

NAMIB DESERT



Namibia

Lilyana Brocato

ULL UNIV 100-H05, November 2024

Personal interest

- I found myself interested in researching and presenting on Namibia after learning a little bit about the Himba tribe of Namibia in my Cultural Anthropology class.
- I was curious if that culture spread across all of Namibia or was exclusive to the tribe.
- So, I chose to research Namibia.

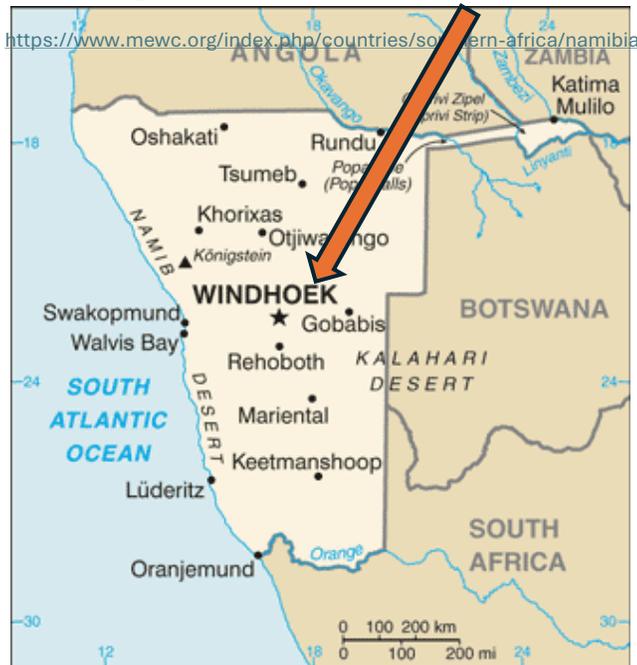


Case Study and Research Purpose

- This explanatory case study aims to answer why the people in Namibia wear the clothing they do.
- The purpose of this case study is to detail the phenomena of Namibia that form the country's culture, which determines the clothing worn in the country.
- This is an investigation of components of culture and the resulting clothing worn.
- This study will answer the research questions of why people wear the clothing they do, what do they wear, and what cultural components impact the clothing worn.
- This research study has no control over the occurrence of events and focuses on real-life situations.

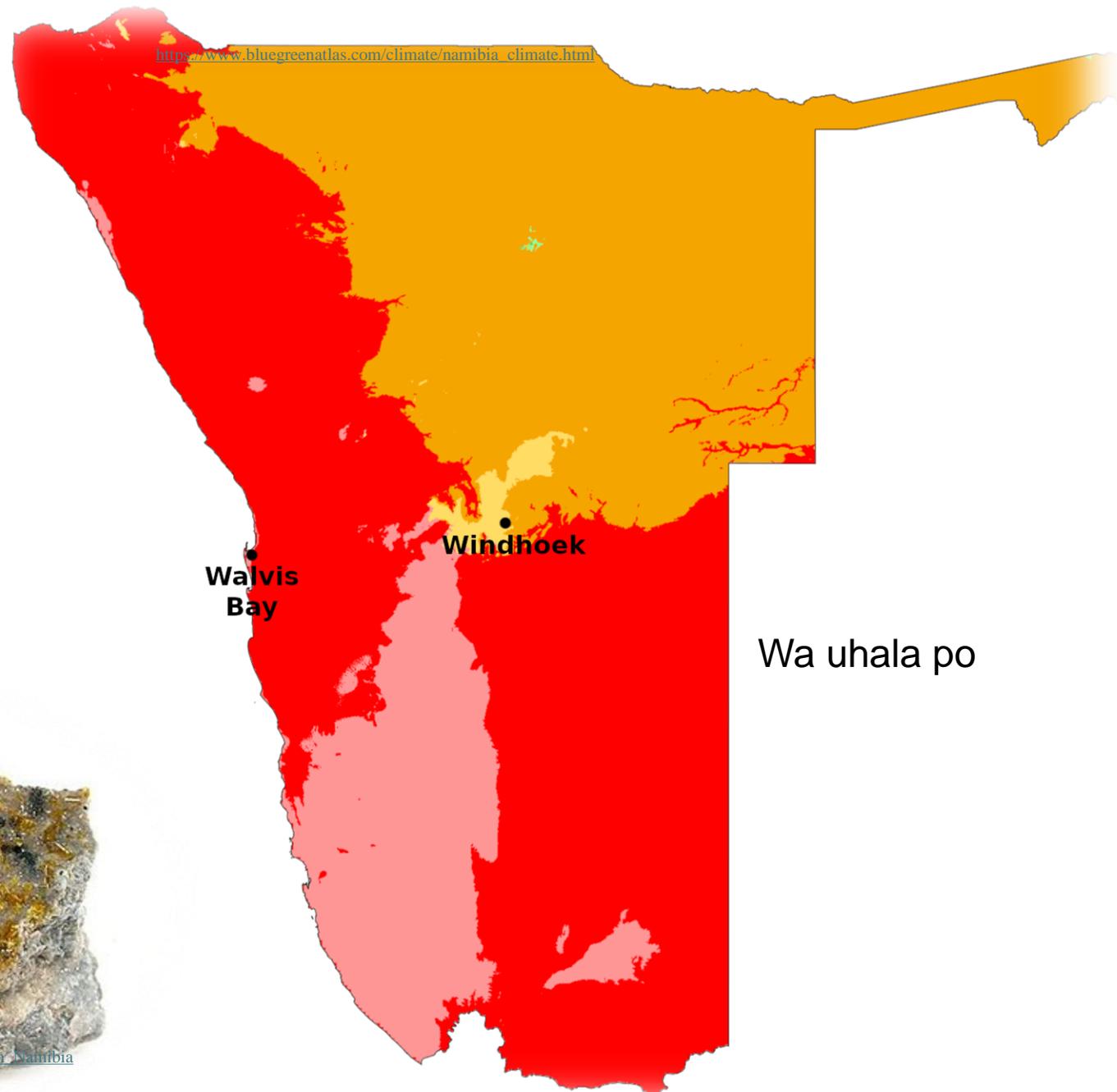
Location

- Location: Southern Africa
- Size: 0.5 million sq. miles (~>1/2 Alaska)
- Population: 3 million (world rank 141st)
- Capital: Windhoek



Background

- **Climate:** Hot and dry
 - Arid
 - Sparse and erratic rainfall
- **Language**
 - 50% Ovambo
- **Natural resources:**
 - Diamonds and Uranium



History

- Pre-colonial
 - 25,000 BC – First humans in south Namibia
 - 2,000 BC - San and Damara- oldest ethnic group
 - 1500 AD – Ovambo migrate to Namibia
 - 1805 – Missionaries become interested in Namibia
 - European and German
- Colonial
 - 1884 - German colonization
 - 1/3 of Herero pop. wiped out in genocide (rebellion)
 - Used forced labor
 - Diamonds
 - 1915 – Namibia annexed by South African govt
 - 1966 - SWAPO lead guerilla attack South African forces
 - 1966-1990 – Namibian War of Independence
 - Note: Internationality/UN
- Present
 - 1990 – Republic of Namibia born
 - 2024 – President Nangolo Mbumba; Presidential republic



Mahangu Soup



- **Mahangu** (aka. pearl millet; grain/flour – cereal crop)
- Fish, goat meat or lamb and rice
- Mixed in iron pot
- Staple food

<https://travelfooddata.com/namibian-food>

Cuisine



<https://x.com/AfricaFactsZone/status/1258102305435639808>

Bullfrog

- Cooked by covering saucepans with dry Omuhongo wood
 - Prevents poisoning

Tourist Attractions

Brandberg Mountain

- Namibia's tallest mountain
 - 8,442 feet above sea level
- Translation: "Burning Mountain"
- Contains cave paintings



Twyfelfontein



Ancient rock art ~
30,000 years







- Largest canyon in Africa
- Popular with hikers

Fish River Canyon

People and Society

- Religion: 98% Christian
- Ethnicity: 50% Ovambo, 11% Nama/Damara
- Life Expectancy: 66years
- Median Age: 23 years

People and Society

- Fertility rate: 2.89 (51st in world) (children born/woman)
- Contraceptive prevalence: 56%
- HIV/AIDS prevalence: 13%
- School life expectancy: 9 years
- Literacy rate: 92%

People and Society



- Drinking Water: 91%
- Sanitation: 48%
- Alcohol consumption : 0.6 gallons/person/year
- Health Expenditures (of GDP): 9%

Economy

- **GDP:** \$12,000 per capita (140th in world)
- **Poverty:** 17% below poverty line
- **Tax:** 27% (33rd in world)
- **Export:** \$6 billion (diamonds, gold, fish to South Africa-uranium)
- **Import:** \$8 billion (129th in world) (from South Africa; petrol, ships, copper, trucks)

Traditional Dress and Identity in Namibia

- Dress affects and reflects tradition, ethnicity, and national identity in Namibia (more specifically Owambo)
 - Post-independence (1990s), reinvent identity through the use of traditional clothing /the concept of tradition and reclamation of cultural items/practices
 - Modern identity
- Oshikutu Sheenhulo
 - Forefront of cultural and national identity
 - Two versions (both from creolization)
 - Politicized (pictured here)
 - Very special occasions
 - Made of odelela; Owambo traditional fabric
 - Worn with traditional jewelry and headscarves
 - Controversial because of background (represents colonization and the erasure of cultural history, but represents modern identity)
 - Everyday
 - Home/church wear



<https://muse-jhu-edu.ezproxyprod.ucs.louisiana.edu/article/751219>

Living Museums: Yay or Nay?

- Most rapidly increasing forms of cultural tourism
- Designed and executed by those who seek economic emancipation
- Pros
 - Bring social and cultural empowerment
 - Poverty alleviation
 - Double life: modern and traditional lives separate
- Cons
 - Commodification of culture
 - Homogenizes communities
 - Prevents progression of culture (global identity)
 - Colonialism? Idea of Otherness



<https://www.info-namibia.com/highlights-activities/living-museums>

Efforts for Cultural Preservation

- Meeting in Paris, France regarding return of artifacts to country of origin (to Namibia) and the role of language
 - Implore Namibian museum to be prepared
 - Reconnect with cultural roots and heal
 - Reclaim heritage
 - Strengthen identity for future generations
 - Space for historical transparency
 - Revive languages
 - Rewrite history



<https://www.dw.com/en/colonial-looted-art-namibia-recovers-23-objects-from-germany/a-6198805/>



<https://www.dw.com/en/colonial-looted-art-namibia-recovers-23-objects-from-germany/a-61988037/>

Education Reform

- Ministries of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC) and Higher Education, Technology and Innovation (MHETI) launch Project Charter
- Project Charter
 - ~Mobilize resources from stakeholders to transform system
 - Global educational disruption (COVID-19)
 - Improve inclusivity and quality
 - Address COVID induced learning gaps
 - Transform education to meet needs of disadvantaged and marginalized students
 - Enhance financing
 - Improve teacher quality
 - More digital access tools (ex. computers)
- Difficulties
 - Resource shortages
 - Negative impact of COVID-19



<https://www.polarpartners.fi/blog/implementing-education-technology-in-namibia>

Himba Tribe

- ~ 50,000 people
- Northern Namibia
- Semi-nomadic
- Pastoralists
- Speak OjitiHimba (variety of Herero)
- Main diet: sour milk and maize porridge
- Women do more labor-intensive work
- Men tend to livestock and politics
- Otjize – red ochre
- **Clothing**
 - Skirt-like
 - Sandals for footwear (W-cowskin, M-tires)
 - Mothers wear backpack of skin
 - Boys have 1 braided plait; girls have many
 - Married women and mothers wear ornate headpieces (Erembe)
 - Married men wear a cap and unbraided hair
- Polygynous
 - Arranged marriages- partners chosen by fathers- onset of puberty

Uranium Mining

- Important for national economy
- Previously heavily exploited
- Dangerous process
 - Radiation/cancer
 - Water contamination
- Two main types
 - 1. primary uranium mineralization
 - Occurs in granite
 - 2. secondary uranium mineralization
 - Calcrete
- Necessity to reduce carbon emissions
- Chinese investment

Clothing



Urban/casual



Rural



https://www.freepik.com/premium-photo/man-from-damara-tribe-traditional-dress-damaraland-namibia_26492643.htm

Business



College



Traditional





Common Wedding

Wealthy Wedding

nbc1



Special adornments

Himba jewelry

Omakipa Button
- Elephant ivory



Ondjeva
- Worn by girls
(unmarried and
not a mother)



Special adornments

Issues/concerns/dilemmas

A photograph of a man in a slum carrying a large white sack on his back and holding a shovel, standing in a trash-strewn area with makeshift buildings and a dog in the background.

- Poverty
 - Common – 30% unemployment rate
 - Very high-income disparity
- HIV
 - 13% prevalence

Conclusions

- History led to differences in tradition and modernization
 - Colonialism/Christianization
- Independence from South Africa and colonialism = new ways of life mixed with old
 - Education
 - Clothing
 - Culture
- High-income disparity leads to a wide variety in culture/life
- Becoming more humanitarian and secure