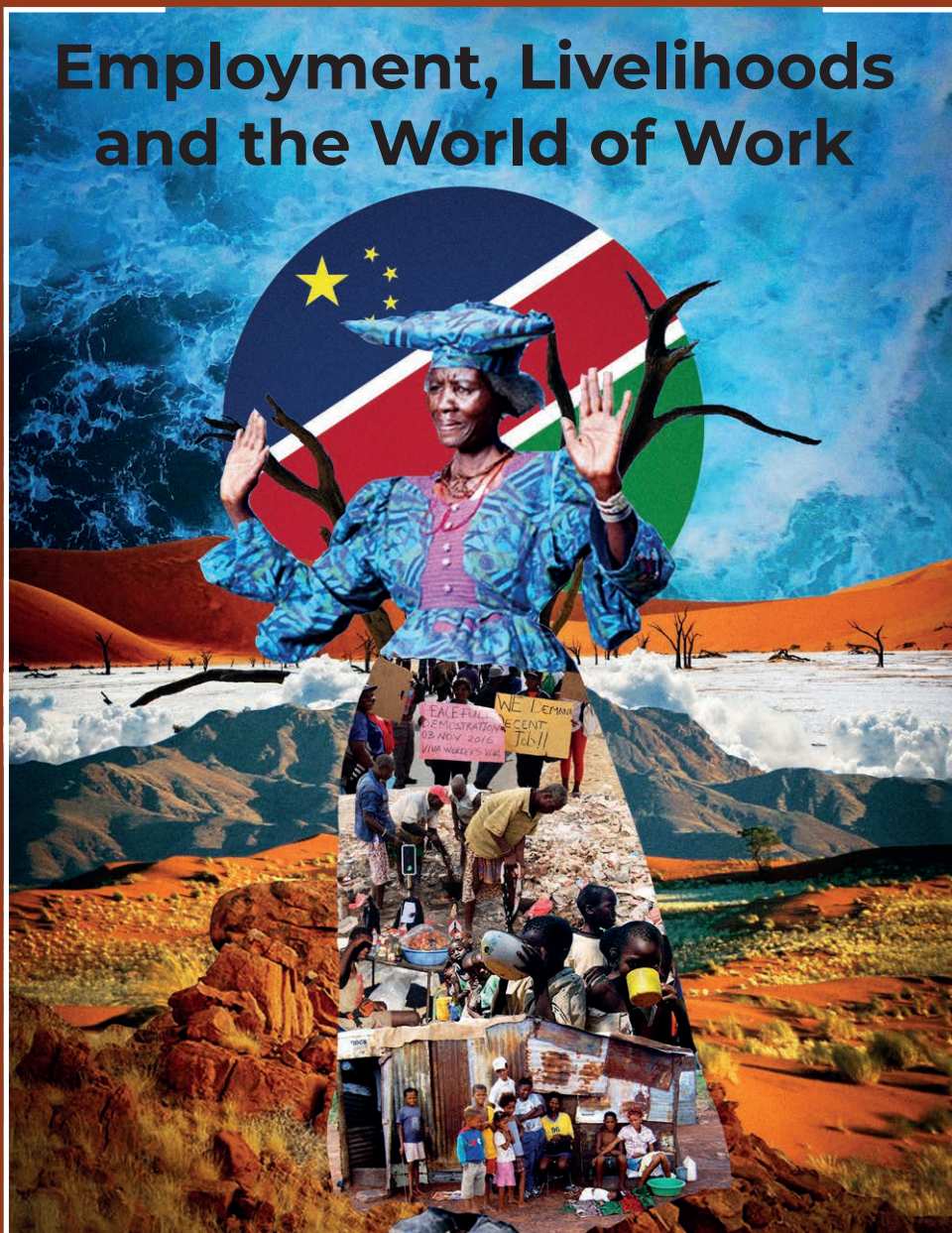


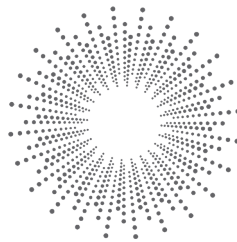
Employment, Livelihoods and the World of Work



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Namibia's Flexible Land Tenure System: The Impact on Livelihoods in Gobabis

Judy Tymon

Abstract:

In 2012, the residents of Freedom Square in Gobabis, the capital of Omaheke Region in Namibia, embarked on a ten-year long process of in-situ upgrading, eventually becoming a pilot programme for the Flexible Land Tenure System (FLTS), a tenure security system designed for low-income communities. This study examines the impacts of that programme on social and economic livelihoods and also examines the programme through the lens of social justice. It is based on data gathered in the field from residents, municipal officials and NGO representatives.

The FLTS has provided residents with both de facto and legal tenure security, and a number of positive impacts on social livelihoods were observed during this study. The case for improvement in economic livelihoods is less clear. FLTS did provide Gobabis residents with procedural justice in that it is an example of a bottom-up approach, allowing residents some control over their future, and the ability to make decisions and negotiate for improvements with local authorities. The challenge, however, is to

replicate this experience so that the FLTS provides the same benefits for other communities and becomes a framework for distributed justice throughout the country.

Key terms: flexible land tenure system; tenure security; livelihood; social justice; informal settlements; Gobabis; Namibia

Introduction

The scarcity of affordable serviced land in urban areas in Namibia forces migrants from rural and urban areas to live in informal settlements characterised by high levels of poverty, unemployment, low living standards, and few basic services. Land is allocated according to an arcane set of regulations that make it difficult for informal settlers to own land and to benefit from land as an asset (De Vries & Lewis, 2009). The construction of homes, and land ownership itself, is only permitted on fully serviced land, preventing low-income households from attaining tenure security and finding a pathway out of poverty. Land

ownership is viewed by many as the means not only to eradicating poverty, but also to attaining food security and gender equality, and to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (Enemark et al., 2014).

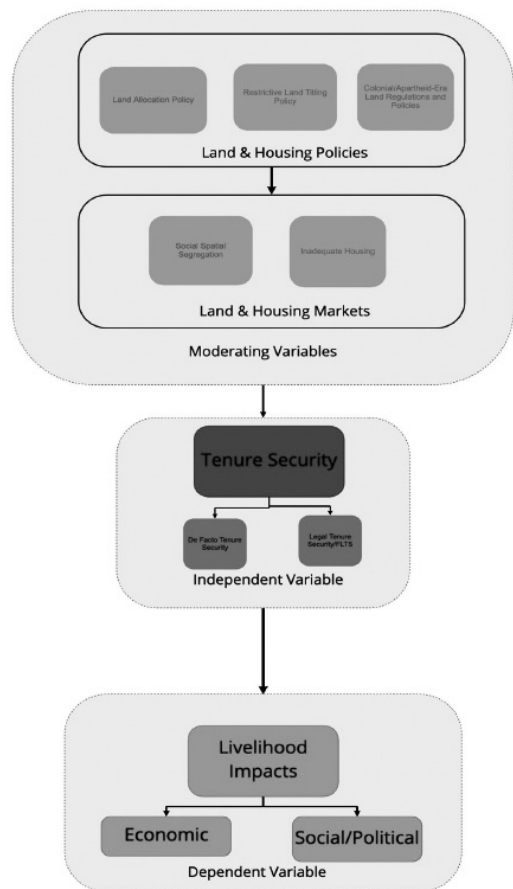
FLTS provides a means of acquiring land tenure for low-income households through the establishment of a new title system, potentially making access to land more equitable for populations in informal settlements (Matthaei & Mandimika, 2014). In Gobabis, 1 086 land hold title certificates were issued in March 2021 under the FLTS. However, very little is known about its impact on the livelihoods of residents. The programme is currently at a crucial point, with pilot programmes having been completed in three communities (Gobabis, Oshakati and Windhoek). The government is now considering national implementation of the programme and has asked a local NGO to evaluate the results of the pilot. In addition, the National Housing Policy is in draft form and includes references to the FLTS. The findings of this study can be useful in determining if equitable outcomes have been achieved in Gobabis, as well as in informing policy and the way forward with nationwide implementation.

Conceptual Framework

This study explores the relationship between tenure security as provided

by the FLTS and the livelihood of the residents of Freedom Square, through interviews with a group of residents who have obtained titles to their land and who have lived in the settlement for the duration of the in-situ upgrading process. Both de facto and legal tenure security will be examined, with the FLTS as the independent variable. The dependent variables are social and economic livelihoods as observed during the study. There is abundant research documenting the genesis of

Figure 1 *Conceptual Framework*



the existing land and housing crises that exist throughout the global south and in Namibia (Huchzermeyer, 2009; Bah et al., 2018, Remmert & Ndhlovu, 2018). Those are considered moderating variables and are not examined as a part of this study.

Land Policy

Apartheid and colonial rule dramatically affected the allocation of land in Namibia, creating an impoverished black majority population, driving an increase in informal settlements, and leaving a legacy of segregation that is considered to be “the defining characteristic of its urban areas” (Lühl & Delgado, 2018). These forces concentrated ownership of land, natural resources and financial assets within the white minority and contributed to poverty and income inequality. As a result, Namibia has one of the highest Gini indices of 59.1 (2015 figure), second only to South Africa (63.0 in 2014) (World Bank, 2018).

In 1998, the Land Policy, stating that all citizens have equal rights and opportunities for ownership of land and access to tenure, was adopted. It provides for the establishment of urban areas as townships and recommends that laws and regulations be passed that are transparent and flexible, with close consultation with local authorities (Delgado, 2018).

Today, Namibia suffers from a severe housing and land crisis that restricts access for the poor to decent housing and serviced land. In response to these pressures, the Urban and Regional Planning Act (5 of 2018) was promulgated in order to streamline land delivery and spatial planning. The Act has the potential to accelerate land delivery by eliminating some of the current administrative procedures required to subdivide land (Ulrich & Meurers, 2015), but continues to uphold the practice of forbidding freehold ownership of communal land, which some interpret as discouraging economic investment (Mendelsohn, 2008.) The Act is intended to decentralise planning practices by allowing local authorities to play a larger role and increasing public participation in the planning process (Remmert & Ndhlovu, 2018).

Housing Policy

In the past, families were discouraged from accompanying black migrant workers into cities, resulting in the construction of single quarters rather than family accommodation (Remmert & Ndhlovu, 2018). After independence, as apartheid regulations were eliminated and families moved into cities, the freedom to own, buy and sell property combined to increase the pressure on housing markets, resulting in the existing inadequate and crowded accommodation (Odendaal, 2005;

Remmert & Ndhlovu, 2018; Matthaei & Mandimika, 2014). Without clear legal title to land, residents of urban informal settlements are not allowed to legally build a house. Without a title, structures can be demolished and households evicted. The threat of eviction is real in post-apartheid communities where the battle for space often occurs between informal settlements and public/private interests (Huchzermeyer, 2009). Before the upgrading plan was put in place for Freedom Square, the local government had planned to relocate the community in order to develop the land for a formal housing project (Delgado et al., 2020).

The primary challenge in the Namibian housing market is the mismatch between the supply and demand for low-income housing (Chiripanhura, 2018; Remmert & Ndhlovu, 2018; Asino, 2018). According to the Bank of Namibia, growing income inequality and rising unemployment rates have resulted in over 70% of residents being excluded from access to credit, reducing housing options for the urban poor (Asino, 2018). Government programmes to supply housing have proved to be inadequate as they have targeted middle-income households. This includes the National Housing Enterprise, which focuses on those earning over N\$5 000 per month. Programmes such as Build Together provide some options for

very low-income groups, but they have not been able to scale up to meet the demand (Remmert & Ndhlovu, 2018). As these trends continue, the demand for housing is expected to increase by over 46 000 units annually between 2031 and 2041, with a majority of that housing required by the urban poor (Asino, 2018).

Tenure Security

At the time of Namibia's independence, the idea of accumulating wealth and capital through the creation of a titling system for informal settlers was popularised by Hernando de Soto, who claimed that the provision of titles is the key to unlocking vast amounts of wealth and capital, and could bring a population out of poverty by "enlivening dead capital" (De Soto, 2000). De Soto's ideas gained popularity in some quarters but attracted criticism for suggesting a simple solution to intractable poverty. Some suggested that he ignored the practical problems associated with land titles, including procedural costs (Lee-Smith, as cited by Buckley & Kalarickal (2006)); the acceptance of a title as collateral by local financial institutions; and the existence of a "continuum of tenure categories" that often exist in the Global South (Payne, 1997), where certain types of 'tenure' are more valuable than others. The value of more flexible, customized tenure systems has been recognised as a possible solution, as opposed to the

“silver bullet” espoused by De Soto (Buckley & Kalarickal, 2006).

Levels of tenure security

Van Gelder describes three forms of tenure security: perceived tenure, which equates to the probability of eviction from the experience of the individual tenant; de facto tenure, which increases over time and implies recognition through either documentation or installation of infrastructure; and legal tenure, which has the backing of state authority (Van Gelder, 2010). De facto tenure is often provided by third-party support, as well as the presence of networks of friends and relatives in the community (Smart, 2009). It is often associated with a particular settlement, documenting the length of time that residents have occupied a settlement (Van Gelder, 2010). In some cases, de facto tenure security can be an impediment to the implementation of legal security, as it can increase land prices and precipitate the displacement of poor communities (Payne & Durand-Lasserve, 2007).

Legal tenure security is typically described according to the expectations of the owner that land rights will be enforced by the state and is often referred to as statutory tenure. Payne categorises legal tenure as public (owned by the state); private (owned by individuals);

or customary/communal ownership (owned by a group). Customary tenure is common in areas where land has been owned in common for farming or grazing of animals and is widespread in sub-Saharan Africa, including Namibia (Payne et al., 2009a).

Land categories in Namibia include state land (including national parks), urban land (owned either by the state, by a local authority, or privately), commercial private farmland, and communal land. The rights to the land can be secured through customary land rights, freehold tenure or leasehold tenure, the latter being limited to 99 years. Additional tenure categories include Permission to Occupy certificates (phased out after the introduction of the Communal Land Reform Act (5 of 2002); and prescription ownership, which is granted after uninterrupted possession for 30 years. Freehold titles can be transferred or used as collateral for bank loans and are considered the “highest form of ownership”, and can be secured in either communal or rural areas (Delgado, 2018). The FLTS provides two additional title categories: starter, and land hold, that are available to informal settlement residents prior to obtaining a freehold title (Delgado, 2019).

The Flexible Land Tenure System Bill

In 1994, the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement (now known as the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform (MAWLR)) in collaboration with the Danish organisation IBIS, explored alternative forms of tenure which could be used in parallel with the existing system (Odendaal, 2005). Pilot projects were planned in 1995 (two in Oshakati and one in Windhoek) although it would take until 2012 before the Bill would be passed. As stated in the Bill, the objectives were “to create alternative forms of land title that are simpler and cheaper to administer than existing forms of land title; to provide security of title for persons who live in informal settlements or who are provided with low income housing; to empower the persons concerned economically by means of these rights” (Flexible Land Tenure Act (4 of 2012)). Six years later, in 2018, the Regulations were passed and the pilot programme was implemented. However, numerous delays in implementation were caused by the inability of government institutions to come to a consensus regarding which branch of government would have responsibility for the programme (Matthaei & Mandimika, 2014). The issue of overlapping institutional authority continues to this day, as the MAWLR is responsible for the implementation of the FLTS, while the Ministry of Urban and

Rural Development is responsible for local authorities and urban planning (Matthaei & Mandimika, 2014). In Gobabis, this dual responsibility caused a delay in the initial implementation of the FLTS, as the MAWLR failed to take into account local residential control (Delgado et al., 2020).

Today, the FLTS is being considered as the solution for a national delivery of land to the urban poor that goes beyond the current pilot programmes. The GIZ is currently working with various ministries to determine what changes need to be made to the Act, the Regulations, the implementation process, and the budgets so that the FLTS can be rolled out nationwide (NGO 1, personal communication, June 14, 2022).

Social Livelihood

Advancing social livelihoods can provide a pathway to sustainability, as it depends on the collective actions of individuals and the level of trust within groups among those individuals, and often provides the ability to undertake action for the well-being of that group (Villalonga-Olives & Kawachi, 2017). Policymakers are looking closely at social livelihood as a measure of a community’s resilience or “localized response” as a possible solution to the needs of disadvantaged communities (Gingerich and Cohen 2015 as cited

by Mpanje et al. (2018)). However, this research cautions that due to the diversity and complexity of informal settlements, the definition of the term and its indicators requires a deep knowledge of the context in which it is used (Mpanje et al., 2018). That complexity is reflected in the view held by some that informal settlements are associated with a lack of organisation and social cohesion (Sadeghi et al. (2007) as cited by Hosseini (2015)). An alternative view is that informal settlements are highly organised and productive, as they can provide more cost-effective housing than the formal market (Napier et al., 2014).

Multiple social livelihood indicators are referenced in research studies. Putnam believed that three indicators should be included: awareness, civic institutions and participation (Putnam as cited by Hosseini (2015)). The World Bank has developed a Human Capital Index that is designed to measure the resilience of each generation, by measuring the infant mortality rate, educational levels and health environment for each country (World Bank, 2020). Other indicators can be summarised as either direct, including trust in neighbours, the municipality, and other ethnic groups; or indirect, which would include participation in the community, having close friends and assisting with charitable aid (Hosseini, 2015). The Sustainable Livelihood

Approach, as developed by Pons Cortes in collaboration with Oxfam (Pons Cortes, 2008), proposes a framework that goes beyond the definition of social capital and encompasses natural, physical, financial, social and political capital, while emphasising the need to utilise the framework with “creativity and imagination” in order to find the right balance in a particular situation (Pons Cortes, 2008). Again, the cautious approach in any situation is firstly, to examine the context of the community, and secondly, to evaluate the desired goal for the framework.

Economic Livelihood

Before De Soto launched the debate linking the creation of wealth with land titling (De Soto, 2000), UN-Habitat had recognised the importance of land titles during its Global Campaign for Tenure in 1999 (Payne et al., 2009a). The debate has focused on economic benefits, but also on its being perceived as either legal or de facto, and on the distinction between the two being directly related to the fear of eviction (Van Gelder, 2010).

The key to establishing a relationship between title ownership and economic benefit will ultimately depend on what is called the ‘attribution gene’: the identification of the particular policy that affected the desired outcome (Payne et al., 2009b). This relationship is

difficult to quantify, with many studies concluding that there is no significant relationship between title ownership and economic benefit (Gilbert, 2002; Velasco et al., 2014). Some studies demonstrate a relationship between title ownership and rising property values, which could benefit the owner, but only if they decide to sell the land (Payne et al., 2009b).

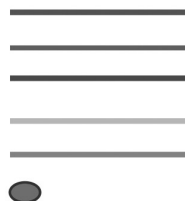
Methodology

The Freedom Square settlement in the town of Gobabis consists of 1 086 households and approximately 4 000 residents. It is located on the north-eastern boundary of the town, adjacent to the settlement of Kanaan.

Map 1 Freedom Square and Surrounding Settlements



- Freedom Square
- Kanaan
- Unplanned settlement
- Transect walk 1
- Transect walk 2
- Shacks



Research Strategy

The research is a case study using a mixed-method data analysis. The research methods used are a combination of desk research and fieldwork and include both quantitative and qualitative data.

Interviewee selection

A group of 14 residents was selected from the population in 1086 households. An in-field NGO representative who is a resident of the settlement and helped facilitate the establishment of FLTS in Freedom Square identified and selected community leaders and other residents to be interviewed. Because several of the selected residents were not able to be present for interviews, additional residents were selected during two transect walks. These walks were conducted over a three-day period, during which the researcher was accompanied by a local guide and/or an interpreter, who assisted in identifying the additional residents.

Qualitative data

Qualitative data were collected over a two-week period in Namibia, with four days spent in the case study area of Freedom Square. Livelihood indicators were examined through semi-structured interviews with residents and during transect walks. These data were triangulated with additional

qualitative data obtained from a series of semi-structured interviews with those individuals who had either written academic literature regarding the Gobabis FLTS process or who have been involved directly through their association with an NGO or with a local Gobabis government agency.

Quantitative data

The qualitative data gathered from interviews were supplemented with a quantitative database provided by members of the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia (SDFN)/Namibia Housing Action Group (NHAG) in Gobabis. Beginning in 2012, SDFN/NHAG collected demographic data from over 700 households including on income and access to basic services. In 2015, demographic data were updated and the number of households grew to 1086. Initial enumerations were updated using Social Tenure Domain Mapping software, with support from the Global Land Tenure Network and the Namibia University of Science and Technology in preparation for certification (Chigbu et al., 2021). When certificates were issued in 2021, a new database was compiled that included demographic information. Because the data were not exactly replicated across the different databases, only those variables common to both databases (2015 and 2021) have been used: the number of households; income levels; and employment status.

Limitations

Field research was limited to four days in Gobabis and five days in Windhoek with NGO representatives. Although both a guide and an interpreter were in attendance at all interviews, cultural familiarity was lacking, resulting in less freedom and latitude to discuss all livelihood issues in depth. Also, due to time limitations and limited social connections in the area, the research relied on a third party to choose subjects for interviews.

The study took place after applicants had received certificates, so that livelihood changes documented in the study had taken place since tenure security had been granted. A longitudinal study would have been able to more accurately observe livelihood changes pre- and post-tenure security status.

Qualitative data challenges and limitations include reliance on self-enumeration data gathered by the community in cooperation with SDFN/NHAG beginning in 2012 and continuing through 2015. A separate data set was provided that includes updated data after the issuance of tenure certificates in 2021. The data contained in the 2012–2015 data set are inconsistent with the 2021 data in that not all records contain the same data variables, and the numbers of records in each dataset do not match.

Findings

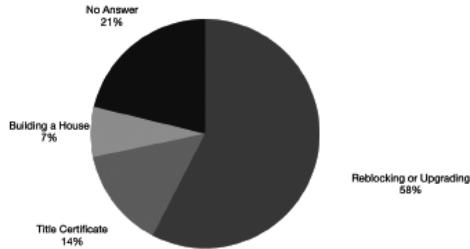
During the course of the interviews, it became clear that residents experienced tenure security in stages, along the “continuum of tenure categories” (Payne, 1997) from de facto security to legal tenure security. There was a very clear distinction made between the process of upgrading (de facto tenure security) and the acquisition of a title certificate (legal tenure security). As a result of this observation, the analysis will focus on the impact of these two stages on social and economic livelihoods.

Social livelihoods

Interviewees were asked two sets of questions: the first were demographic questions, including the age of respondent, the size of household and the duration of residence in Freedom Square; the second, open-ended questions designed to determine levels of social and political cohesion, sense of safety and security, financial independence and overall quality of life in the settlement. One of the questions in this second set asked was: “What was the most important event that has taken place since you have lived in Freedom Square?”

57% of respondents stated that the upgrading process that took place between 2015 and 2018 was the most important event that had occurred in

Chart 1 Resident Interview Question:
Most important event



Freedom Square. This process actively engaged the community and had a positive impact on social livelihoods. Residents’ participation in planning the re-blocking of plots and roads, the location of open spaces and the installation of infrastructure helped to create a sense of pride and ownership in their surroundings.

Residents described the neighbourhood positively, with many using terms such as ‘friendly’, ‘nice’ and ‘comfortable’ to describe interactions with neighbours and friends. These responses indicated a level of community support, a presence of communal activity and a dependence on each other for that support. Residents also responded positively (10 out of 14) when asked about safety for themselves and their children. They acknowledged that children attend the local school and recognised the importance of education. Several residents also talked about their roles as caretakers for the children from other households, while

one resident mentioned that his family was responsible for the children of a deceased relative. Municipal officials confirmed the significant livelihood improvements provided by de facto tenure (Municipal Official 2, personal communication, June 19, 2022). They observed a positive change in residents’ attitudes, as well as their confidence in the future for themselves and their families.

When the upgrading process was being planned, residents were asked about their priorities for the installation of services, including water, sewerage and electricity. Residents determined that their greatest need was for water and sewerage, with electricity as the third highest priority (Delgado et al., 2020). This was confirmed during my interview with municipal officials. During the planning process it was also determined that residents preferred pre-paid water meters so that they could have some control over the expense. As of 2020, 90 communal water taps had been installed (Delgado et al., 2020). In order to access the communal taps, residents have access to a pre-paid account that allows them to determine the exact amount of water that they wish to purchase (NGO 3, personal communication, June 19, 2022).

The de facto tenure security process also precipitated major changes in daily life, as water and sanitation were

introduced. Prior to installation of these services, access to water had been limited to communal water pumps, while sanitation had consisted of communal toilets and open defecation in the bush. Residents now had access to the communal water taps and, for additional charges for sewerage hook-ups and installation, the option of installing private toilets.

The lack of electricity was mentioned in every interview as high priority issue for the community. It was also seen as an impediment to safety, since the streets were not lit at night and were considered unsafe for women and children. The lack of electricity also required that fires be used for cooking, which increased the danger of uncontrolled fires in the settlement.

Several residents did mention the lack of electricity as a possible impediment to starting and maintaining a business, although no one expressed an interest in starting a business. One business owner mentioned the lack of electricity as an impediment to sustaining regular business hours (Resident 19, personal communication, June 19, 2022).

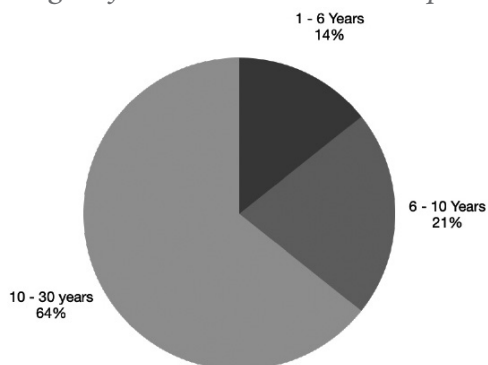
Residents were able to identify the plots as their own, with clear boundaries, and were also able to attain a sense of privacy by having a defined plot. Many residents mentioned the privacy afforded by streets and many had installed fences to define plot boundaries. Before the re-blocking, trespassing had been very common, and residents mentioned that they now felt more secure and safe on their property.



Photograph 1 Shacks in Freedom Square

During the interviews, I was able to talk with residents who had spent over ten years living in Freedom Square. There was no indication that these residents were planning to move out of the area, or that they were dissatisfied with the length of time spent living in the settlement. The feeling expressed most often was that of pride in having lived in one place for so long.

Chart 2 Resident Interview Question: Length of Residence in Freedom Square

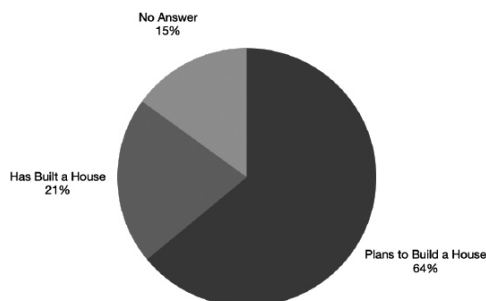


Economic livelihoods

De facto tenure security afforded residents the opportunity to secure credit, to borrow capital, and to build houses with loans from the Twahangana Fund which is managed by SDFN/NHAG and financed on a revolving basis by current residents whose payments fund future homeowners. Contributions are also made by private donors and by the Namibian Government through the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development (UN Habitat, 2005). In order to qualify for

loans, Freedom Square residents were required to have a minimum of N\$3 000 in their savings accounts and approval from their savings group members (NGO 2, personal communication, June 11, 2022).

Chart 3 Resident Interview Question: Plans to Build a House



Several interviewees had constructed houses with multiple rooms, including living spaces, bathrooms, kitchens and bedrooms, and a majority expressed a desire to eventually build a house (see Chart 3). As of June 2022, 37 building permits had been issued for the construction of homes, with 17 of those permits issued nine months before legal tenure was granted in March 2021 (NGO 3, personal communication, June 19, 2022). None of the residents mentioned an economic benefit resulting from property ownership, including selling or renting property or using property as collateral for a loan.

Although most residents continued to live in shacks, there were noticeable

improvements that had been made since upgrading. Plots were defined by gardens and fences, and evidencing pride of ownership, yards were clean and free of debris and solid waste.



Photograph 2: Garden in Freedom Square

Changes in economic status using income and employment data were explored using the 2015 and 2021 databases provided by Shack Dwellers International (SDI)/NHAG. The 2015 database provides income and employment information for approximately 700 residents, while the 2021 database contains data for 1 086 residents, with no link provided to crosscheck households in the two databases. In addition, the databases provide inconsistent data categories, so that only employment and income levels could be compared.

As seen in Table 1, nearly all residents of Freedom Square earned below N\$5 000 per month in 2015 and 2021.

Table 1 *Income Levels*

Income Level	2015 % of total	2021 % of total	Increase/Decrease from 2015 to 2021
N\$ 0 – 5 000	97.2%	96.1%	-9%
> N\$ 5 000	2.7%	3.9%	44%

Table 2 *Employment Status*

Employment Status	2015	2021	Increase/Decrease from 2015 to 2021
Employed	56%	58.6%	4.6%
Unemployed	36%	31.3%	-13%
Pensioner	N/A	10%	N/A

Unemployment figures showed a slight decrease from 2014 to 2021; however, as is the case with the income figures, unemployment data rely on the same SDI/NHAG databases of 2015 and 2021. Although unemployment appears to have reduced between 2015 and 2021, there is no evidence that these conditions were precipitated by the residents' tenure security status. Other factors may have contributed to changes in these figures, including the fluctuations in the population between 2012 and 2022, when certificates were issued.

Residents were asked about employment status, but were not questioned about income. Three of the 14 residents were employed, three stated that they were unemployed and looking for work, with the remainder providing no response to the question.

Social justice

The FLTS process is complex and bureaucratic, with Regulations that do not reflect the language used in the 2012 Flexible Land Tenure Act – an opinion shared by an NGO representative during interviews (NGO 1, personal communication, June 18, 2022). In spite of this complexity, the FLTS was successful in Gobabis, as evidenced by the fact that all 1 086 households are eligible to receive title to their land. During this study, several factors

were observed that contributed to the success in Gobabis:

- Municipal officials have offices that are located within a 10-minute walk of Freedom Square. This proximity to the settlement and its accessibility plays a factor in awareness on the part of local authorities and prepares them for anticipating and solving issues as they arise (Municipal Official 3, personal communication, June 16, 2022). In addition to municipal officials, an NGO representative is tasked with ensuring that each resident is aware of the steps to be taken to obtain the certificate.
- The sense of agency and empowerment expressed by residents depended to a great extent on the support of SDI/NHAG. The ability of SDI/NHAG to engage with stakeholders and sustain a high level of participation was evidenced by the continuation of participation in community savings clubs after tenure security had been achieved.
- Gobabis residents have been involved in the upgrading process since 2012, when the first enumerations took place. Between 2012 and 2022, residents participated in spatial planning, infrastructure

installation, and the planning and layout of recreational areas (Delgado et al., 2020). During this study, residents were observed installing water and sewerage facilities, evidence of continued participation and self-organisation. Interviewees indicated that self-participation

has contributed to a sense of community when they described Freedom Square as a friendly and safe environment (57% of respondents described Freedom Square as “friendly” and 71% described it as “safe” when asked to describe the settlement).

Table 3 Resident Interview Question Regarding the Characteristics of the Neighbourhood

Indicator	Friendly Neighborhood	Safe Neighborhood
Positive	8	10
Negative	1	2
No Answer/Neutral	5	2

Although these factors contributed to the success in obtaining legal tenure security, additional studies would be needed in order to determine the strength of the relationship between these factors and the success of the FLTS.

Despite its success in Freedom Square, access to the FLTS is not distributed equally throughout Namibia. In addition to Gobabis, pilot programmes have been completed in Oshakati and Windhoek (Delgado et al., 2020), with the latter being the smallest pilot with fewer than 200 plots (NGO 1, personal communication, June 14, 2022). There is additional demand in Windhoek, as reported by another NGO representative (NGO

4, personal communication, June 21, 2022). Residents of this settlement are currently waiting for a response regarding their FLTS re-blocking plan submitted in October 2021, which is evidence of unequal access to the FLTS system within the country.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This research explores the relationship between obtaining tenure security and a change in livelihoods in an informal settlement. During the study, a higher level of social capital was observed as residents described the upgrading process that led to tenure security. It was clear that daily life was greatly improved, with access to water and sewerage, and defined roads and plots that provide

privacy and a sense of safety. Having a defined spatial layout for the settlements made for fewer intrusions of neighbours onto individuals' property and increased their levels of personal safety. Access to water and sewerage improved sanitation and also contributed to a cleaner environment.

The residents of Gobabis achieved tenure security with the support of NGOs, namely SDFN/NHAG, but mainly through sheer persistence and their own hard work over a ten-year period. They achieved their goal of land ownership in spite of the hurdles placed before them by the legislation, its minefield of regulations, and their own country's history of colonialism and apartheid. In order for the FLTS to make similar opportunities available to other communities, changes will be required to streamline the process and to make local governments more responsive to the needs of their constituents. When that happens, FLTS will have the potential to provide all Namibians with the sense of security and pride of ownership which are currently enjoyed by the residents of Freedom Square.

In addition to improvements in daily life, residents expressed pride in having legal ownership of a plot, and the realisation that this ownership would provide a more secure future for them and their children. Residents used

the terms 'pride' or 'proud' and also referred to the fact that they had a piece of paper with identifying information, including names and ID numbers, as evidence of ownership. They displayed an understanding of that ownership when discussing the potential to build a house and to pass on the land and title to their children.

Social connections among residents were strong and stable, with most respondents describing the community as friendly and safe. Residents had positive relationships with their SDI/NHAG savings group leaders. Contact with local authorities was limited, with most residents relying on community leaders to maintain that relationship.

Economic gains were mostly evidenced through the construction of permanent homes. Those residents with sufficient savings were able to obtain permits and build houses. However they represent a minority of households (37 of 1 086 as of June 2022). Although 64% of those interviewed stated their desire to eventually build a house, none of the residents interviewed mentioned further economic gain to be made by having a title certificate, including applying for loans to start businesses or plans to sell their property to realise a profit.

The SDI/NHAG quantitative data demonstrated very little change in

either income or employment in the period from 2015 to 2021. The settlement experienced rapid growth in the number of households during that period, so that a definitive relationship between economic livelihood and tenure security could not be established. In addition, this study was qualitative, and conducted over a short period, making it difficult to measure changes in economic status.

The complicated regulations and the lengthy process of the FLTS both point to systemic failures to provide procedural justice. In spite of this, residents of Freedom Square were able to secure legal tenure with ongoing support from SDI/NHAG and local officials embedded in the community. In order to provide similar outcomes for informal settlements throughout Namibia, a successful approach could include:

- **A strong partnership between local authorities with SDI/NHAG that includes organisational and financial support:** The ability of SDI/NHGA to engage stakeholders and sustain a high level of participation was evidenced by the continued participation in community savings clubs and community-based installation

of infrastructure after tenure security had been achieved. A nationwide partnership could become the basis of implementing the FLTS on a wider scale and would create more equitable access to land tenure.

- **Improved access to local officials:** If local officials were embedded in the community, as they are in Freedom Square, there might be a greater awareness of not only their daily struggles, but also of their capacity for co-production. This insight might be the catalyst needed for local government to engage and cooperate with these communities.

Further Study

Since the certificates were issued in March 2021, this study does not provide a sufficient perspective on the economic impact of tenure security. A study of the economic status of Freedom Square residents should be conducted after they have had their certificates for five or more years. After five years, residents are free to sell their property. Will residents build houses? Will they sell or rent their property? Will they apply for loans to start businesses? These are questions that remain to be answered.

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