

# Center for Community-Based Resource Management (CBRM)

Natural Resources Institute, University of Manitoba

## CBRM Database

<b>Date:</b>	<b>December 16, 2011</b>	<b>Entry Number:</b>	<b>1202</b>
<b>Case Study Name:</b>	The impact of culture and ecology on cooperation in a common-pool resource experiment		
<b>Author:</b>	Prediger, S., Vollan, B., & Frolich, M.		
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<b>Region:</b>	Africa – South of Sahara		
<b>Country:</b>	Namibia and South Africa		
<b>Ecosystem Type:</b>	Semi-arid rangelands		
<b>Social Characteristics:</b>	Rural communities, indigenous		
<b>Scale of Study:</b>	Community		
<b>Resource Type:</b>	Rangelands		
<b>Type of Initiative:</b>	Research driven project		
<b>Community Based Work:</b>	Resource management		

<b>Keywords:</b>	Common-pool resource experiment, Southern Africa, Payoffs to cooperation, Historical/political background
<b>Summary:</b>	<b>Context affects decision-making in many ways. In this paper we explore differences in cooperation behaviour between communal farmers in Namibia and South Africa, who share the same ethnic origin but have had different historical and ecological constraints. We report on a series of field experiments based on a common-pool resource model. Our experimental design is framed according to the grazing situation in semi-arid rangelands. Dependent on the behaviour in previous rounds, participants are facing different states of resource availability with varying need to cooperate, coordinate and to be patient. While only 4% of the grazing areas in South Africa remain in good quality, Namibians achieve a level of 42%. We analyse the different experimental states and find that Namibians behave in all states more cooperatively. We argue that the large difference between the two regions is due to a combination of different historical developments and ecological preconditions: Namibian resource users have a longer experience in cooperative resource management and intact traditional norms. Moreover, the real-life payoffs to cooperation are higher in Namibia stemming from ecological factors.</b>