avoid danger. This was done because it was rare for one to suspect that it was possible for a normal human being to be in the animal kraal, and this saved many guerrillas' lives. During the liberation struggle, people did not trust each other as some civilians collaborated with the SADF or Koevoet and some collaborated with SWAPO PLAN guerrillas

6.4 Role of the Church

Church personnel were also involved in food and other food provision during the liberation struggle. S.T. Mary Anglican Missionary Church, situated in the village of Odibo in the Ohangwena region, was one of the churches that contributed to the liberation war in Namibia. According to J. Kaluvi (personal communication, June 30, 2023), Odibo Anglican Missionary Church played a major role in assisting the PLAN guerrillas and Namibians who went into exile to join the PLAN in Angola. Kaluvi indicated that during the liberation war, it was difficult to do things in public or to discuss the activities leading to the assistance of PLAN guerrillas publicly. All these were done and discussed in secret, and this was the same at the church level.

It was during the 1974–1980s when the Anglican missionary church was actively involved in activities that assisted the PLAN guerrillas with different needs, narrated by J. Kaluvi (personal communication, June 30, 2023). Kaluvi was a youth leader in the church during that time of the war, and she was fully involved in the church activities. Although she was young by the time, she got involved and witnessed what happened at the church and in the village at large. Kaluvi narrated that, due to the dangerous period they lived in, the pastor could not announce publicly in the church to the congregants that they needed to volunteer and bring items to the church as assistance to the liberation or to the PLAN guerrillas. However, the pastor did it secretly by confiding in some of the church members he trusted according to their positions in the church. This went like the snowball sampling because those congregants also went on confiding in other church members they trusted. Consequently, the church members started to bring items needed to assist, such as *mahangu* flour, *omavanda*, soaps, body lotions, body creams, and clothes, because the guerrillas had different kinds of needs.

Odibo village shared borders with Angola; thus, the Anglican missionary church also served as a refuge for PLAN guerrillas and other civilians who suffered at the hands of the South African authority. Whenever they retired from their long journey, guerrillas slept at the church to rest and also to hide from the enemy. Moreover, the church served as a meeting point and departure point for those comrades from all corners of Namibia who went into exile to join the SWAPO wing PLAN. Kaluvi narrated that many people were dropped off at the church at Odibo, and it was the responsibility of the church to take care of the people, be it feeding or transporting over the borders into Angola. She argued that the church had bicycles and minibuses

that were used for transportation, but she could not recall where these minibuses and bicycles came from.

On the other hand, the Anglican missionary church received funds from its diocese in England. These funds were given to the church to enable different bodies within the church to run their activities effectively. According to J. Kaluvi (personal communication, June 30, 2023), the church executive committee tried by all means to utilize a portion of the funds to buy food items, clothes, soaps, lotions, creams, and sweets in order for the church to be able to assist the PLAN guerrillas whenever they came to the church. She stated that guerrillas loved sweets because, according to them, sweets gave them energy when travelling. Kaluvi further noted that the executive committee knew how they manipulated their financial reports and how they did their recordings, since she was not a member of the executive or a member of the financial committee.

The church provided spiritual assistance to civilians arrested during the war, such as those who cooked for the PLAN guerrillas, moved at night, or collaborated with SWAPO or the PLAN guerrillas. Kaluvi argued that some civilians and PLAN guerrillas who were arrested in the Ohangwena region were taken to police cells in Ohangwena town. Hence, the Anglican Church pastor visited the detainees in Ohangwena police cells, gave them counselling, and took along food items, sweets, soaps, and body lotions (J. Kaluvi, personal communications, June 30, 2023). Leys and Saul (1995) concurred with Kaluvi that the church gave food to the war victims who were detained during the liberation war.

6.5 Discussion of the main emerging themes

These findings are in line with the research by Akawa (2014), which highlights the significant role civilians played in supporting the guerrilla movement during the Namibian liberation struggle. Akawa's work emphasizes the critical support civilians provided through food and material assistance, reflecting the resilience and adaptability necessary to sustain PLAN guerrillas in the face of significant risks and restrictions.

Similarly, Cleaver and Wallace (1990) point out the strategic measures civilians had to adopt due to the "Dusk to Dawn Curfew" and other oppressive policies. The current study's findings align with their assertion that civilians often had to engage in secretive activities, such as clandestine cooking and transportation, to avoid detection by colonial forces.

Moreover, the role of churches in providing both material and spiritual support is consistent with Becker (2011), who explores how religious institutions like the Anglican Missionary Church in Odibo became sanctuaries for guerrillas while also offering emotional support to detainees and civilians affected by the struggle.

Thus, the findings in this study reinforce and expand upon existing literature, demonstrating the depth of civilian involvement and their profound impact on the success of the Namibian liberation movement.

These findings are also in line with the work of Nampala (2015), who explored the creative and resourceful ways civilians supported the liberation struggle. Nampala's findings underscore the adaptability of civilians in responding to oppressive colonial measures, demonstrating how they found innovative methods to circumvent restrictions and provide necessary support to the guerrillas.

Additionally, the collaborative spirit among civilians, as identified in the current study, is consistent with Ashipala (2015), who notes the collective efforts among communities in the northern regions. Civilians worked together, sharing resources and information, which contributed to the success of the guerrilla movement. This sense of unity and mutual support was a crucial aspect of the broader liberation struggle.

Furthermore, the risks associated with civilian support, including violence, arrest, and even death, align with the findings of Hyde-Nolan and Juliao (2012). Their research discusses the broader implications of oppressive regimes and the lengths to which civilians must go to resist and support liberation movements. The present study's findings confirm the high stakes and sacrifices made by civilians in the fight for Namibia's independence.

The findings in this study are consistent with and build upon existing literature, such as that by Akawa (2014), Cleaver and Wallace (1990), Nampala (2015), Ashipala (2015), and Hyde-Nolan and Juliao (2012). These findings highlight the multifaceted contributions of civilians, their adaptability and resilience, and the critical role of communal and institutional support in sustaining the Namibian liberation struggle. The alignment with these previous studies reinforces the significance of civilian involvement and their indispensable role in achieving Namibia's independence.

6.6 Chapter summary

To conclude this chapter, civilians cooperated to provide food and other materials to PLAN guerrillas and other Namibians who were going into exile. Different villages provided food in different ways. In some villages, civilians combined homesteads and cooked at one place, while in other villages, PLAN guerrillas were divided into different homesteads and civilians cooked at their different homesteads. It was not an easy task because civilians suffered beatings, arrests, and even death if they were found cooking or if they were reported by the puppets of the SADF. However, despite all the torture civilians experienced, they did not surrender. It encouraged them to assist more with the liberation struggle in Namibia.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings presented in the previous chapters. It will first discuss what caused the participation of civilians in the liberation struggle. This chapter will discuss the presentation of how civilians contributed as secret agents and scouts and the effects they suffered. It will also discuss the contribution of civilians through different strategies used to protect themselves and others from the beatings and arrests of the South African soldiers. The chapter will also discuss how civilians contributed to the liberation struggle by providing food and other materials. Finally, it will give recommendations.

7.2 Summary of the main findings

7.2.1 Research question 1: What kind of contribution did civilians in the Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions make towards Namibia's liberation struggle between 1966 and 1989?

According to the study, between 1966 and 1989, civilians in the Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions made a varied and significant contribution to Namibia's liberation struggle. These contributions are integral to understanding the dynamics of guerrilla warfare and the broader movement for independence (Bufachi, 2005; Jones, 2018). Civilians in the Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions played a crucial role in providing sustenance to the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) guerrillas. The study highlights that PLAN guerrillas faced shortages of food and essential supplies during their missions in Namibia. The impracticality of carrying sufficient provisions made civilians indispensable to filling this gap. Civilians contributed by providing food, clothing, and other essential items, creating a symbiotic relationship that was vital for the guerrilla movement's success (Battersby, 1987; Chitukutuku, 2017).

Despite facing their own hardships, civilians in these regions demonstrated an extraordinary level of commitment and patriotism. The study points out that civilians sacrificed their resources, including food, clothes, transport, and accommodation, to

support the guerrilla fighters. This selfless act underscored the depth of their commitment to the cause of independence, portraying them not merely as passive observers but as active participants in the struggle for freedom (Lamb, 2006; Likuwa & Shiweda, 2017). The formal ways of supplying food were complicated due to the unpredictable and dangerous nature of the war. Civilians in the Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions displayed resilience and resourcefulness by finding alternative and often secretive methods to supply food to the guerrillas. This adaptive behaviour is indicative of the civilians' determination to overcome challenges and provide crucial assistance under adverse circumstances (Mao and Fanon, 2015; Morris, 1977).

The study emphasizes that PLAN guerrillas were heavily dependent on active civilian participation for survival. This dependence underscored the importance of winning over civilians for the guerrilla movement's success. The relationship between guerrillas and civilians in the Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions was critical, highlighting the need for collaboration and mutual support for the overall success of the liberation struggle (Fanon, 2016; Kothari, 2004). The findings indicate that civilians in these regions faced challenges related to the "Dusk to Dawn Curfew." The curfew restricted civilian movements, making the provision of food challenging during certain hours. Despite these restrictions, civilians adapted their strategies, including cooking secretly, to ensure that guerrillas received sustenance even under curfew conditions (Bruner, 1991; Oosthuizen, 2012).

The study reveals that violent laws aimed at limiting contact between civilians and guerrillas spurred civilians to devise alternative tactics for providing food. This innovation demonstrated the civilians' resilience in overcoming legal obstacles, adapting to changing circumstances, and finding creative ways to support the guerrilla movement (Dorman, 2006; Mao and Fanon, 2015). Civilians in the Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions collaborated to provide food despite the risks of violence, arrests, or death. The study illustrates the extraordinary risks civilians took to support the cause, showcasing their unwavering commitment to the liberation struggle. This collaboration between civilians and guerrillas was a testament to the depth of their shared objectives (Mutumbara & Sodi, 2018; Schmidt, 2001).

Food was provided in various forms, including cooked, raw, or in cans, showcasing the adaptability of civilians in meeting the diverse needs of the guerrillas during

different situations. This variety in food provision reflected the flexibility and resourcefulness of the civilian population in supporting the guerrilla movement (Becker, 2011; Ndawana & Hove, 2018). The study brings to light the active involvement of churches, such as the Anglican missionary church in Odibo, in the liberation war. Churches in these regions not only provided material support but also served as a refuge for PLAN guerrillas. The church's role as both a provider of material assistance and a safe space emphasizes the significant contribution of institutions in supporting the guerrilla movement (Balch & Scholten, 1990; Namhila, 2015).

Operating in a dangerous environment, the church operated secretly, manipulating financial records to ensure assistance for the guerrillas. This highlights the challenges faced by supportive institutions in navigating a hostile environment while maintaining clandestine operations for the greater cause. Additionally, the provision of spiritual assistance by churches to detainees reflects the holistic role of the church in addressing the well-being of those affected by the war (Bickford, n.d.; Fanon, 2016). The civilians in the Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions made a diverse and invaluable contribution to Namibia's liberation struggle between 1966 and 1989. Their sacrifices, adaptability, resilience, and collaboration with institutions, particularly the church, underscore the complex dynamics involved in sustaining a guerrilla movement under challenging circumstances. The findings of this study shed light on the intricate relationship between civilians and PLAN guerrillas and emphasize the collective commitment of the local population to the cause of independence.

7.2.2 Research question 2: What challenges did civilians face in the Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions during the liberation struggle between 1966 and 1989?

According to the study (Becker, 2011; Bickford, n.d.; Bruner, 1991; Dorman, 2006; Lamb, 2006; Mao and Fanon, 2015; Morris, 1977; Mutumbara & Sodi, 2018; Namhila, 2015), the civilians residing in the Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions faced numerous difficulties during the liberation struggle between 1966 and 1989. s of these regions grappled with heightened levels of insecurity and violence stemming from the ongoing guerrilla warfare. The conflict between liberation movements and occupying forces cultivated a perilous environment, subjecting civilians to the constant threat of violence, including direct confrontations, bombings, and reprisals (Becker, 2011; Dorman, 2006).

The study underscores that PLAN guerrillas confronted shortages of vital resources, such as food and essential supplies, during their operations in Namibia. This scarcity extended to the civilian population, compelling them to cope with inadequate resources. Shortfalls in basic necessities, including food, clothing, and medical supplies, posed formidable challenges to the overall well-being of civilians (Becker, 2011; Mao and Fanon, 2015). The imposition of the "Dusk to Dawn Curfew" imposed constraints on civilian movements, presenting difficulties in engaging in routine activities, including providing support to guerrillas. This curfew not only restricted their freedom of movement but also complicated the delivery of essential services, such as food supply, during specific hours (Morris, 1977).

The presence of violent laws designed to curtail contact between civilians and guerrillas introduced legal impediments. Civilians had to navigate through these legal restrictions, impeding their ability to openly and directly support the liberation movement. The risk of legal repercussions, including arrests and persecution, added to the challenges faced by the civilian population (Dorman, 2006). Despite their commitment, civilians in the Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions often faced resource constraints. The study indicates that civilians sacrificed their own resources, such as food, clothes, and accommodation, to support guerrilla fighters. This selflessness, while crucial, also imposed hardships on civilians who had limited resources to spare (Becker, 2011).

The unpredictable and dangerous nature of the war made communication challenging. Civilians had to find ways to convey information, coordinate support, and adapt to rapidly changing circumstances. The lack of reliable communication channels increased the difficulty of organizing and providing assistance effectively (Bruner, 1991; Mao and Fanon, 2015). The presence of occupying forces and the risks associated with supporting the guerrilla movement created an atmosphere of fear and intimidation. Civilians had to contend with the constant threat of violence, arrests, and potential repercussions for their involvement in supporting the liberation struggle (Lamb, 2006).

Supporting institutions, such as churches, operated in secrecy to mobilize support and provide assistance to guerrillas. This required civilians and institutions to engage in covert activities, including manipulating financial records and operating discreetly.

The need for secrecy added complexity to their efforts (Namhila, 2015). Civilians had to continually adapt to the unpredictable circumstances of the guerrilla warfare. This included finding alternative and often secretive methods to supply food, overcome legal obstacles, and navigate through the challenges posed by the conflict. Adaptability became a crucial factor in their ability to contribute to the liberation struggle (Becker, 2011; Mao and Fanon, 2015).

The challenges faced by civilians in the Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions during the liberation struggle were multifaceted and encompassed security threats, shortages, legal restrictions, and the need for adaptation in the face of unpredictable circumstances. The resilience and determination of the civilian population to overcome these challenges played a significant role in supporting the broader movement for independence in Namibia.

7.2.3 Research question 3: What encouraged civilians to take part in the liberation struggle from 1966 to 1989?

The motivations driving civilians to actively participate in the liberation struggle between 1966 and 1989 were intricate and influenced by a convergence of various factors, as illuminated in the literature. The profound impact of spirituality on individuals served as a powerful motivator during the liberation struggle. Spirituality not only provided a source of solace but also imbued individuals with a sense of purpose and resilience in the face of the traumatic experiences of war. It acted as a guiding force that influenced civilians to actively engage in the liberation struggle, driven by a connection to higher values and a collective quest for freedom. The enduring legacy of armed violence, as articulated by Lamb (2006), casts a long shadow over Namibia, compelling civilians to respond with urgency and a commitment to instigate change. The pervasive impact of violence on the nation created a collective determination among individuals to actively participate in the liberation struggle, driven by a shared aspiration to overcome the historical injustices perpetuated by militarization and armed conflict.

Mao and Fanon's exploration of competing theories of violence offered intellectual insights that shaped the motivations of individuals. The ideological and philosophical considerations surrounding the use of violence for liberation became a motivating

force. The intellectual underpinnings provided a framework that inspired civilians to join the struggle, viewing their participation as a means to contribute to the broader decolonization movement. Chitukutuku's examination of materiality and landscapes of violence in Northern Zimbabwe emphasized the tangible aspects that influenced civilian participation. The material conditions and physical environment, shaped by violence, played a role in motivating individuals. The stark reality of the landscapes affected by violence contributed to shaping the motivations of civilians, urging them to actively participate in the liberation struggle for tangible change.

Jones (2018) highlighted the instances where the liberation agenda in Namibia was narrowed, focusing on specific issues such as women's roles, corporal punishment, and scandals. This narrowing influenced civilians who identified with or were directly affected by these specific aspects. It became a catalyst for their active participation, as they perceived the struggle as a means to address and rectify these specific issues within the broader context of liberation. Likuwa and Shiweda's exploration of the Okaholo contract labour system underscored the role of economic and labour-related factors in motivating civilians. The socio-economic implications of the contract labour system, coupled with broader post-colonial lessons, contributed to motivating individuals to actively engage in the liberation struggle as a means to address economic injustices and labour exploitation.

The motivations for civilians to participate in the liberation struggle were multi-dimensional, encompassing spiritual, historical, ideological, material, and socio-economic factors. The intricate interplay of these elements shaped the collective determination and actions of individuals during a pivotal period in Namibia's history.

7.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study sought to unravel the multifaceted role played by civilians in the Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions during Namibia's liberation struggle between 1966 and 1989. The research questions guided an exploration of the contributions made by civilians, the challenges they encountered, and the motivating factors that spurred their active involvement in the struggle for independence. The findings of this study illuminated the substantial and diverse contributions made by civilians in the Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions towards Namibia's liberation struggle. Civilians

emerged as integral actors in the broader narrative of liberation, demonstrating resilience, sacrifice, and unwavering commitment. Their involvement spanned various dimensions, including providing support to guerrilla fighters, navigating through legal restrictions, and adapting to the unpredictable circumstances of guerrilla warfare. The collective efforts of civilians underscored their pivotal role in shaping the trajectory of the liberation movement.

The study delved into the challenges faced by civilians in these regions, revealing a tapestry of difficulties intricately woven into the fabric of their daily lives during the liberation struggle. From the insecurity and violence stemming from guerrilla warfare to shortages of essential supplies and curfew restrictions, civilians grappled with a myriad of obstacles. Legal restrictions and repression, coupled with resource constraints, communication barriers, fear, and the need for clandestine operations, formed a complex web of challenges. The ability of civilians to adapt to these adversities highlighted their remarkable resilience in the face of adversity.

Exploring the factors that encouraged civilians to actively take part in the liberation struggle unveiled a nuanced landscape of motivations. Spirituality, as a coping mechanism for war trauma, played a significant role, providing individuals with purpose and resilience. The legacy of armed violence, competing theories of violence, and material conditions influenced the intellectual and tangible motivations of civilians. Additionally, the narrowing of the liberation agenda and economic considerations, such as the contract labour system, emerged as key drivers inspiring civilian participation.

Understanding the contributions, challenges, and motivations of civilians in the Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions during the liberation struggle contributes to a more comprehensive and nuanced historical narrative. The study underscores the agency and resilience of ordinary individuals who, in the face of adversity, played pivotal roles in the broader movement for Namibia's independence. Recognizing their sacrifices and contributions enriches the historical understanding of the liberation struggle, emphasizing the collective endeavour that shaped the destiny of the nation.

7.4 Recommendations

- Conducting in-depth oral history interviews with individuals who actively participated in the liberation struggle or were directly affected by it could provide a richer understanding of the personal experiences, motivations, and challenges faced by civilians. These narratives can offer a nuanced perspective that complements the existing literature and adds depth to the study.
- Ensure a more comprehensive exploration of the liberation struggle by incorporating diverse perspectives, including those of different ethnic, gender, and age groups. This approach would contribute to a more inclusive and representative understanding of the varied experiences of civilians in the Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions.
- Further exploration of archival materials, official documents, and records from the Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions could provide additional insights into the specific actions, policies, and events that influenced civilians during the liberation struggle. Archival research can complement the existing literature and contribute to a more robust historical analysis.
- Consider conducting comparative studies with other regions in Namibia or neighbouring countries that were also involved in liberation struggles during a similar period. This approach would allow for a broader understanding of regional dynamics, variations in civilian contributions, and the impact of different contexts on the liberation movements.
- Investigate the long-term impact of civilians' contributions to the liberation struggle on the post-independence era in Namibia. This could involve examining the socio-economic, political, and cultural transformations in the Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions, providing insights into the enduring effects of the liberation movement.
- Advocate for increased community engagement and recognition of the contributions made by civilians during the liberation struggle. Collaborate with local communities, educational institutions, and relevant organizations to ensure that the stories and sacrifices of these individuals are acknowledged, preserved, and integrated into educational curricula.
- Develop public awareness campaigns to disseminate the findings of the study among the general public. This could involve organizing seminars, workshops, and exhibitions to share the historical significance of civilian contributions in the

Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions, fostering a broader understanding and appreciation of their role.

- Collaborate with cultural institutions, museums, and heritage centres to showcase the historical artifacts, documents, and narratives related to the liberation struggle in the Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions. This collaboration can contribute to the preservation of historical memory and facilitate public access to this vital aspect of Namibia's history.
- Based on the study's findings, consider formulating policy recommendations that address any lingering challenges faced by individuals who contributed to the liberation struggle. These recommendations could focus on aspects such as access to resources, psychological support, and recognition of their role in national history.
- Encourage continued scholarly dialogue and research on the liberation struggle in Namibia, fostering collaboration among researchers, historians, and institutions. This ongoing discourse can contribute to a dynamic and evolving understanding of this critical period in Namibia's history.

7.5 Recommendations for Further Research

While this study provides valuable insights, further research is encouraged to delve deeper into specific aspects, such as the socio-economic impact of the liberation struggle on civilians and the long-term consequences of their contributions. Additionally, exploring oral histories and personal narratives could offer a more intimate understanding of individual experiences during this crucial period in Namibia's history. This study contributes to the ongoing dialogue surrounding Namibia's liberation struggle, shedding light on the often-overlooked role of civilians in the Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions and emphasizing the enduring legacy of their contributions.

7.6 Summary of the chapter

The summary encapsulates the main findings of the study, highlighting the multifaceted contributions made by civilians in the Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions. From active involvement in supporting liberation movements to facing numerous challenges, the civilian experience during the struggle was marked by resilience, sacrifice, and determination. The motivations that encouraged civilians to participate

were diverse, encompassing spiritual, historical, ideological, material, and socio-economic factors. The complex interplay of these elements shaped the motivations of individuals during this crucial period.

The conclusion provided a reflection on the study's purpose and the emerging findings. It emphasized the significance of acknowledging and understanding the civilian perspective in the liberation struggle, emphasizing the need to preserve their stories and contributions to Namibia's history. The study highlighted the interconnectedness of various factors that influenced civilians' decisions, underscoring the importance of a holistic approach to studying historical events.

The recommendations section outlined practical steps for further research, community engagement, and the preservation of historical memory. Emphasizing the importance of oral history, diverse perspectives, archival research, and comparative studies, the recommendations aimed to enhance the depth and breadth of understanding the liberation struggle. Additionally, suggestions for community engagement, public awareness campaigns, and collaboration with cultural institutions sought to ensure that the study's findings have a meaningful and lasting impact on both academic discourse and public recognition.

By implementing these recommendations, the study aims to contribute not only to academic scholarship but also to community awareness and national recognition of the pivotal role played by civilians in the Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions during Namibia's liberation struggle. This comprehensive approach strives to bridge the gaps in historical understanding, preserve the richness of civilian experiences, and foster a deeper appreciation for the sacrifices made during a transformative period in Namibian history.

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List of Interviewees

1. Cecilie Hamutoko, 11 October 2017, (Cornelia Tileinge, Onamhinda - Ohangwena)
2. Emma Shaidila, 14 October 2017 (Cornelia Tileinge, Onamhinda - Ohangwena)
3. France Lazarus, 12 October 2017, (Cornelia Tileinge, Onamhinda - Ohangwena)
4. Helena Naunyango, 26 October 2017, (Cornelia Tileinge, Oshikango - Ohangwena)
5. Hilma Petrus Lukolo, 4 November 2017 (Cornelia Tileinge, Iimanya - Oshikoto)
6. Josephine Kaluvi, 30 June 2023, (Cornelia Tileinge, Onengali – Ohangwena)
7. Justina Hangula, 10 October 2017, (Cornelia Tileinge, Okawambi - Oshikoto)
8. Kawali Abiatar Sheya, 30 October 2017 (Cornelia Tileinge, Ompangela - Oshikoto)
9. Lucia Shiponwa, 13 October 2017, (Cornelia Tileinge, Onamhinda - Ohangwena)
10. Meriam Shihepo, 17 October 2017, (Cornelia Tileinge, Okahenge - Ohangwena)
11. Ndeshuuda Joel, 24 October 2017 (Cornelia Tileinge, Omungwelume - Ohangwena)
12. Niinkoti Kuumbili, 27 October 2017, (Cornelia Tileinge, Iipopo - Oshikoto)
13. Patricia Samuel, 16 October 2017 (Cornelia Tileinge, Onamhinda - Ohangwena)
14. Rauna Sheehamange, 23 October 2017 (Cornelia Tileinge, Omungwelume - Ohangwena)
15. Rebekka Fotolela, 22 October 2017 (Cornelia Tileinge, Omafo - Ohangwena)
16. Rosalia Abraham Amwaalwa, 29 October 2017 (Cornelia Tileinge, Iipopo - Oshikoto)
17. Selma Hamunyela, 24 October 2017 (Cornelia Tileinge, Okahenge – Ohangwena)
18. Tobias Iimene, 10 November 2017, (Cornelia Tileinge Elombe - Oshikoto)
19. Veronika Hamunyela, 21 October 2017 (Cornelia Tileinge, Onamhinda - Ohangwena)
20. Vilho Amoolongo Sheetekela, 8 November 2017, (Cornelia Tileinge, Onuulaye - Oshikoto)
21. Vitory Samuel, 20 October 2017 (Cornelia Tileinge, Onamhinda - Ohangwena)

APPENDIX 1: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE FROM UNAM



ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Ethical Clearance Reference Number: FHSS /242/2017 Date: 27 September, 2017

This Ethical Clearance Certificate is issued by the University of Namibia Research Ethics Committee (UREC) in accordance with the University of Namibia's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines. Ethical approval is given in respect of undertakings contained in the Research Project outlined below. This Certificate is issued on the recommendations of the ethical evaluation done by the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee sitting with the Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Title of Project The Contribution Of Civilians Toward The Liberation Struggle From 1966 To 1989 In Oshikoto And Ohangwena Regions, Namibia.

Researcher: Cornelia Panduleinge Tileinge

Student Number: 2009254

Faculty: Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Supervisors: Dr. M. Akawa-Shikufa (Main) Dr. Napandulwe Shiweda (Co)

Take note of the following:

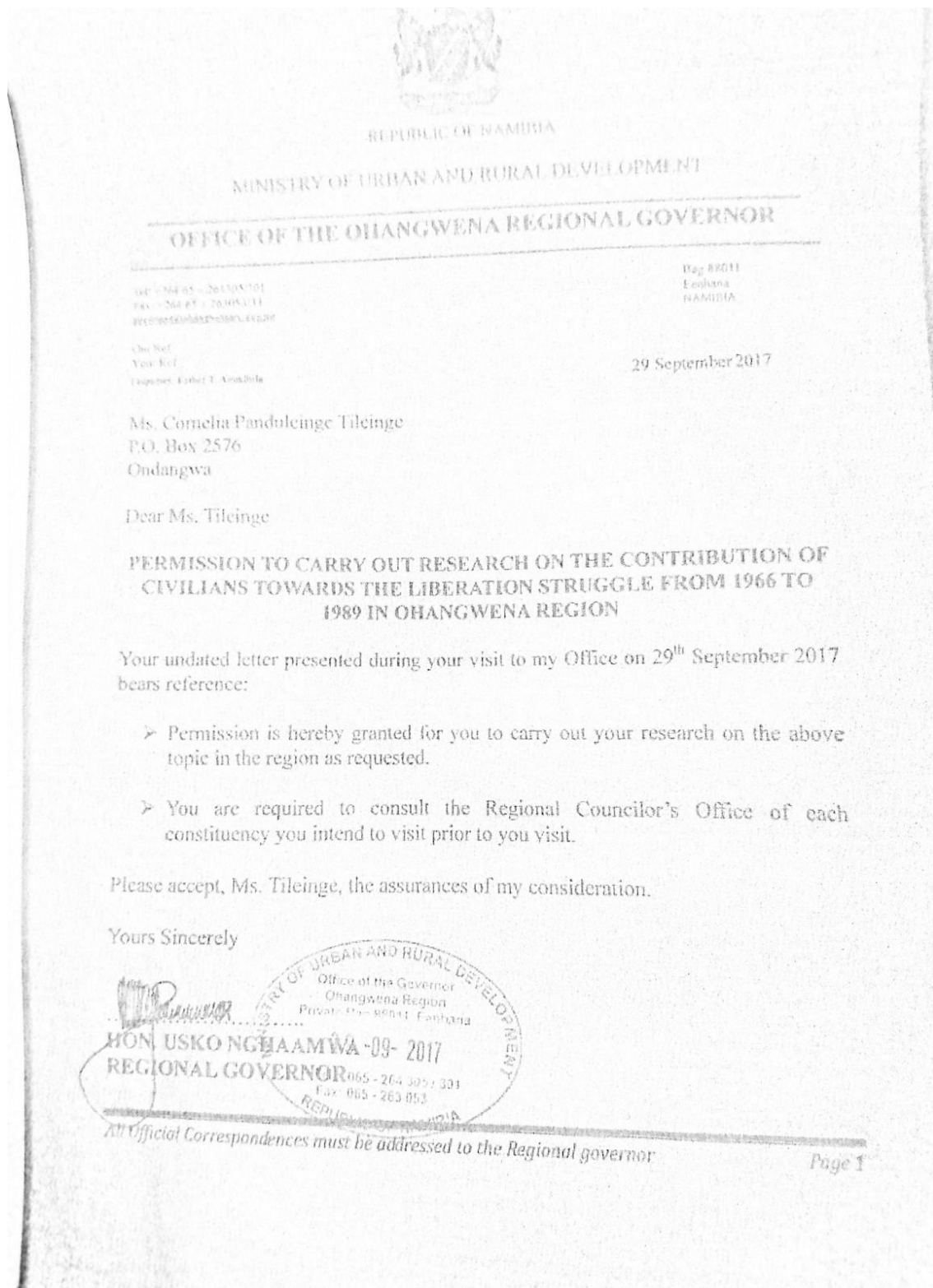
- (a) Any significant changes in the conditions or undertakings outlined in the approved Proposal must be communicated to the UREC. An application to make amendments may be necessary.
- (b) Any breaches of ethical undertakings or practices that have an impact on ethical conduct of the research must be reported to the UREC.
- (c) The Principal Researcher must report issues of ethical compliance to the UREC (through the Chairperson of the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee) at the end of the Project or as may be requested by UREC.
- (d) The UREC retains the right to:
 - (i) Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance if any unethical practices (as outlined in the Research Ethics Policy) have been detected or suspected,
 - (ii) Request for an ethical compliance report at any point during the course of the research;

UREC wishes you the best in your research.

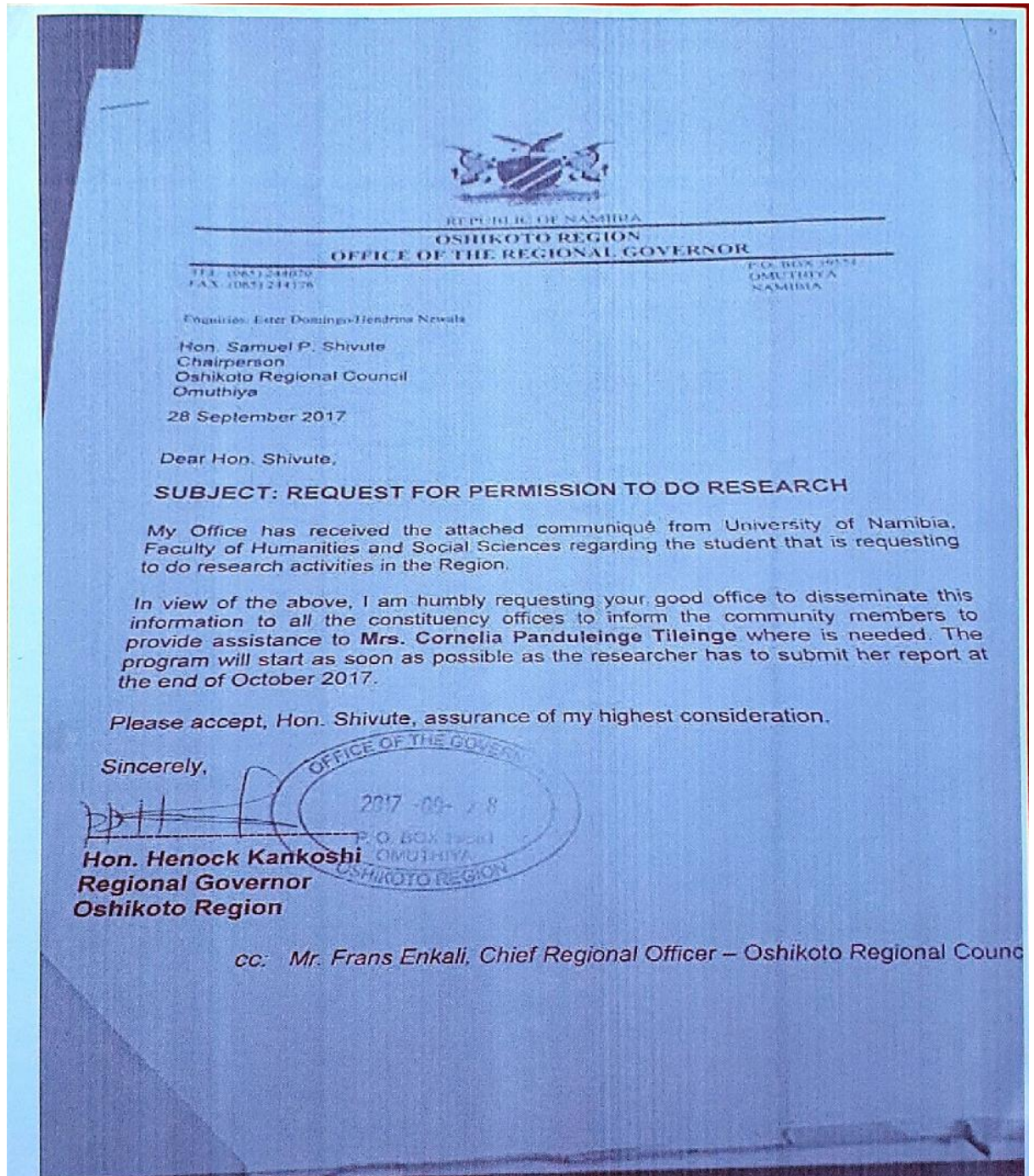
Prof. P. Odonkor: UREC Chairperson

Ms. P. Claassen: UREC Secretary

APPENDIX2: PERMISSION LETTER FROM OHANGWENA REGIONAL COUNCIL



APPENDIX 3: PERMISSION LETTER FROM OSHIKOTO REGIONAL COUNCIL



APPENDIX 4: REQUEST LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Cornelia Panduleinge Tileinge

P o Box 2576

Ondangwa

Dear sir/Madam

RE: Request for permission to carry out research

My name is Cornelia Panduleinge Tileinge, a teacher by profession. I am a history teacher at Hamunyela combined school in Onyulaye circuit, Oshikoto region. I am currently studying at the University of Namibia (UNAM), doing my Master degree in History. my student number : 200925482. As per master level requirement, students are required to carry out a research. Hence I would like to carry out my research in Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions. My topic for my study is: THE CONTRIBUTION OF CIVILIANS TOWARDS THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE FROM 1966 TO 1989, IN OSHIKOTO AND OHANGWENA REGIONS. I would like to interview the Namibian people in the two regions who did not go into exile, to find out how they contributed to the liberation struggle of Namibian independence. My research will take one to two weeks. It is then against this back ground I am requesting for your good office to grant me permission to interview the civilians in the region in order for me to complete my studies. My study need to commence as soon as possible as I am required to submit my report end of October 2017.

For inquiry my supervisors can be contacted Dr Martha Akawa-Shikufa, contact number: 0813509170 and Dr Napandulwe Shiweda, contact number: 0812024591, all from the University of Namibia (UNAM). Attached is my Ethical clearance certificate which I received from the Ethical committee of UNAM as a sign that I am allowed to go and carry out my research by UNAM.

Thank you for your understanding.

Yours faithfully

Cornelia Panduleinge Tileinge

0812811249/0812530659

APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Bibliography information: date and place of birth, parents and siblings, childhood and friends, education, life in general in northern Namibia during your childhood.
2. Explain how the situation was during the South African colonial rule compared to the situation today?
3. What were the day-to-day tasks you had to accomplish as a contributor to the liberation struggle, during the liberation struggle?
4. What was your contribution to the liberation struggle of Namibia's independence?
5. What challenges did you experience, caused by your participation in the liberation struggle?
6. How did you manage to escape the risk situation?
7. What encouraged you to participate in the liberation struggle?
8. How did your participation in the liberation struggle impact your life?
9. What do you believe is your greatest accomplishment during the time of the liberation struggle?

APPENDIX 6: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Participant no: ____

This is a consent form that will be signed by the participant and the researcher if you are willing

to participate in this study.

If you decide to participate in this study, please fill in your details and sign below:

I, _____ (full name) am willing to participate in this study and give my full consent to participate in this study. I know that as a result of participating I may experience unwanted memories that may trigger some emotional reactions. Furthermore, I am aware that my participation is voluntary and I can withdraw from this study at any time.

I understand that the interview will take approximately one hour to one hour thirty minutes and give my consent for the interview to be digital-recorded. I have also been assured that my identity will be protected and will not be revealed at any time. I understand that if I have any question regarding this research, I can contact the researcher (Cornelia Panduleinge Tileinge) on her mobile number: 0812530659 or via his email at: mboshonomanda@gmail.com.

Participant's signature

Date

Researcher's signature

Date

APPENDIX 7: SPECIAL CONSENT FORM

SPECIAL CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF RESEARCH: Contribution of civilians toward the liberation struggle in Oshikoto and Ohangwena region, from 1966 to 1989.

Researcher: Cornelia Panduleinge Tileinge

Master of Arts in History

Department of Geography, History, Environment Studies and Tourism Management

University of Namibia

+264 81 2530659

mboshonomanda@gmail.com

Part I: Information Sheet

Introduction

My name is Cornelia Panduleinge Tileinge. I am doing a Master of Arts degree in history with the University of Namibia. To graduate, I have to complete a study titled: An investigation of the contribution made by civilians to Namibia's liberation struggle in Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions, Namibia. I am therefore requesting you to participate in the study as a respondent since you witnessed the liberation war in Oshikoto/ Ohangwena region. You can take your time and decide if you want to take part or not. Should you not understand some of the words or concepts, I will take time to explain them to you. You can also ask questions at any time.

Purpose of the research

The Namibian liberation struggle has many unsung heroes who contributed to the fight against colonialism and apartheid, especially civilians who live in rural areas. Yet their contribution appears forgotten and excluded from the liberation struggle historiography. This study aims to explore the contribution that civilians in villages

of Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions have made during the Namibian liberation struggle. This is particularly about interrogating their suffering, sacrifices and the trauma that they live with in the aftermath of the war.

Type of Research Intervention

The research will involve your participation by an interview. The researcher will ask you questions from the interview guide but, if necessary, follow up questions will be raised to probe the facts you have presented. The interview will last for an hour.

Participant Selection

You have been invited to take part in this research because you have witnessed the war of the liberation struggle in Oshikoto/ Ohangwena region and you can probably give primary accounts of events that happened in your village during the war.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. If you choose not to participate there will be no consequences or whatsoever. The interviews are solely for academic research purposes. And should you be sceptical feel free to confirm my identity with my supervisor whose contact details are provided below.

Procedures

I'm inviting you to take part in this research project, the title of which is given above. If you accept, you will be asked to participate in an interview with Cornelia Panduleinge Tileinge. During the interview, the researcher will sit down with you in a comfortable place of your choice. Should you prefer the interview to take place in the comfort of your home environment, it is also fine with me. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions during the interview, you may say so and the interviewer will move on to the next question. No one else but the interviewer will be present unless you would like someone else to be there. The information recorded during the interview will be kept at the National Archives of Namibia as closed files. Only the researcher and the supervisor will have access to the data collected during the interview. The entire interview will be tape-recorded but should you feel

uncomfortable with it you will not be recorded. Instead, the researcher will rely on note taking. Furthermore, your name will be used in the study in order to ensure the integrity and reliability of the study. You have the right to stop or refuse to take part if you do not want your name to be used in the study.

Duration

The research is expected to last for a period of 6 months. During this period, the researcher will visit you once or twice for interviews. When the interviews are completed the writing process will then commence under my supervisor's supervision. This process will be followed by the submission of the research theses to the faculty of Humanities and Social Science for examination and grading. I will keep you informed about the progress made and you will receive a copy of my research project when the study is completed.

Risks

Since the war for the independence of Namibia has left many people emotionally and psychologically traumatized, the researcher will enlist the service of a psychologist as well as a social worker. In case of a meltdown, when interviewees remember and relate experiences of pain and suffering. Similarly, victimization of people and their families have been prevalent in the war zone, with people who joined and fought on apartheid forces being victimized and labeled colonizers for example. The researcher is aware that some civilians were suspected to be enemy collaborators. However, the researcher will not entertain rumors and hearsays.

Benefits

The benefit of this study will be in the form of creating awareness about the vital contribution that civilians have made to the liberation struggle. The study will benefit more young generations of Oshikoto and Ohangwena regions and Namibia in general about the history of Namibia's liberation struggle

Confidentiality

Confidentiality of the data that you have provided is not guaranteed. But should you feel that certain information that you provided is sensitive for the public consumption you are at liberty to exclude such information.

Sharing of Results

You will receive a copy of my research project when this study is completed.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

You do not have to take part in this research if you do not wish to do so. There will be no negative consequences should you choose not to participate in the interview or decline to sign the consent form.

Who to Contact

Should you have any further queries or encounter any problems, you should not hesitate to contact Dr. Goodman Gwasira at the following contact details:

Mobile: 0814241647

Email: ggwasire@unam.na

Should you have any further concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the investigator or the supervisor you can also contact the Centre for Research and Publications at the following e-mail address: pclaassen@unam.na. You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

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Interviewer Name and signature

Date

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Interviewee Name and signature

Date