8 Building Materials

Materials used to build the walls of homes vary greatly. On the one hand are a range of manufactured materials such as burnt bricks and cement blocks, prefabricated panels and corrugated iron. All these materials are generally obtained by cash purchases. On the other hand materials harvested from local resources, such as poles, thatch, mud, and reed mats are acquired using manual labour. Wealthier homes with adequate financial resources therefore usually have walls made of purchased materials, and those which lack buying power use domestic labour to collect and assemble their own walls. Many people in informal settlements collect and build their homes from scrap, such as metal sheeting and wood panels.

One of the most significant measures to reflect improving welfare is shown in the following graph. In almost all areas of the country there has been a major switch from harvested materials to those purchased from the suppliers of building materials. The percentage of households with walls of poles, mud and the like halved in some regions. These were in the northern regions where trees are relatively abundant, while the smallest changes occurred in the southern, central and western regions where trees suitable for building are rare.

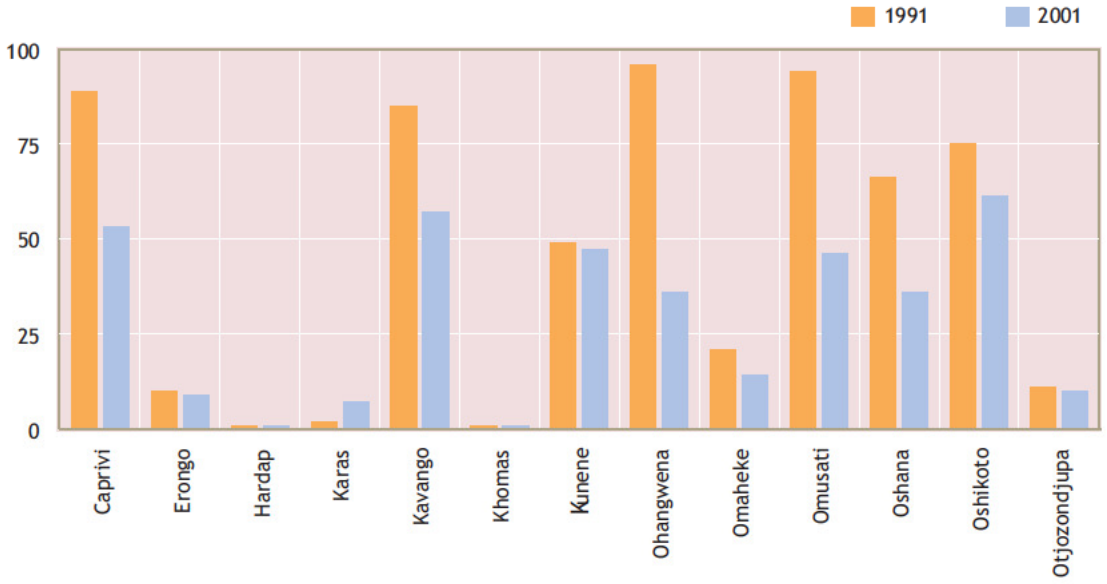
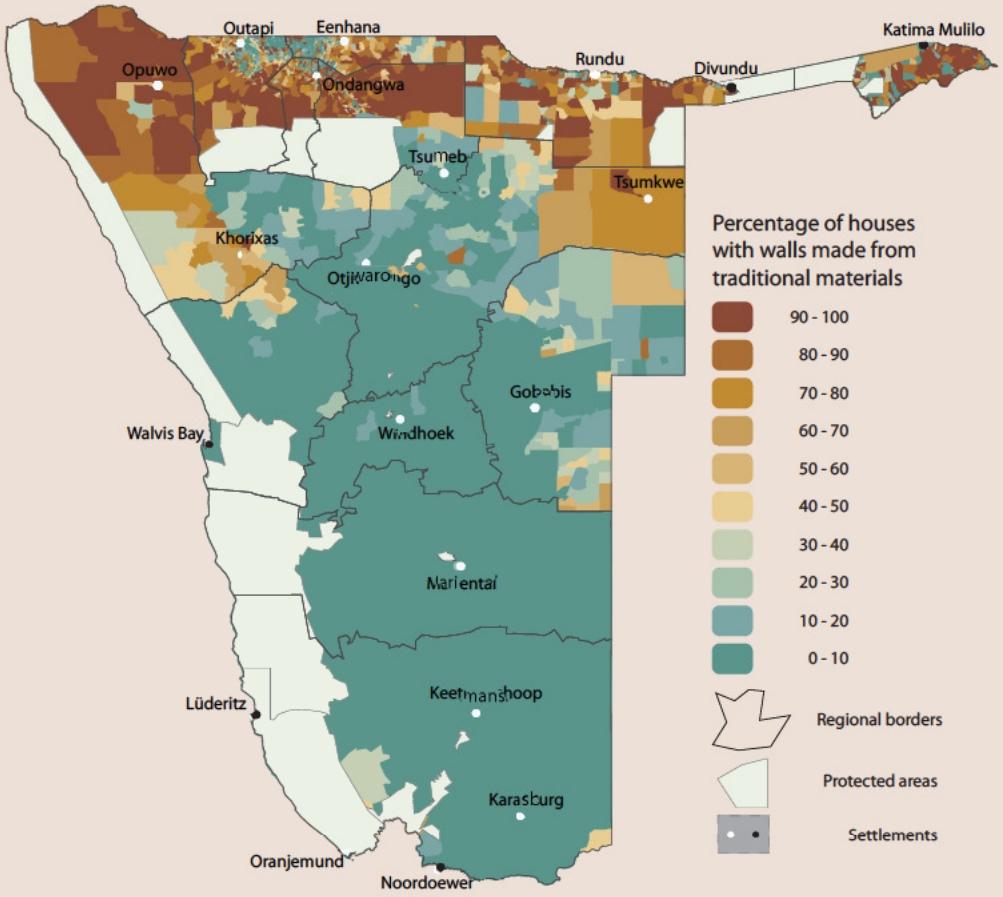


Figure 38.
The proportion of households in 1991 and 2001 per region having walls built using wood, sticks, grass, mud or cattle dung. All other homes have walls of bricks, blocks and prefabricated materials. In 2001, 99,220 or 29% of all homes had walls built of traditional materials.

This housing along the Orange River is constructed using locally available reeds.

Figure 39. The proportion of Namibian homes in 2001 having walls built using wood, sticks, grass, mud or cattle dung.



Traditionally, most homes in the central northern regions were built using mopane poles which are extremely durable and also resistant to damage caused by termites. These poles were also used for the extensive palisade walls which surround the whole homestead. As a result large areas of these regions were deforested, especially during the 20th century when the population in that area of Namibia grew rapidly. However, observations suggest that the number of trees, particularly mopanes, appears to be increasing in the central-northern regions as a result of the change in building materials.

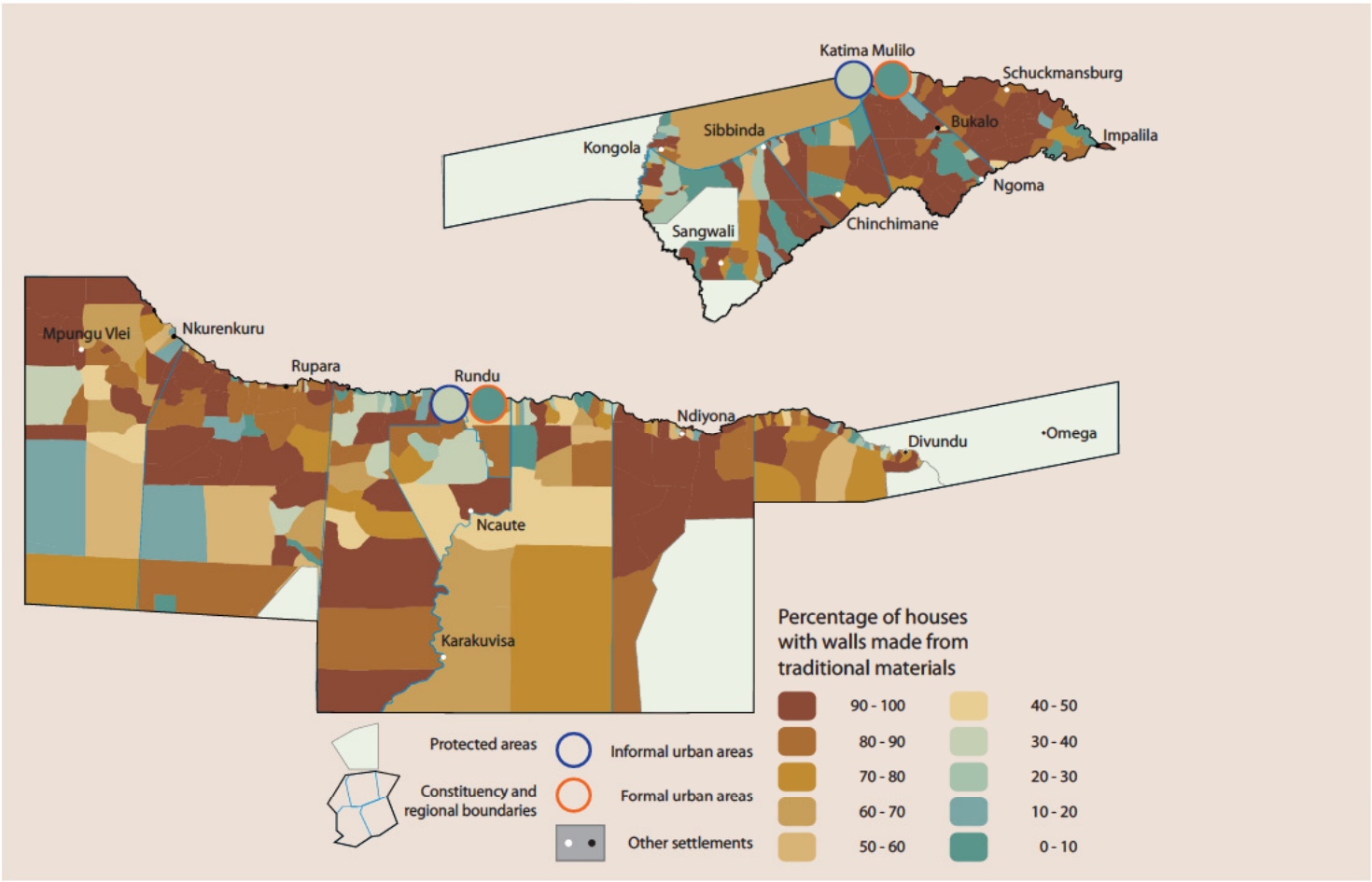


Figure 40.
The proportion of homes in Caprivi and Kavango in 2001 having walls built using wood, sticks, grass reeds, mud or cattle dung.

Most homes in Katima Mulilo and Rundu have walls of bricks or prefabricated materials, but a significant number of households in the informal settlements of those towns have walls of poles, sticks and mud.

While almost all rural homes have walls of traditional materials in many enumeration areas, many other nearby rural enumeration areas curiously have a low proportion of such homes. Reeds are often used for palisade and huts walls for homes situated close to the Okavango, Zambezi and Kwando/Linyanti Rivers.

Nowadays, most rural homes are constructed of materials locally acquired by labour and others obtained through cash purchases.

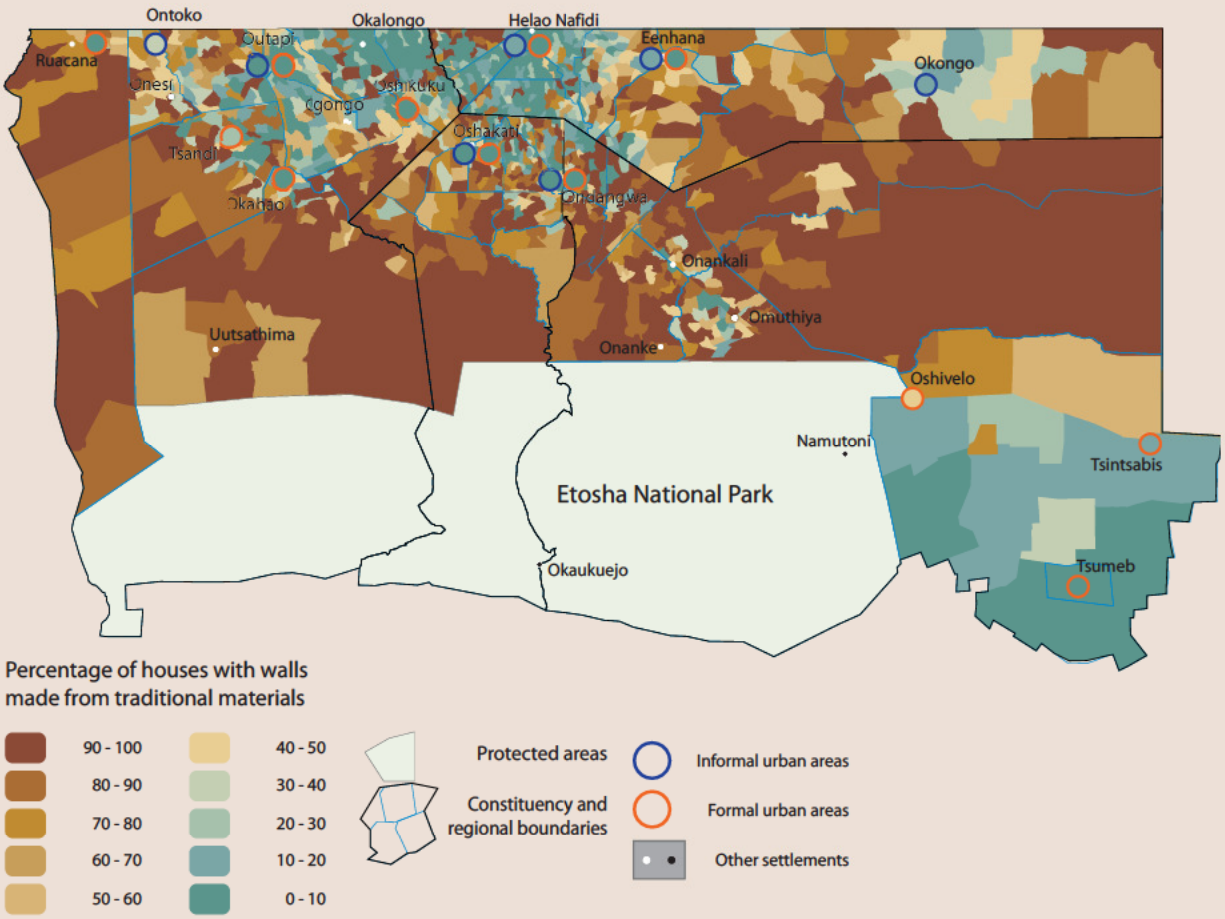


Figure 41. The proportion of homes in Omusati, Oshana, Ohangwena and Oshikoto in 2001 having walls built using wood, sticks, grass, mud or cattle dung.

The concentration of enumeration areas with high proportions of rural homes with walls of purchased building materials is also in the most densely populated area of these four regions. Most homes on the freehold farms around Tsumeb are also built of bricks.

It is in the more remote and sparsely populated areas that most homes have been built using poles and other local materials. Not only are most homes in these areas poor, but trees are also more abundant than in the central zone that roughly stretches between Ondangwa, Helao Nafidi, Outapi, Okahao and Oshakati.

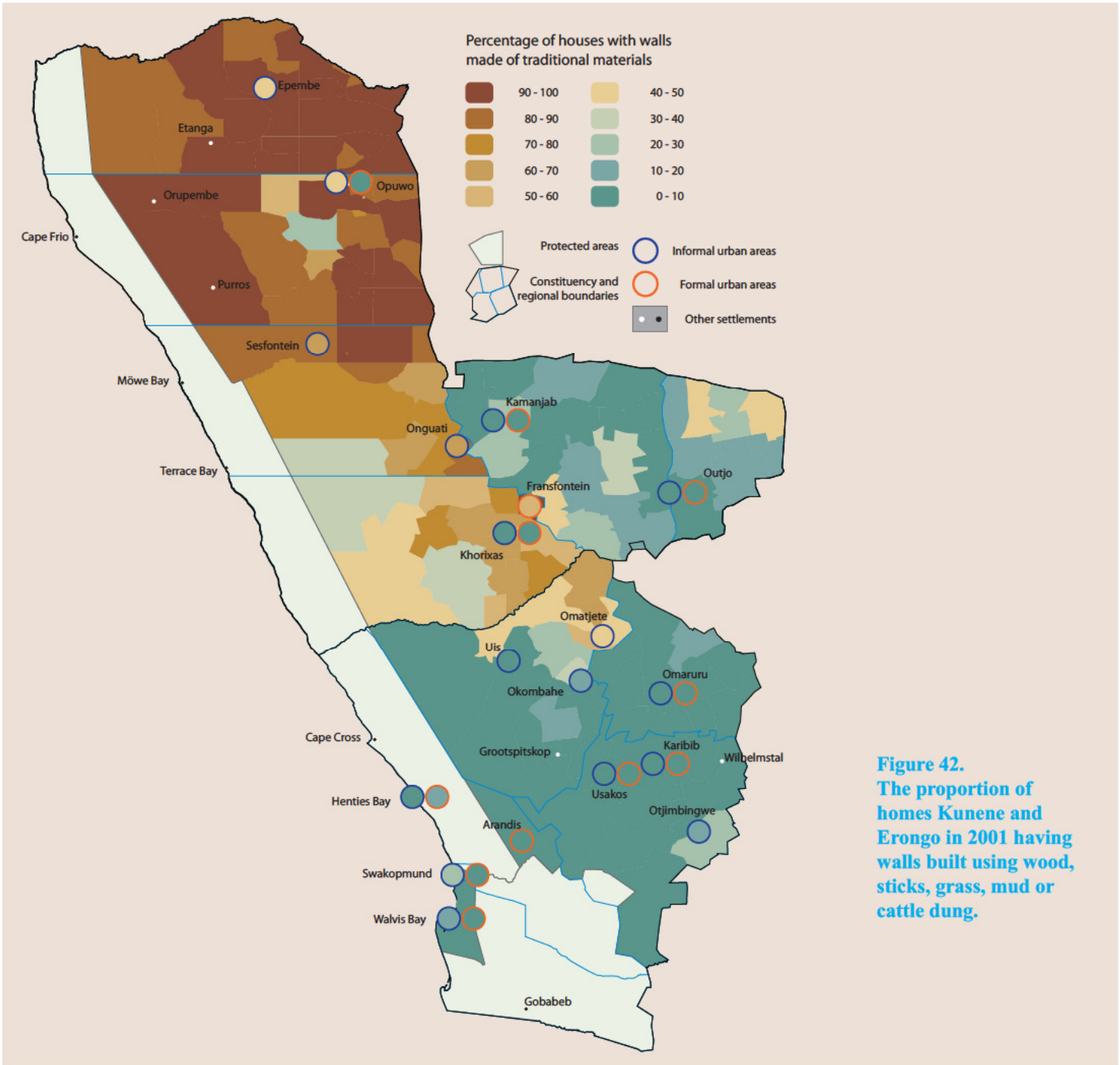
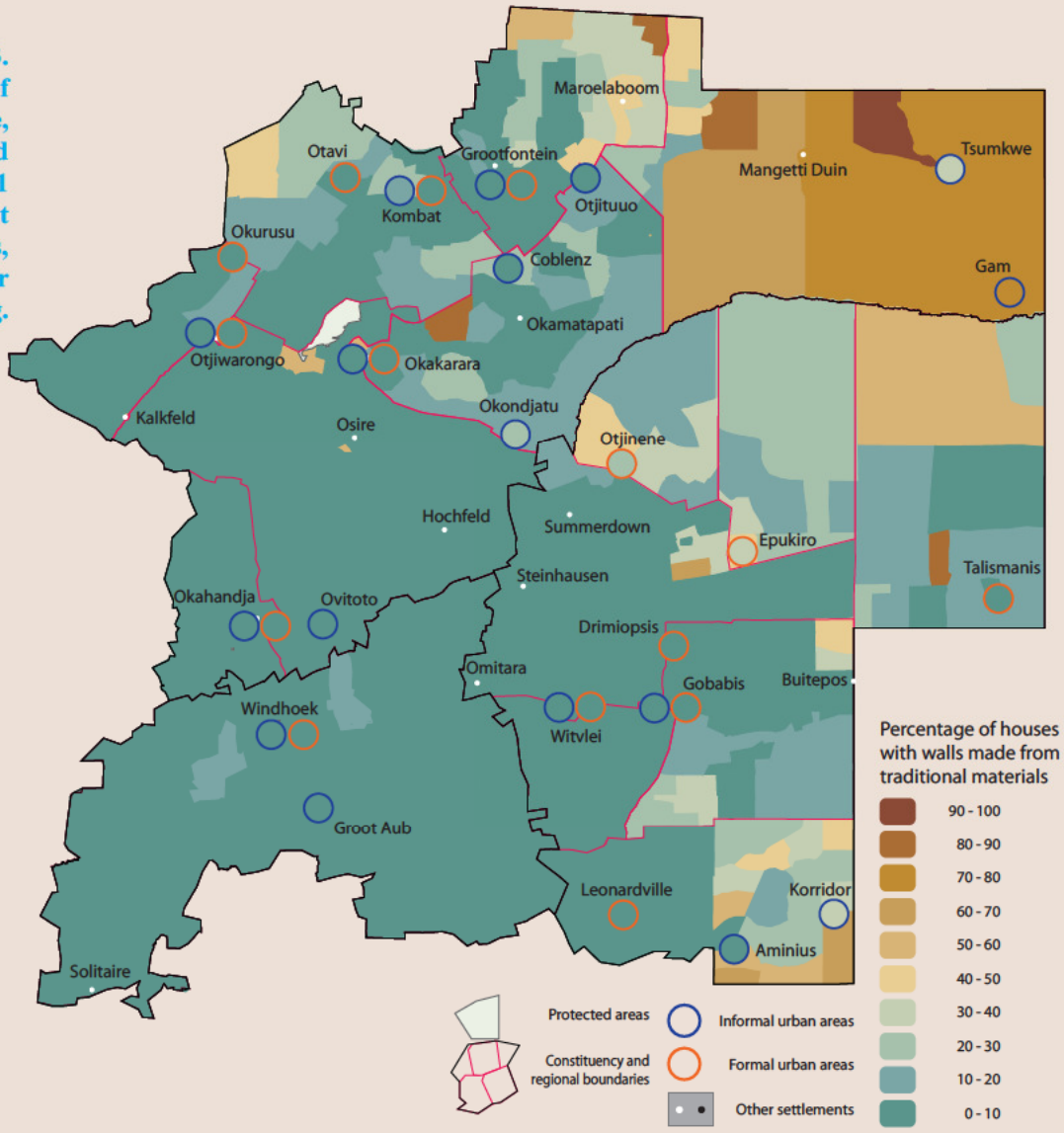


Figure 42.
The proportion of homes Kunene and Erongo in 2001 having walls built using wood, sticks, grass, mud or cattle dung.

The difference in use of building materials between the northern and southern areas of these two regions is extreme and conspicuous. While part of this difference is due to the greater availability of trees in the northern areas, differences in land tenure and wealth are more important. Thus, the greatest use of traditional materials is by poorer households in communal areas, whereas rural homes in the southern freehold areas are usually built with brick or prefabricated walls.

Figure 43. The proportion of homes in Omaheke, Otjozondjupa and Khomas in 2001 having walls built using wood, sticks, grass, mud or cattle dung.



The greatest proportion of poor homes built with traditional materials is in the north-eastern former Bushmanland area of Otjozondjupa. This is a communal area, but so too is the large area of former Hereroland where most homes have walls of materials that have been purchased. The same is true for the Aminuis Block in the south-east, suggesting that many households in those areas have access to considerable cash resources.

A high proportion of houses in informal settlements have walls assembled from scrap materials which have often been collected from refuse dumps.

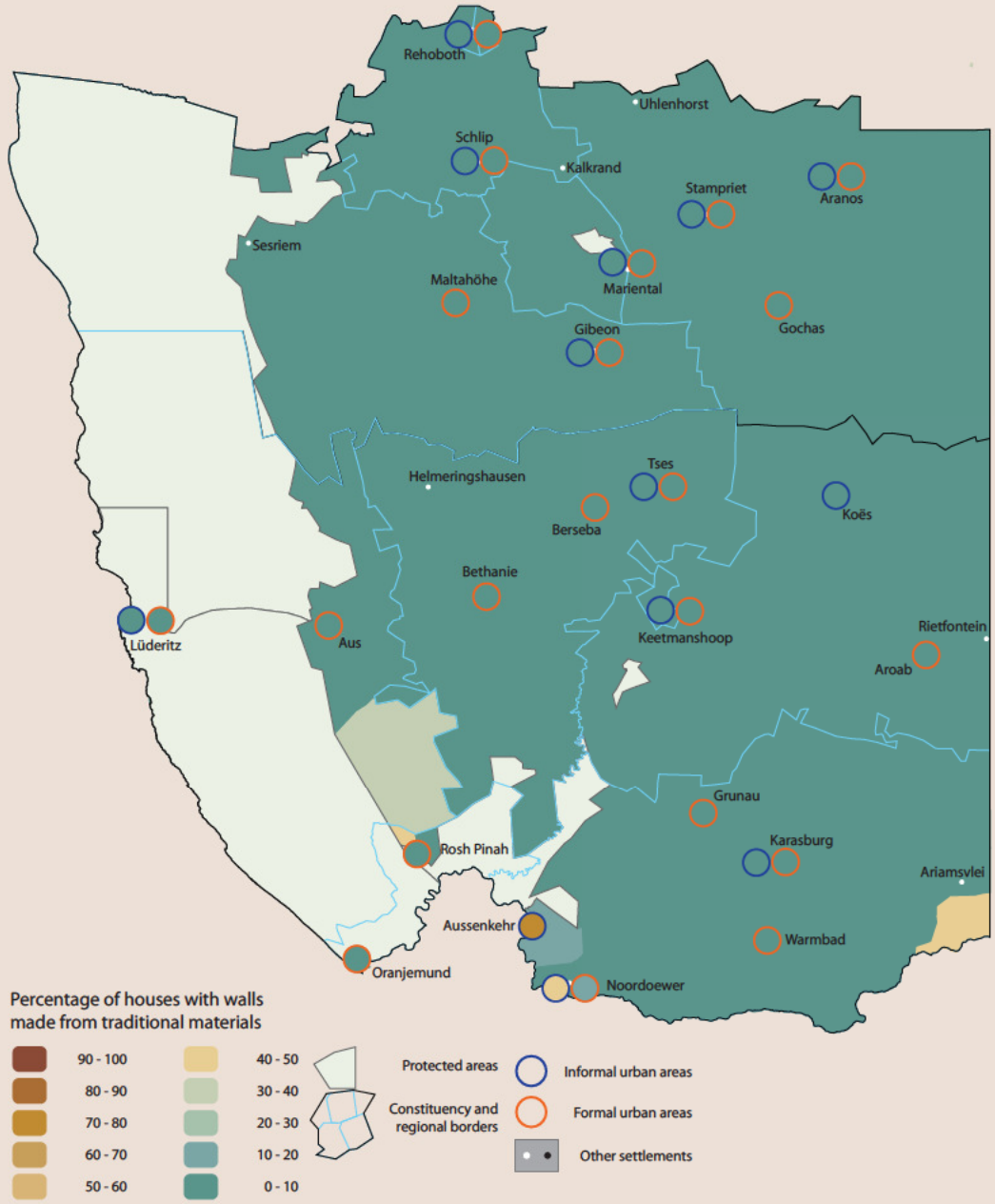


Figure 44.
The proportion of homes in Hardap and Karas in 2001 having walls built using wood, sticks, grass, mud or cattle dung.

In the absence of trees and reeds almost everywhere in Karas and Hardap regions, the great majority of homes have walls of bricks and prefabricated materials. One notable exception is the high proportion of traditional structures among the informal houses at Aussenkehr as shown in the photograph on page 47.

Not shown in this map is the high percentage of poor homes in the rural communal areas that have walls of scrap metal and corrugated iron.

9 Education

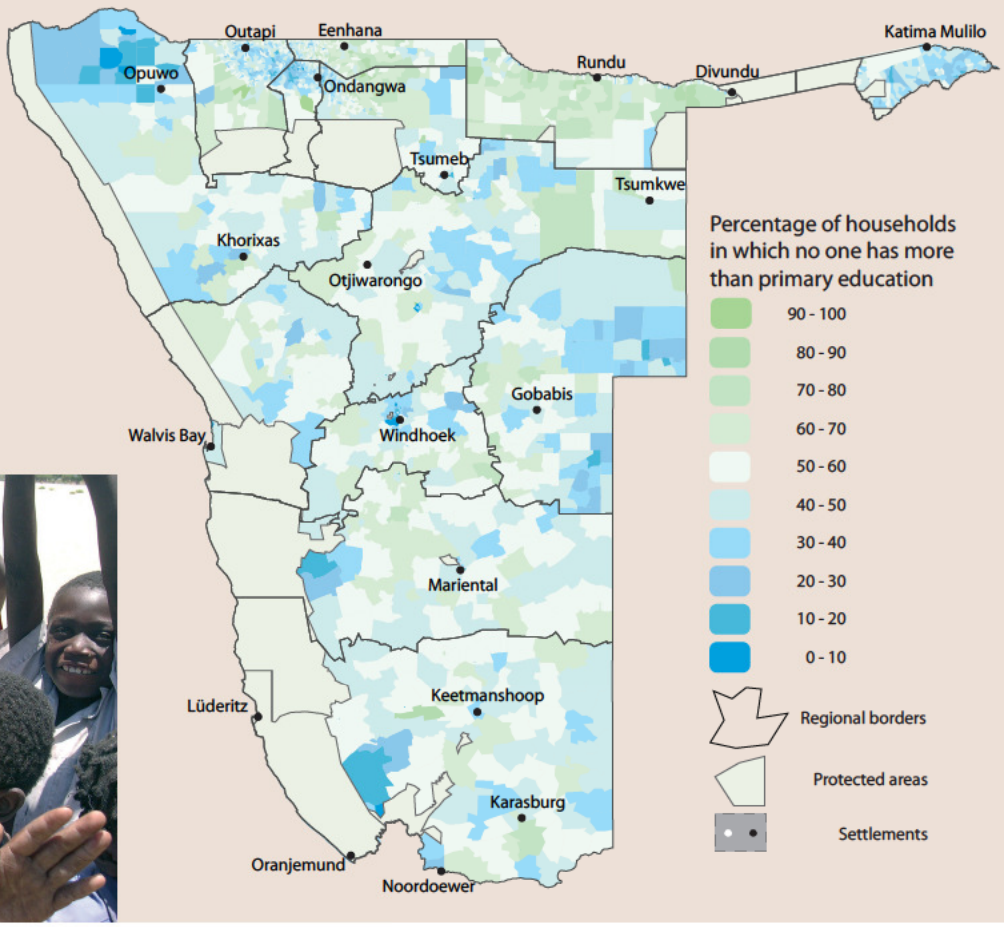
A lack of or poor education contributes to poverty in various ways, for example, in not equipping people with skills, and in people being unable to read, write and think critically. Many of the differences shown in Figure 45 and the maps that follow reflect differences in levels of educational instruction, with older people and those in rural communal areas often having received little or no schooling.

However, other differences and particularly those between urban and rural areas are due to the migration of more schooled people to towns.

Typically, those people with only a primary school education remain in their rural homes, those who completed secondary schooling are in major regional towns, while those with a tertiary education are in the biggest urban centres where opportunities for skilled labour are greatest.

In Namibia as a whole, there were 130,972 households in which no member had more than a primary schooling in 2001. That is equivalent to 38% or over one third of all homes.

Figure 45. The percentage of homes in 2001 in which no household member had progressed beyond primary school or Grade 7.



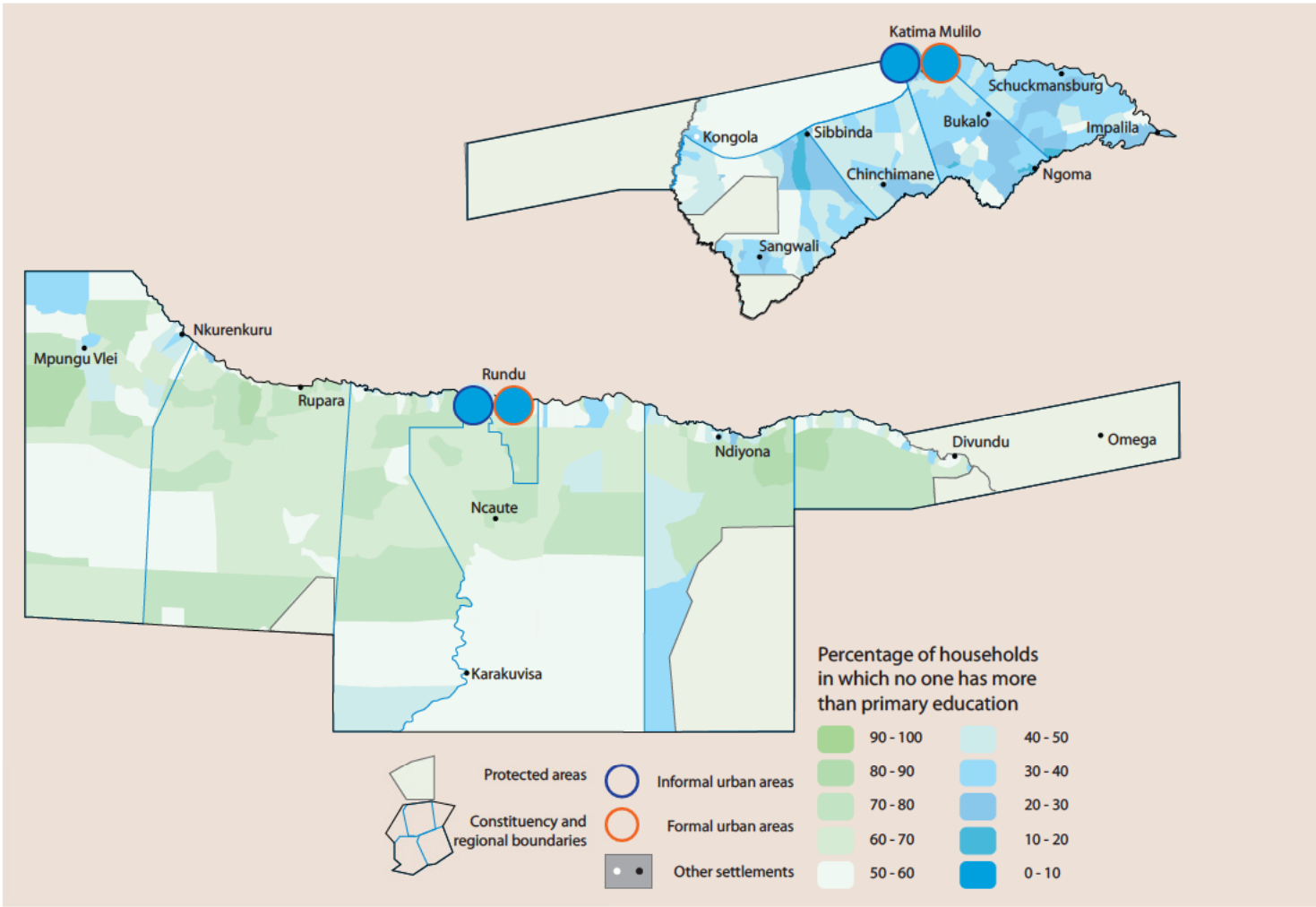
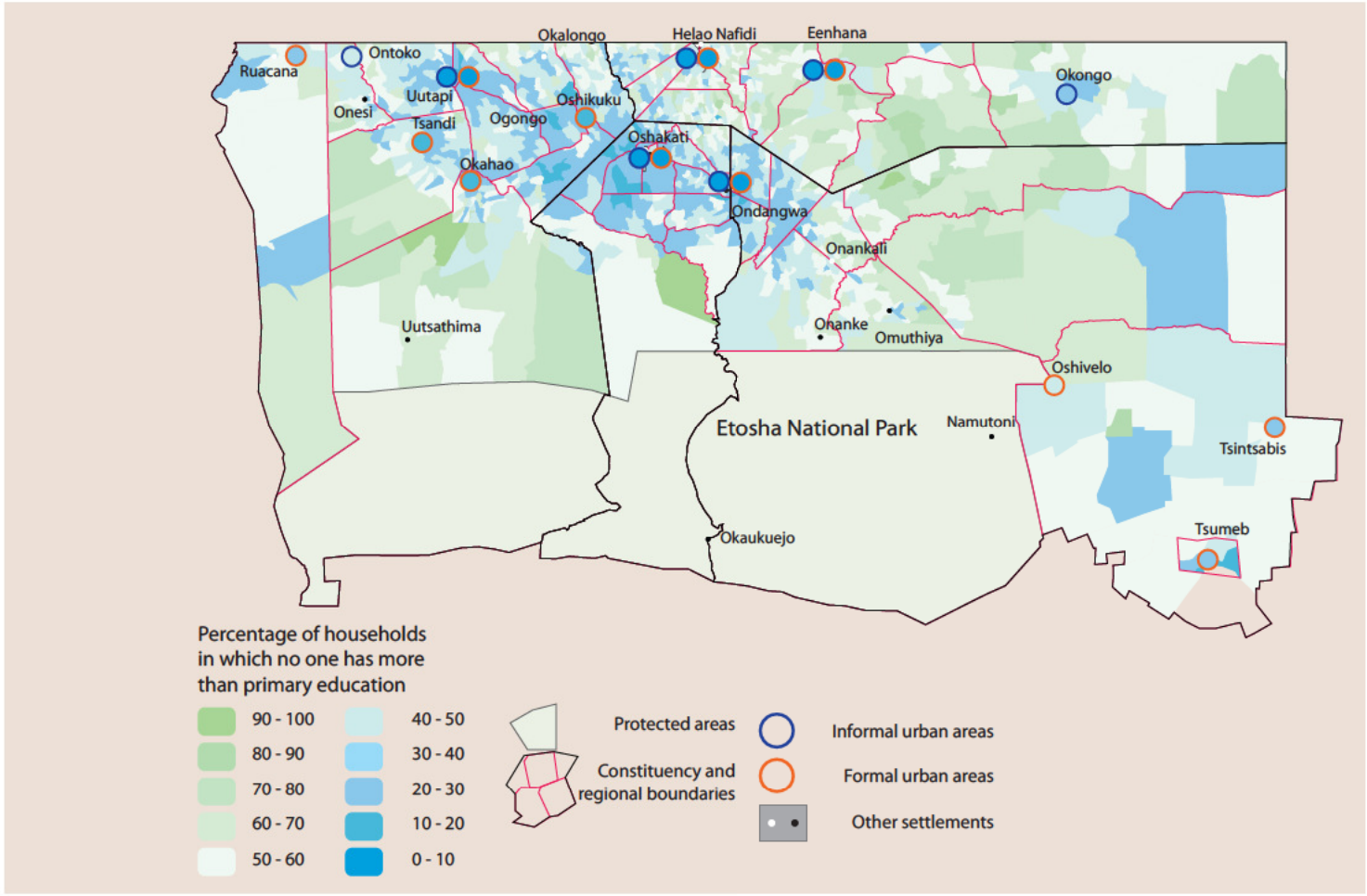


Figure 46.
Percentages of homes in 2001 in Caprivi and Kavango in which no household member had progressed beyond primary school or Grade 7.

Differences as a consequence of more educated people moving to towns are very evident in these two regions. As a result, almost all homes in Rundu and Katima Mulilo have at least one household member with more than Grade 7.

Levels of education in rural homes in Caprivi are considerably higher than those in Kavango. Rather more homes along the Okavango River have household members with more than Grade 7 than those households in areas further south in Kavango.



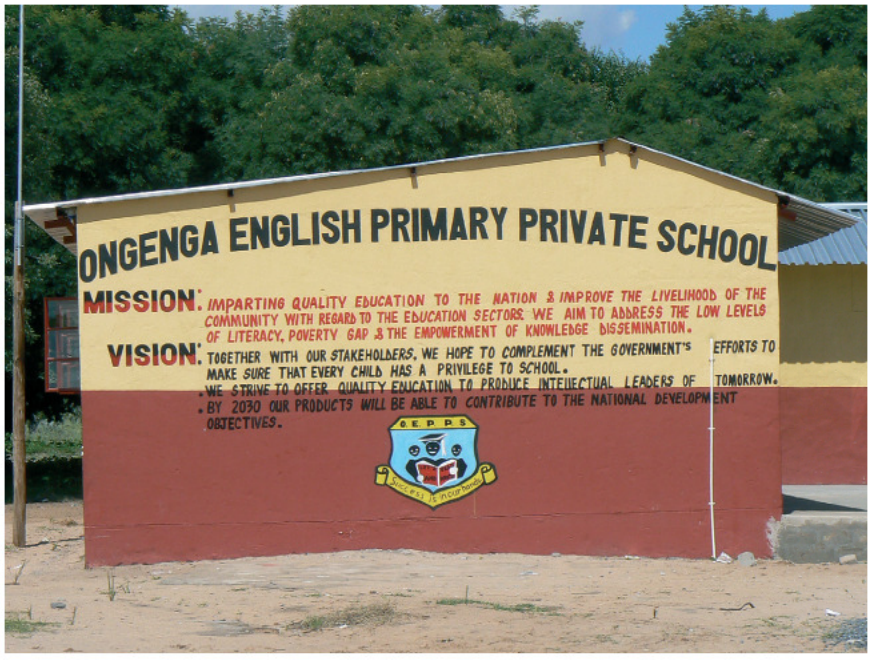


Figure 47.
Percentages of homes in 2001 in Omusati, Oshana, Ohangwena and Oshikoto in which no household member had progressed beyond primary school or Grade 7.

Most homes in the remote rural areas in this part of Namibia do not have family members who have gone beyond the final grade of primary schooling. This is partly due to the absence of schools that offer secondary grades in many of those areas, but the migration of educated people away from remote rural areas is a more significant factor.

The majority of homes in the densely populated rural rectangular zone between Ondangwa, Helao Nafidi, Outapi, Okahao and Oshakati have at least one household member with more than Grade 7. This is by far the most densely populated rural area in Namibia.

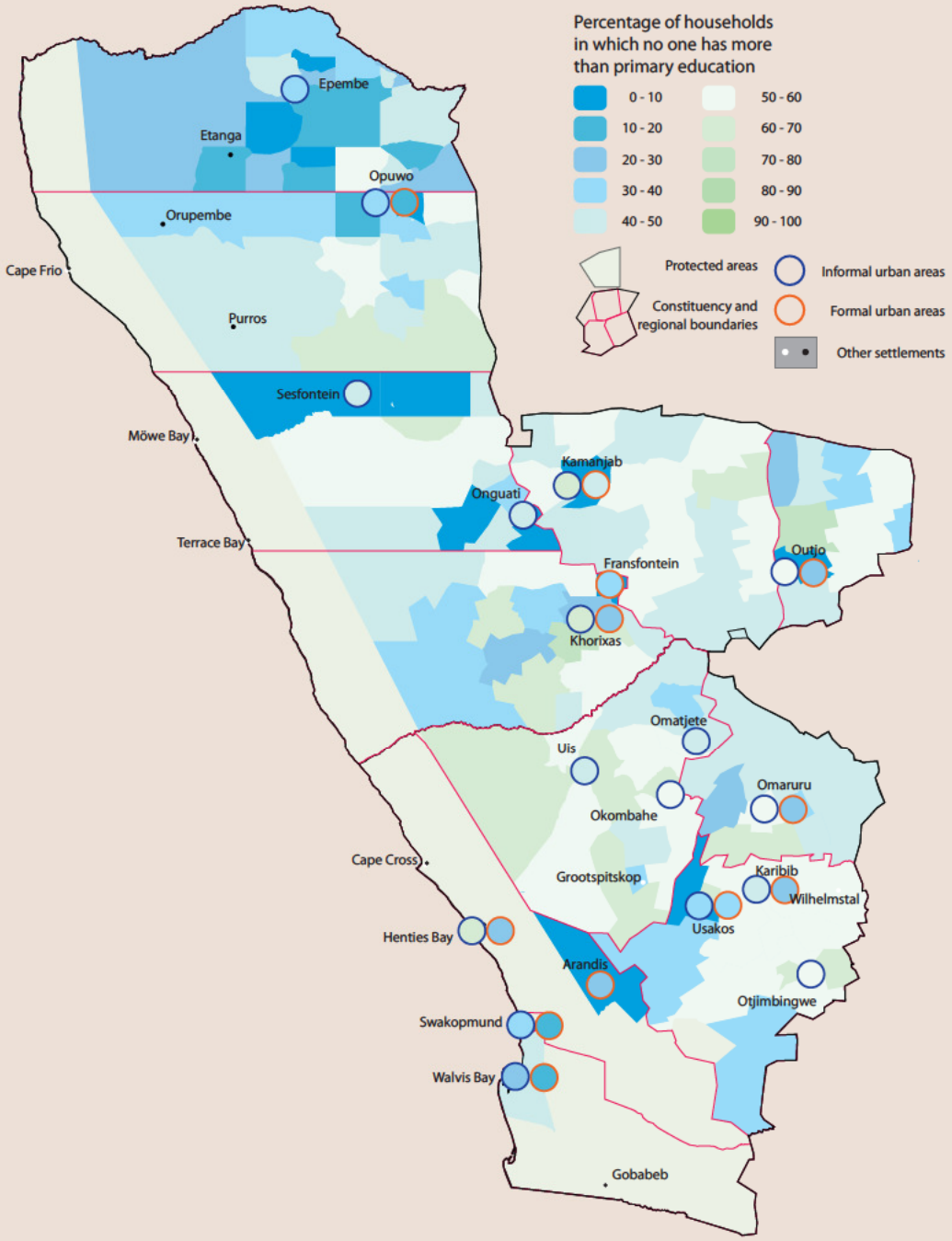
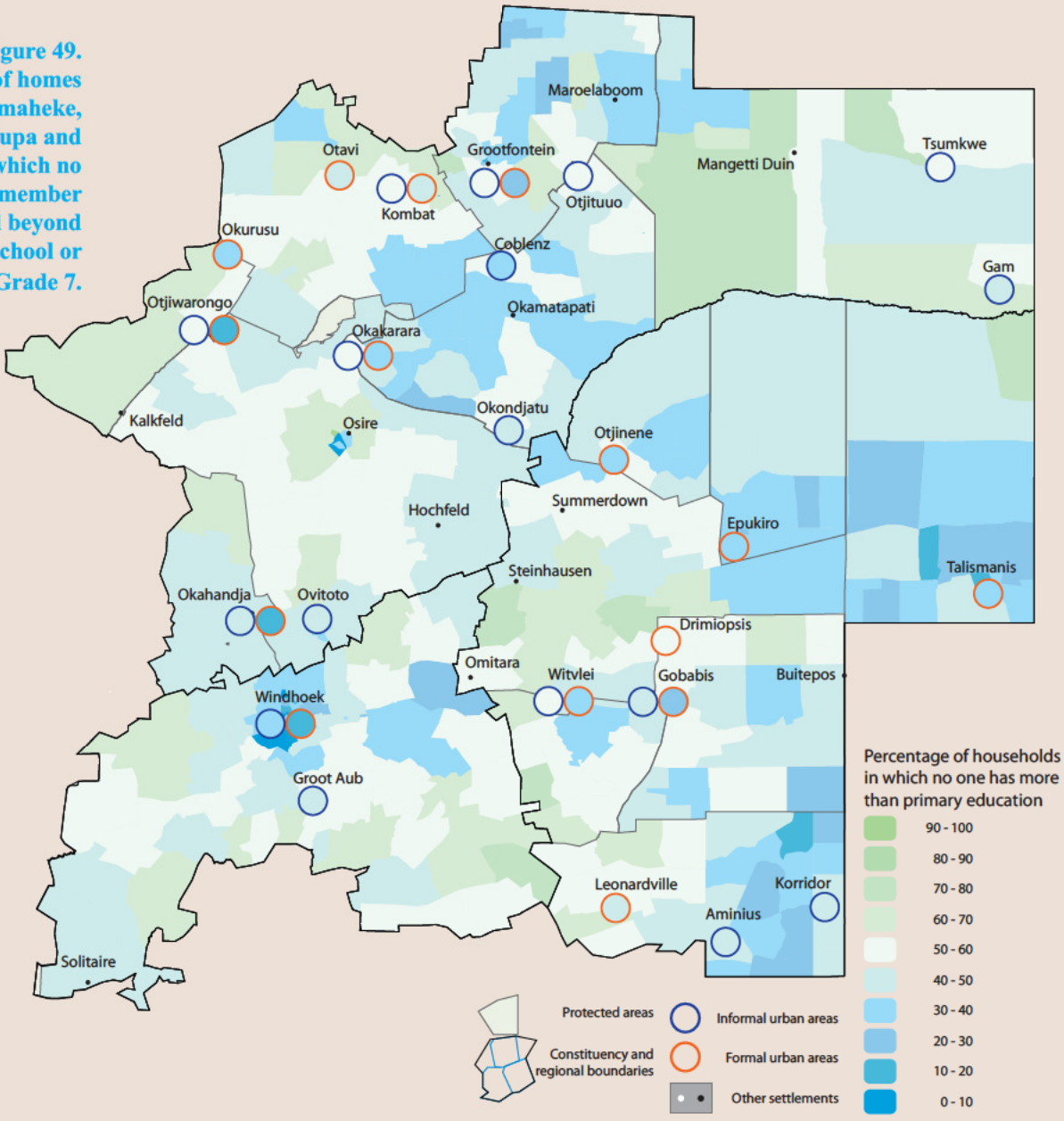


Figure 48. Percentages of homes in 2001 in Kunene and Erongo in which no household member had progressed beyond primary school or Grade 7.

Most homes in all the larger urban centres have at least one household member who has completed more than Grade 7. Many smaller towns, by contrast, have substantial proportions of homes where no one has achieved that level of schooling.

The high proportion of households with at least one member with more than primary schooling in northern Kunene is surprising, since people that live there are typically regarded as educationally marginalized because many of them do not attend school for any significant period.

Figure 49. Percentages of homes in 2001 in Omaheke, Otjozondjupa and Khomas in which no household member had progressed beyond primary school or Grade 7.



In most areas of the country, the most significant differences in levels of education are between rural and urban areas, with few differences between informal and formal urban areas. However, many of the towns in these three regions show just these differences, with significantly more homes in informal settlements having no household member with more than a primary education. This dichotomy is particularly conspicuous in Grootfontein, Otjiwarongo and Okakarara.

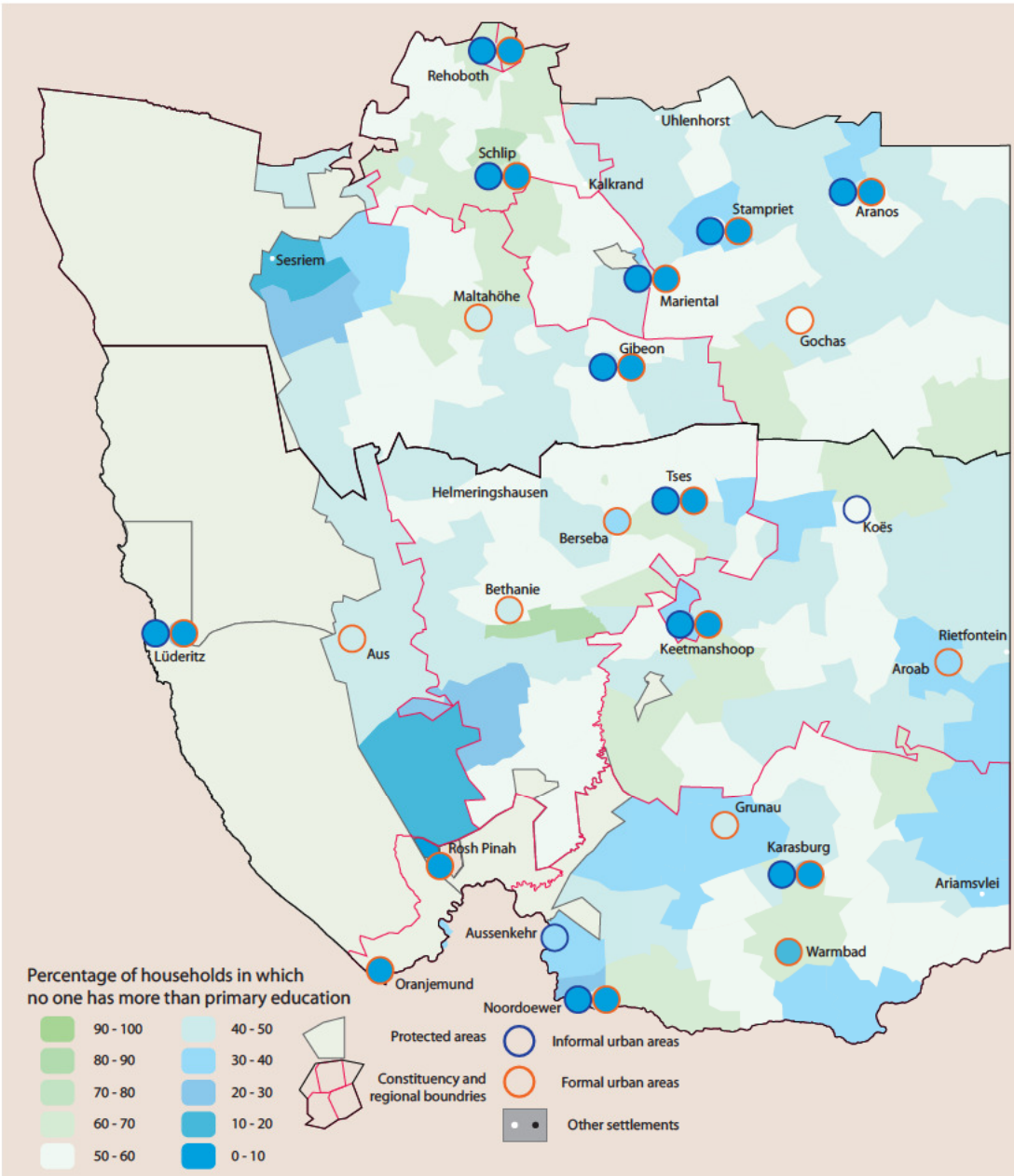


Figure 50. Percentages of homes in 2001 in Hardap and Karas in which no household member had progressed beyond primary school or Grade 7.

Almost all urban households in both formal and informal areas have at least one member with more than Grade 7. Exceptions are in the very small towns, such as Bethanie, Koës, Gochas, Aus, Maltahöhe and Grunau.

Most of these small towns do not have secondary schools, a factor which may also lead to somewhat lower levels of education than in the bigger towns.