Report 2003 - 2005

Language, Gender and Sustainability

A pluridisciplinary and comparative study of development communication

2003-2006
(LAGSUS-1)
Summary of main results

Location of field research

The projects were started in summer/fall 2003 in the countries where they had been planned, Namibia (Herero), Indonesia/Sulawesi (Kaili), and Ivory Coast (Tura). On addition, a project module was started in Uganda (Baluli).

Research has been carried out in co-operation with local institutions and co-researchers. Some of the latter are engaged in training programs related to the research.

Tura, Ivory Coast, Uganda

As a consequence of the partition of Ivory Coast into a government-controlled southern and a rebel-held northern and western part towards the end of the year 2002, the Tura homeland, the original main focus of the research, and the city of Man, originally intended to be its logistic center, happened to come under the control of the „Forces Nouvelles" (as the former rebel forces are called). As a consequence, the cassava project on which it had been grafted according to the original concept, had to be officially suspended when the expert and project participant, Fan Diomandé (ISOS, University of Kassel), was evacuated by the French. He continued his research program in Uganda under temporary assignment, which led to the *de facto* extension of the research project to that country (approved by Volkswagen Foundation on March 24, 2004).

1. Summary of research results

1.1. Language as a key factor of development

The relevance of language as an essential ingredient to the development process and its outcome – the starting assumption of the project put in most general terms - has been corroborated by the results from all subprojects. One of the key observations is that in areally unconnected and socio-politically as well as economically very diverse settings the issue of language tends to be perceived as a key factor by the target groups themselves, and one on whose successful negotiation the outcome of development interventions depends in a significant way. The degree to which local languages are recognized as a key resource in negotiating fundamental and practical issues pertaining to development crucially influences the way in

which local actors perceive their roles relative to these issues and their readiness to identify with them.

This last point suggests that language choice and language use are decisive not just for enhancing comprehension of innovative ideas and for their contextualization – which they certainly are -, but even more so for ensuring *social sustainability* as a prerequisite to sustainable development. Again, evidence in support of this hypothesis comes from all three major subprojects.

Evidence, inter alia from the Indonesian subproject, suggests that the local language fulfils a key role as an instrument of mediation both on the cognitive and on the institutional level: between traditional knowledge and modern concepts on the one hand (sustainability), between traditional models of consensus finding and adjustment of behavior to new realities on the other (local park management; cf. Wickl 2005d:15).

Contrastive evidence to the effect that results of development interventions may be substantially and systematically different depending on the place which the local language is given or not comes from the Herero and Kaili area. (The Tura community using positive discrimination in favor of the Tura language, contrastive evidence is less easy to come by there.)

For further details see

> <www.lagsus.de/Project description/Reports/Scientific report 2003-2004>
> Subproject reports, below.

1.2. Local language hermeneutics (LLH)

As a result of two years of intensive inquiry – a delayed start in Indonesia due to administrative problems has meanwhile been compensated – the project has accumulated a wealth of materials consisting of interviews, meetings and casual audio- and video-recordings from all four different research sites. Much of this material is still being processed, but it is safe to say that many relevant data for research on development communication and development-related issues could not have been obtained under any circumstances if the heuristic principle of local language data collection had not been adhered to.

This is true without exception for the rich and varied materials on development in crisis which were collected in the Tura home area during the protracted and still prevailing period of partition of Ivory Coast in the wake of civil war (see Tura below).

Among others, these materials include local views on the events in conjunction with what has been called *local analysis*. Local analyses, e.g. of economic difficulties, their causes and possible strategies to cope with them, are defined by local language coherence conditions in terms of what is said and how it is said, and in terms of completeness of argumentation. In most cases, it is unlikely that information of the same spontaneity, depth and quality could be obtained via indirect methods involving questionnaires, translation or any other method which imposes the researcher's coherence conditions on the process of inquiry.

Beyond the general discourse methodology outlined in the Project Description, various proce-

dures of verification come into play in formulating hypotheses, conclusions and extrapolations based on data. One generally accepted is the principle of triangulation, adapted from field research in social sciences (Morse et al. 2000:54): any claim to generalization on hypotheses must be supported by independent parallel evidence from bona fide independent sources.

The costliness and tediousness of the process of transcription and translation which accounts for a good proportion of total LAGSUS research time pays nevertheless off in that it provides a vast ground for contextualization and perspectivization which would otherwise be short-circuited.

Data collection, by its very nature, is like gold-washing: it is finally a small extract from the bulk of data which will be most relevant to a given theme, but what exactly will respond to this criterion cannot generally be pre-determined in planning interviews much less in informal recording sessions. It is not uncommon that casual speech occurring apart from recording sessions (or, not untypically, after extinction of the recorder) contains essential clues to understanding.

In order to alleviate the difficulty, selective approaches were used which allow to control the bulk of data and yet to reduce transcription time: pre-analysis, audio-analysis, selection of most relevant passages with the help of the native expert, etc.

LLH as a new approach to Third World Studies

What is meant by LLH? From the partial description given so far, one might conclude that it is above all a name given to a set of field techniques, most of which were more or less well known for decades. Nothing could be further from the truth. The field methodology adopted within the LAGSUS framework carries with it a modest claim to set standards in agreement with the source text principle which had been foundational to the coming of age of the humanities in the Western world. We do think that extending such standards to the study of oral sources in the Third World is an important step in view of strengthening the position of the Humanities in the context of scientific study of development and of Thirld World studies in general. (See Bearth 2004; Annex: Working paper on Local language hermeneutics. See Soraya 1998 for the general hermeneutics of cross-cultural research.)

1.3. Communicative sustainability

It cannot be denied that the theoretically innovative concept which is at the heart of the LAGSUS framework – *communicative sustainability* – proved to be somewhat elusive on theoretical grounds. A main reason is that it appears to assume that exogenous and endogenous influences on development could be somehow neatly and objectively factored out – which is doubtful on methodological grounds.

A constructivist, rather than objectivist view of boundaries seems to take care of this objection (for the details see <www.lagsus.de/> /Project description/Reports/Scientific report 2003-2004, note 10). On site the clearest demonstration for its viability, if not necessity, is Mont Sangbé National Park in Western Ivory Coast which has become the LAGSUS research focus

in Northern Tura subregion (Baya forthcoming). Recent research on local discourse in the area adjacent to the park indicates that, well aware that the park had become the most prominent victim of the war raging in the area, the people living in its perimeter, and above all the village leaders, maintain it on their agenda, emphatically. Admittedly, such observations may not mean much to colleagues looking at the world uniquely through the glasses of the hard sciences. However, precisely this – communicative sustainability in the absence of anything more tangible – may be a stepping stone for its relaunch if and when the situation permits.

1.4. Parallel discourses

The notion of "parallel discourse" (Bearth 2000b:87) was introduced to account for the phenomenon of discursive closure, relating to the fact that people beyond reach of a bridge language, or subject to communicative dependency (e.g. in translational development communication) would seek discourse coherence and understanding of the world within their own universe. The divergence between official development discourse on the one hand, its translation on the other, and, thirdly, the local discourse, which is in debt to none of the two others, but is what people base their action on, was supposed to be a measure of communicative unsustainability.

Extrapolating, from preliminary analyses of available data, the divergence respectively convergence of "parallel" discourses (DSL-centered vs DTL-centered)[1] seems to offer a rational basis for identifying and factorizing variables underlying communicative sustainability, with possible ramifications far beyond local contexts of development.

An evaluation metric could be constructed along two complementary and partially independent dimensions, which are applied to selected parameters, very much like it is done for development sustainability indicators (cf. Bell & Morse 1999; Morse et al. 2000). Parameters can be representations of elements of development ideology as they can also be quite practical issues, with broad leeway to adjust to the variability of concrete situations. The two dimensions to be considered in the immediate analytical future (eventually, the relevant parameters may turn out to be much more numerous!) are:

– Convergence vs. divergence of parallel discourses in respect to specific issues of recognized interest at the local level, whereby convergence raises the score of a given CSI while divergence lowers it.

– The connectedness vs. disconnectedness of parallel discourses. The yardstick for connectedness are mutual knowledge and mutual - or even unilateral - acknowledgment of the discourse of the other, different of one's own, on a given issue. While it is assumed that connectedness can be relatively easily ascertained through data from spontaneous discourse or from elicited meta-discourse; it must be clear that connectedness is not the same as empathy or adhesion. The *connectedness metric* constitutes an independent variable; it can however provide an indication as to the possibility of bridging in a practical way existing communication gaps between actors at various levels.

1.5. Communicative sustainability indicators (CSI)

See the Herero report below (2.3d).

---

[1] DSL, DTL = Development source language, development target language (see Project Description, Nov. 2002, p. 4).

1.6. Web pages

<http://www.lagsus.de>

<http://www.research-projects.unizh.ch/phil/unit65400/area176/p3131.htm>

2. Herero (Namibia)

2.1 General

Overall, both current researchers (R.M.Beck, T.Musutua) have the impression of a very positive development of the Herero Subproject on all levels. Field research yields very good results, the relationships in the field are perceived to be stable, local processes and dynamics become more and more transparent to us with growing intimacy with the field on the one and proceeding analysis of data on the other hand. Both of us have had the time and the opportunity to acquire the necessary knowledge while going along with the demands of the research project.

2.2 Methodological issues, choice of foci

In the face of such successful field research we have amassed app. 120 hrs of video- and/or audio taped meetings, interviews and other key events (cattle auctions, a workshop), app. 250 photographs, etc. Choosing from these data the appropriate foci have been based mainly on extra-(socio)linguistic factors. The first focus, the village of Omutiuanduko with its self-organized waterpoint committee, was chosen on the grounds of a) the impressive stability of its development organisations which b) are probably the legacy of the GTZ based community development efforts in the context of SARDEP (1992 – 2004). Two meetings have been almost fully transcribed (Mr. Musutua) and partly analysed (R.M.Beck, see also the paper „We speak Otjiherero, but we write in English"). There exists a partial survey on the social network of the village (Beck/Musutua/Döbel) which is complemented by a number of interviews on various issues. The second focus on the Tjohorongo-Kondjee Farmers' Association was chosen for two reasons, first the prominence that it achieved in the eyes of the main researcher (R.M.Beck), maybe because she stayed on the compound of the local extension service, who was partly occupied with the work of the Farmers' Association, but maybe because it does play an important role, too, locally. Second, because of contacts with highly committed members of the association through mediation of an extension worker intensive interest arose from their side in our project which they felt could contribute to solving some problems the organization faces due to its young age, specifically in the field of organization building. Finally the TKFA is, at least partly, the result of efforts of the agricultural facilitator of SARDEP at the times, its observation contributes to the project of impact monitoring, as was stated as one of the goals in the project description for LGS 1.

The fact that we did not choose the foci on the basis of our own intuition, can be understood as a validation of the importance of the foci. The choice of the meetings to be transcribed, however, remains ours and is owed to the fact that the main researcher must rely on translation (oral or written) of the proceedings of a meeting. Because there is a considerable time lag between recording, the completion of the (raw) transcription of a meeting and the analysis,

this time has been used to get a closer understanding of local dynamics with more common methods, such as interviews and participatory observation. Not only can we thus gather ethnographic knowledge to understand the proceedings of meetings and their (implicit, unspoken) presuppositions, or gain a more intuitive approach to the data, but we can get an impression of what „moves" people and then use this knowledge for the analysis of the meetings.

Very soon after the onset of the research project, and in response to the situation in the field, we started to orient ourselves towards the interdisciplinary context of Conversation Analysis and, more specifically, to the German offshot of this discipline, the Gesprächsforschung (provisionally translated as Interactional Analysis, see the journal „Gesprächsforschung – Online Zeitschrift zur Verbalen Interaktion, on „ethnographische Gesprächsforschung" Deppermann 1999). Interactional Analysis has a number of properties which proved to be favourable not only for the solution to some methodological problems, but which also provided an interdisciplinary framework. To position ourselves within this framework also meant that we were no longer forced to re-invent the methodology or theoretical and interdisciplinary structure, but that we could build on them and use them critically.

The Interactional Analysis-approach, an independent branch of ethnomethodologically oriented Conversation Analysis has started to discuss critically the systematic integration of structural and thematic aspects of conversations, and especially the integration of ethnographic knowledge (or explicit every-day knowledge) into its analysis. Gesprächsforschung meticulously provides for a whole "toolbox" of methodological techniques which can be applied to naturally occurring interactions. Our own methodological procedures are partly described already (in a prepublication version of Beck [in print 2006], and [in preparation]), but will need further adaptation to the specific situation of a researcher who is not a mother tongue speaker of Herero (or any other language, for that matter).

We follow also some fundamental assumptions and goals of this research tradition, namely that we „shift away from the search for causes of human conduct and toward the explication of how conduct is produced and recognized as intelligible and sensible" (Pomerantz & Fehr 1997:65). „The core analytic objective [of Conversation Analysis] is to illuminate how actions, events, objects, etc., are produced and understood rather than how language and talk are organized as analytically separable phenomena." (ibid.: 65). '"Instead, conversation analysts attempt to explicate the relevancies of the parties to an interaction.

2.3 Results

a) The role of (L)L in the transfer from DS to DT

We can show in various cases that Local Languages – in the cases where our focus is mainly on the uses of Otjiherero – have both democratising and destabilizing effects on the organizations observed. For instance, when we had the Marketing Policy of the TKFA translated from English into Otjiherero, the farmers present started asking many questions which were based on the fact that for the first time they had the information available to them in Otjiherero. At the same time these questions led to discussions about the usefulness of the policy or part of

it, as well as questions pertaining to previous practices by the management of the organization, its marketing officer or the buyers. On the field of Financial Report, though it was presented in Otjiherero at the Annual General Meeting of the TKFA in January 2005 as far as possible in Otjiherero and was not as disputed and questioned as it was at the AGM in April 2004, it seems mistrust and allegations about misuse of funds could not be generally acquiesced, as the field research of R. Döbel in July 2005 uncovered.[2] While on the one hand we have to deal here with a fundamental mistrust between local people and leaders – whereas we assume that it is a specific trait of Herero leadership that it is disputed per se – we also have to consider weaknesses in the local understanding of organizational principles (p.c. V. Tjimune, on various occasions), lack of understanding of financial processes in general, of price differences between the „world" of local people and Namibian elites, to which the executive committee of the TKFA at least partly belongs and which is a specific Namibian phenomenon inherited from colonial/Apartheid times, and a lack of „ownership" of the organization by the local farmers.

b) The role of (L)L in negotiation

A first hypothesis can be formulated which pertains to the competition between local language (Otjiherero) and English, namely that this competition can be – and apparently in similar ways all over the Subsaharan African continent is – used as a means to create social distance between elites and farmers. Specifically the European, colonial language, is exploited as an instrument of exclusion toward the farmers, and of defending the elite's own interests. This case clearly demonstrates the importance of language as the means of in- and exclusion from access to material, social and political resources which allow "for full exercise of one's rights of citizenship and full participation in public debate and decision-making processes (Bamgbose 2000, ch. 3-4)." (Bearth, application for Lagsus 1, p.1).

c) The role of a procedural infrastructure.

Meetings, which have been a major focus within this subproject, have shown to rely on a procedural infrastructure, which integrates already existing mechanisms with new ones. Procedural infrastructure here refers to the methods, rules and procedures that allow for the independent 'functioning' of an organization beyond direct contact with a development expert (see Beck [in preparation] for an extensive discussion of this term). For the Herero Subproject this is the turn-taking system which consists of a person holding up his/her hand to signal the wish to take over the next turn, the turn then is allocated to him/her by the chairperson, he/she gets up to speak, speaks, then sits down again. After this, the procedure starts anew. It can be showed that this local method is not only present as meta-communicative activity, but it is used as an instrument to solve procedural difficulties, such as the break down of the system in situations of conflict, and that the leader, in cooperation with a 'common' member, together re-install the method and solve the situation. It seems that this method is widely known, within and beyond Herero society, but we do not yet know enough about this. Furthermore we

---

[2] In a preliminary report of R. Döbel to the management, end of July 2005.

can show that this method is gendered – only men 'used' to get up to speak, women, sitting on the ground, would not speak up in public. Getting up, or rather the standing itself, is a sign of deference and respect for God, for the chairperson or eldest of a meeting was reserved for male communicative behaviour, but is now appropriated by more "modern" oriented women to appropriate speaking rights for themselves. The genderedness and the religious connotation play major roles for communicative sustainability. Since the "standing" itself contains religious connotations, meetings of this kind are associated with religious legitimation already on the level of procedural infrastructure. Religious legitimation –in local terms: blessing – is an important aspect of sustainability, since without blessing an organization is deemed to fail. While on the one hand women appropriate participation through the procedural infrastructure, in some contexts the conglomerate of religious legitimation, legitimation to speak and gender are actively used to integrate women into important decisions. In the waterpoint committee meeting women were asked to stand for the introductory prayers, which from the beginning made clear that this meant that they could be held accountable for their water debts: Every head of a household – app. 70% of all households in Omutiuanduko are female headed – had to stand in front of the congregation and account for their debts, and state how they intended to pay them. That women use these "new" communicative procedures does not mean that they feel fully comfortable with them: The female chairperson of the waterpoint committee negotiates her communicative behaviour between her "traditional" role as silent, sitting women with that of speaking, authoritative chairman. Here, as I have observed in other African societies, we can see that it is women who play a crucial role for innovation as they carefully mediate risk and preservation in and through their carefully balanced behaviour between tradition and modernity.

d) Empirical confirmation of Communicative Sustainability

We take as empirical confirmation of CS the fact that there is a procedural infrastructure used for development meetings, as opposed to procedural infrastructures used for family meetings. Both, the infrastructure and the categorization of meetings is rather stable throughout the meetings and the interviews we have observed in the Omatjete communal area.

Being a „strong partner" in communication, i.e. being in a position not only as recipient of developmental input has shown to be of great importance to CS. We can see this with the impressive example of female household heads in Omutiuanduko, we can see it in the resistance of the „difficult villager" in the example of the Boar goat project case study (Beck, [in print]), we can see it with the destabilizing effects the translation of the Marketing Policy of the TKFA had on the organization.

e*) CS indicators*

I suggest as indicators for communicative sustainability
- the recurrence of a stable procedural infrastructure across meetings of the same organization/institution, and across such meetings in various, related communities (i.e.

> one waterpoint committee, waterpoint committees across various communities in a given area).

- Instances of meta-communicative activities which show that within such an organization there is some degree of awareness about the procedural infrastructure (see Beck [in preparation])
- the ability to socially integrate the stakeholders of a development organization through meetings and its stable infrastructure

f) Relationship between local and global issues

As can be seen with discussions in the TKFA, and the difficulties of the waterpoint committee to enforce its decisions with the members, local deliberations depend on national juridical and political processes. In the case of the TKFA the current land reform under discussion, especially the so-called registration for „household land" and subsequent laws pertaining to the number of animals allowed on communal land, influences not only discussions but also social tension within the organization. For the waterpoint committee, since there is no Namibian law which states how to deal with water debtors and since there is even a political debate on whether water, as the fundament for living, should be a national good and paid for by the government, it is very difficult to convince the villagers to pay for their debts.

Especially when it comes to material resources, or, in some contexts, the issue of gender equality, it becomes clear that these discourses are perceived to be Western in the sense that they are mainly brought up as a theme by development organizations. They are thus connected to the promise of benefits and as a means to secure resources otherwise (in the Namibian context) not available to the people in Omatjete.

2.4. Open issues

So far we have some scattered case studies here and there, some write-ups which were used for the workshop with the TKFA, with various conferences and papers we gave in the course of the past two years. In the time to come, these partial analyses must be supplemented by further fine transcriptions and analyses (for example in the context of the Colloquium at the University of Frankfurt in the coming semester, with a working group made up of several researchers either employed by the research project or associated to it), and knit together to form more coherent statements about the role of language, local language hermeneutics and communicative sustainability.

So far, we have concentrated mainly on sociolinguistic aspects and a more sociologically oriented conversation analysis of our data. Largely lacking is a closer look at Otjiherero itself as the source of social interaction within the developmental context of the Herero community from a linguistic point of view. As the focus in doing so lies on the interface between discourse and society we consider *interactional linguistics* (cf. Selting & Couper-Kuhlen 2000, among others) to be the adequate framework on which such a study should be based. Although *interactional linguistics* as a means of linguistic analysis has attracted a number of linguists in recent times (cf. Auer 1996, 1999; Uhmann 2001), attention so far has been pre-

dominantly paid to well-documented and –analysed European languages such as German, English and Romance languages, except for Streeck (1996). To include the study of Herero discourse strategies against the background of *interactional linguistics* will provide insight into discourse analysis from a totally different - and so far neglected - perspective.

An other open issue is the production of handbooks with more practical aspects: We plan a handbook for organization building with the NNFU (Mr. V. Tjimune), but whether this can materialize will, among others, depend on the workloads of the researchers and practitioners involved. In any case, a second organization building workshop for the TKFA is in the stage of planning.

2.5. Qualifications

In terms of formal qualification, Mr. Musutua has acquired a Diploma in Gender and Development at the University of Namibia and has been accepted into a M.A. course of Sociology at Unam. He will be enrolled at the Unversity of Frankfurt for the winter semester 2005/2006.

3. Tura (Ivory Coast)

3.1. Adjustment of setting and research agenda

The situation in Ivory Coast may be described as a „frozen" civil war. As long as the disarmament remains on paper, peace remains on paper. Truce and relative safety are guaranteed by the intervention forces dispatched by France and the U.N. It remains to be seen whether the new hope generated by the Mbeki mediation will materialize and the country will find the way out of the political crisis which paralyses it since fighting broke out on 19 Sept. 2002. The acid test of any lasting arrangement between the parties was generally expected to be the preparation and implementation of the presidential election due to be held October 30, 2005, and the acceptance of its results by all parties. It is certain that the election will not take place at the convened date.

The setting, the organizational structure and to some extent the agenda of the research were affected in different ways by the new situation which resulted from the political crisis:

1. Setting: As a consequence of the partition of the country into a government-controlled southern and a rebel-held northern and western part, the Tura homeland, the original main focus of the research, and the city of Man, originally intended to be its logistic centre, were under the control of the "Forces nouvelles" (as the former rebel forces were now called).

2. Adjustment of overall research strategy: an understanding of attitudes and strategies generated by the local population in a context of abrupt change could provide insights of value to development specialists who are increasingly faced with situations of crisis in Africa and other parts of the world.

3. Cross-situational comparison of expert communication: Following his evacuation by French troops, end of November 2002, when the rebels took over the city of Man, D. Fan, agricultural expert and himself a Tura, was transferred to Uganda by his employer where he found himself in the less comfortable, and yet rather typical situation of the interpreter-dependent expert who is excluded by the language barrier from immediate interaction with the

target group. This opened the way for him to compare these two conditions of expert-target group information.

For initial data and preliminary conclusions on this subject, see *Appendix T-2* (Fan Diomandé, Nr. 1); and G-1 (FD's paper read at the Windhoek conference).

4. Endogenous views and motivations for development: In the absence of external agencies promoting development, the question naturally arises whether development is possible without such external stimuli. The sudden breakdown of structures providing guidance, support and monitoring to development projects from the outside offers an ideal frame for testing the extent to which development is endogenously motivated and sustained. This issue had not been explicitly put on the original research agenda and thus constituted a new focus which has been added to it as a consequence of unexpected events. At the same time, however, endogenous development is a central issue in the so-called post-development debate (Rahnema & Bawtree 1997, Maiava n.d.), as well as in the emerging field of studies focusing on the interdependence between development and institutional crisis (cf. Collier et al. 2003; Gersony 2003). Moreover, it feeds back on the central issue of the project as originally conceived. See also Mumvela (2004) for a comprehensive study documenting „endogenous" development in another African zone of crisis, the RDC.

5. A laboratory case for examining communicative sustainability: State-guaranteed law and order as well as development activities in the usual sense have completely vanished from the Tura area. This is still the case today, three years after the outbreak of civil war. The former have been replaced by warlord-type suzerainties, the latter by relief agencies operating at best in the big centres, far away from the mountainous area where the Tura live. What adds to the inherent research interest of this state of affairs, however, and what adds to its interest as a laboratory case, is the fact that the now dysfunctional development projects had been objects of inquiry from the angle of the research perspective during their active phase, namely shortly before the outbreak of the war. This applies both to the *cassava project* initiated by D. Fan, which was one of the starting points of the research proposal (see earlier reports on the pilot project)[3], and to the *Mont Sangbé National Park* project which has come to draw fresh attention to itself through its being repeatedly evoked in recorded local discourses during the reporting period. References to both projects also surface in the data recorded during this period. Both, in a sense, had used local language-based approaches, but only the former had followed consistently the principle of submitting the project contents or objectives to negotiation through the local language, and in particular to the *Kono* principle (Bearth & Fan 2002), whereas in the Mont Sangbé project, the role of the local language had been reduced to its use as a means of filtering a message which, as it seems now, has largely remained external to Tura society. <u>Field documents</u> see *Appendix T-1*. Further data from the time of the pilot project (2000-2002) have been transcribed and will be integrated into the corpus.

---

[3] Some aspects of this prior inquiry are reflected in Bearth/Fan (2002).

6. Self-organisation as a social pre-condition to development: After armed conflict had broken out in the area, the Tura villages adopted an evidently successful strategy of local crisis management which was consistently reported by the researchers who were still on the scene (D. Fan before his evacuation, J. Baya during the whole period of the war) and by various other sources. From these reports, it appears that most or all villages followed a directive issued at the beginning of the war to stay neutral, to ban party politics, to avoid taking sides in a conflict in which they had all to lose and nothing to gain, and to practise traditional hospitality towards all who might request or need it, whatever their political or ethnic allegiance. At the same time, a number of measures were taken and orders issued whose objective it was to keep low profile in order to avoid behaviour which might be interpreted as provocation and arise suspicion or military intervention by the new masters. Thus a ban was imposed on chanting in the fields as it had usually been practised as a means of mutual encouragement during community work activities, particularly in times of harvest. The remarkable degree to which orders issued along these lines were followed is largely attested in a series of documents which were recorded during the reporting period through group and individual interviews (See Appendix T-1).

7. As a result of this, combined with its physical remoteness, the Tura core area, while suffering economically from the war, was spared from its most tragic and irreversible consequences. Against the background of a society traditionally characterized as "acephalous" in terms of local governance, and at the same time renowned for its gerontocracy, this observation raises a number of questions about the communicative mechanisms which are behind the crisis management and the self-organization and which can be assumed to be relevant to development as well. An attempt to formulate these questions and provide some preliminary answers is found in *Appendix T-8* (Tura local crisis management – an ethno-historical perspective).

8. Gender: Gender aspects were originally intended to be studied first in the Tura home area, then, at a later stage and mainly for comparison, in the urban diaspora. The unstable security situation at the time of the launching of the project led to the decision to change this order: the gender discourse research group led by Mrs. Lydie Kouadio started its work in the Greater Abidjan area, taking advantage of empathy and familiarity with Tura women's associations in the diaspora. This turned out to open up a source of unexpected insights about gender asymmetries prevailing in urban areas far removed from the village, on village-centeredness of first and second-generation diaspora members, and on diaspora-centeredness of village development. It thus pointed to a network of subtle interdependencies which cannot be ignored in interpreting recordings of "development talk" taken in the villages of the home area. Recordings with village women and mixed groups were started in July 2004.

Field documents see *Appendix T-1*: Documents 201-205; 251.

3.2. Research organization

The following steps were taken to overcome the practical difficulties inherent in the situation and to ensure optimal results in spite of them:

(i)   *Administration and co-ordination.* The Tura project was originally intended to function as a single administrative unit with its logistic centre in Man. The dismemberment of the country resulted in its de facto tripartition, as far as administration and co-ordination is concerned (Man, Abidjan, Uganda). An office room could be rented in Abidjan, and administrative work is shared between T. Bearth (co-ordination and supervision), Lydie Kouadio (Abidjan local team supervision and finances) and Fan Monssia (local co-ordination, technical infrastructure). The Man task force (J. Baya) is sharing facilities with Alphatoura (Tura literacy project), whose members are also participating sporadically as research assistants and transcription experts.

(ii)   *Communication and supervision:*
   a. seminars on transcription and analysis in Abidjan (T. Bearth in Oct. 2003, Feb., May 2004) and technical know-how (G. Soupou on transcription Dec. 2003, June 2004, December 2004, August 2005);
   b. tele-cooperation including unlimited data exchange thanks to ATP, a special device developed for converting African scripts to ASCII and unicode;
   c. co-ordination by means of phone card.
   d. LAGSUS newsletter with feedback;
   e. a formalized procedure of monthly reporting;
   f. memos and work papers drafted by project participants on seminars, field research etc. (see Appendix T-2).

The adoption of the flexible team work concept for which the foundation had been laid in the preparatory phase in 2002 has been the most decisive factor for getting the project off the ground in spite of the external difficulties during the reporting period.

Qualifications:

J. Baya : M.A. June 10, 2004 on the LAGSUS theme „The place of the local language in the diffusion of concepts of development: the case of the Tura language."

G. Singo has completed her M.A. thesis on a subject of oral tradition.

Co-operative agreement with CSRS:

A formal agreement taking effect on 1st of Oct. 2004 was concluded between LAGSUS-Tura and the *Swiss Center of Scientific Research (CSRS)* which allows LAGSUS field activities to be carried out under this agreement and thereby benefit from the exterritorial status of CSRS. All Ivorian researchers carry a badge showing that they are doing their work in the name of

the CSRS. Thanks to this arrangement, a research journey „behind the lines" to the Tura home area presented no serious problem in February 2005.

February 12, 2004: LAGSUS *Colloquium* at the CSRS with speakers and participants from the University and CSRS.

3.3. Data

Of the 30 recordings obtained in various settings, with an average length of over one hour (total 50 hours), several focus on the Abidjan diaspora situation, the others represent local views or negotiation processes from the rural Tura area.

Topical series were recorded according to principles of *triangulation*. This means that identical or similar questionnaires were applied to at least two different villages. Special attention was paid to gender viewpoints.

Transcription has been completed for more than ½ of the recordings. For key documents, the Tura transcript is supplemented with French interlinearization and translation. Analysis is progressing and is reflected in forthcoming publications (Baya, Bearth, Kouadio).

3.4. Results

On the basis of preliminary analyses of transcribed documents, important insights emerge in the following domains:

− Native views on innovative economic activities in a situation of war and crisis
− Communicative resources for self-organisation and self-defense
− Change of gender relations due to economic change
− Change of generational contract
− Local viewpoints on ecological sustainability.

The comparative approach imposed by the political situation yields significant results in the following areas of research:

− Endogenous motivation *and* capacities for development activities are not totally superseded by day-by-day survival strategies in times of crisis but must be taken into account as independent variables which may under given circumstances, within limits but quite effectively, counteract the destructive effects of war and of the breakdown of government administration. Concordant evidence for this comes from D. Fan's paper "Le développement est-il possible en temps de guerre?" (*Appendix T-2a, item* 5) and from several of the documents from the Tura area.

− There is a strong drive towards literacy particularly in the younger adult female segment of the population. In the western part of Tura country, there is a very active promotion of the local language supported by the village heads. Thus in Sept. 2004, a festival of the Tura language was organized in Kpata with over 2000 participants. On Sept.9, 2005, the 2nd Festival is expected to take place with even greater participation. It is preceded by workshops of a local „language academy" type. This is one paradox – as if getting out of the poverty trap was not the most imminent preoccupation ...

−   The "Kono" principle (the highly structured indigenous procedure of the Tura through which exogenous innovative messages are "adopted" and "legitimized" as indigenous discourse objects and become communicatively sustainable, see Bearth & Fan, 2002) has parallels in the Baluli community. A typological comparison of the two procedures was presented by D. Fan at the Namibia conference.

3.5. February 1-15, 2005. Journey to the Tura home area

First video recordings authorized in occupied zone

- Palm leaf broom industry
- Kono procedure
- Meta-Kono (a *kono* procedure is reported to a visitor)
- Gouané: the perimeter of Mont Sangbé National Park

Palm leaf broom industry:

It is against the backdrop of this economic impasse that the shift from vegetable-market-oriented-bound income-producing activities to the palm leaf broom industry with its disastrous ecological consequences becomes understandable. It purports to be a desperate move to safeguard a minimal source of cash partially compensating for the loss of both the male and the female basis of income in normal times.

Kono:

Epitomizes the Tura society's communicative resources. The kono is an elaborate procedure which, among other things, functions as a powerful instrument to ensure social cohesion at all levels of structure. It is respected and practised by all, young and old.

Gouané:

The recordings from this big and very remote village are an eloquent plea in favour of the Mont Sangbé National Park.

At the same time, this apparently strong case of communicative sustainability, in the absence of the material counterpart, is relativized by parallel discourse around the corner.
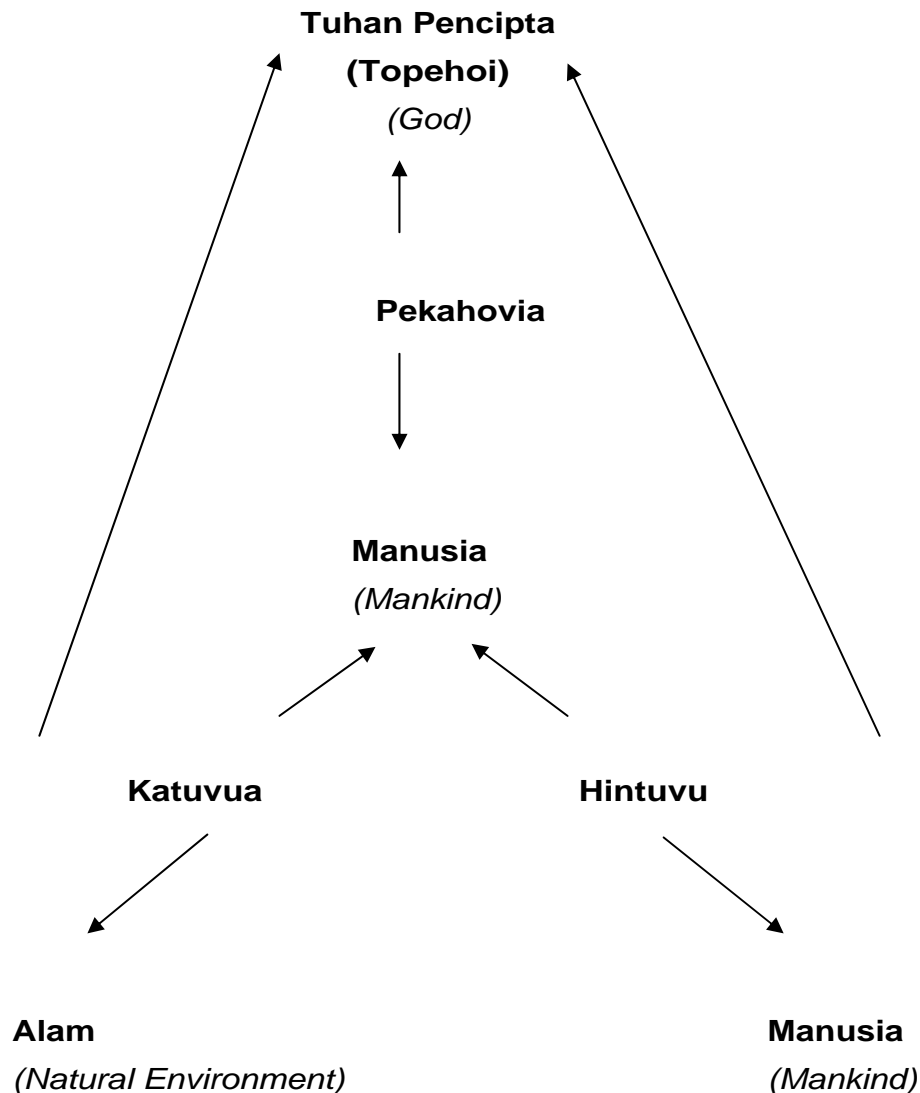
It is of methodological interest that we learn about this other „non-sustainable" discourse because (a) we decide to spend the night in the village, and (b) thanks to an especially close kinship relation with one of our research assistants.

4. Kaili (Indonesia)

The primary goal of the LAGSUS 1 project (July 2003 to June 2006) was and is the analysis of the role of local languages in development discourse, in order to prove an existing communicative sustainability which can be taken as a means of implementing innovative concepts into local structures.

The research area of the Indonesian sub-project of LAGSUS 1 is located around the borders of the Lore Lindu National Park (LLNP), which was officially launched in 1993. Since the initiation of the National Park everyday life in the + 60 villages at the border of the National Park changed dramatically. The use of natural resources within the National Park's boundaries, a traditionally source of income, was strongly restricted. This loss of income was

to be compensated by an Asian Development Bank (ADB) - funded development project carried out by the National Planning Organization BAPPEDA of Indonesia. The main target of the project was the diversification of the economy of the concerned villages in order to establish sustainable development. New ideas and concepts, as sustainability itself, had to be made part of the process in order to reach the intended target of sustainable development and the acceptance by the local population of the villages to fulfill this requirement. During the first project phase from July 2003 to June 2005 it could be established that a variety of different discourse strategies exist due to different demographic structures of the villages around the boundary of the Lore Lindu National Park. There are villages where local discourse has no association to the target of sustainable development at all. The continued use of the natural resources is therefore – more or less – the natural consequence of the lack of discussion about new ways of earning a living. In most villages people do understand the necessity of new concepts as a result of the restricted use of the natural resources. However, the lack of organizational processes within these villages impedes changes which would encourage the necessary acceptance by the village population in order to create sustainable development. In Toro, one of the villages on the western border of the National Park, important organizational processes like local organizations as agents of change, the use of local knowledge and the acquisition, dissemination and utilization of new knowledge to incorporate new concepts can be observed. (Fremerey 2002:1) In the village of Toro the traditional consensus finding system of *musyawarah* (the discussion) and *mufakat* (the consensus) has been consciously reactivated to promote sustainable development and to initiate the acceptance by the local population through a step by step process of the dissemination of new ideas and concepts by means of local discourse strategies. First results show a correlation between discourse patterns in the local language and sustainable development on communicative, economic and ecologic levels with the communicative sustainability as a prerequisite in order to reach „higher" levels of sustainable development. Innovative concepts and new terminologies, as the notion of sustainability itself, are to be incorporated into the local language and into local structures to become part of the local knowledge and local action. The notion of „sustainability"is in *Bahasa Indonesia*, the national language of Indonesia, phrased as *pelestarian*. The analysis of interviews carried out in the target region of the Kaili sub-project clearly shows that the interviewees could not respond to the Indonesian term. In Toro, the notion of sustainability had been integrated into a traditionally existing triangle which describes social, religious and environmental relations and is therefore tangible by most members of the village society.

Tuhan Pencipta

(Topehoi)

(God)

Pekahovia

Manusia

(Mankind)

Katuvua   **Hintuvu**

Alam   **Manusia**

(Natural Environment)   *(Mankind)*

Respondents know about the concept of sustainable development and are able to discuss this matter. This demonstrates the importance of the local language in transferring innovative concepts from a given development source language (i.e. sustainabiltity, pelestarian) to a specific development target language (i.e. katuvua). It also shows conclusively the necessary incorporation of innovative concepts into existing, although unused, local structures. Further key factors in securing the incorporation of innovative concepts and terminologies are good leadership, vision, equal rights of the sexes and the guaranteed participation in the decision-making processes, all of which can be documented in the village of Toro. Thus Fremerey (2002:1) comes to the conclusion, that „in terms of acquisition, dissemination and utilization of knowledge, [Toro] shows good promise to develop an organizational learning pattern, which comes up to the prerequisites of sustainable development". Still, the analysis of the collected data gives strong evidence that the idea of sustainability in a village like Toro does not concur with the internationally accepted definition of this term. Economic requirements

will automatically lead to an abuse of the natural resources of the National Park's area, once the next generation is about to need their own land to grow rice on, the number one crop to secure the daily demands of the village life. However, the progress in establishing a local community with organizational skills like Toro, that "takes care" of its own future, has initiated the setting up of foundations to cope with the rising problems. Toro is building up a local Credit Union to help solve the economic problems by diversifying the economic basis through division of labor and new local enterprises.

Evidence based on collected data from villages with no organizational patterns like the described progress in Toro suggest, that indeed the use of the local languages as a means of communicating and adapting innovative concepts is the primary tool for creating developmental discourse. In order to achieve the intended target – i.e. sustainable development – the use of local structures, local organizations and the dissemination and utilization of the externally and internally enhanced local knowledge needs to be taken into account.

5. Interproject comparison and sociological perspective

5.1. Aims of LGS 1

The overall goal of the project had been to build a *general paradigm of the relevance of language to development* through the development of *a coherent interdisciplinary approach combining theoretical and methodological premises from both disciplines*. The sociology component's particular task was to support the development of the comparative perspective, methodologically as well as conceptually, taking into consideration the issues of power and trust in institutionalised and non-institutionalised communication processes. In this respect, gender relationships were conceptualised as relationships of power, criss-crossing with other relationships of power – locally and internationally. The task of the sociology component was also to survey the ongoing global discourse concerning sustainability and development and to supply an overview perspective to the individual sub-projects to allow for their positioning in the framework of global development efforts.

5.2. Activities

In accordance with the integrative nature of the sociology component's task, the schedule of its activities was coordinated closely with the other components' schedules. Thus, the first field research period in Indonesia was of an exploratory nature aimed at locating appropriate target areas among the sixty villages surrounding the Lore Lindu National Park in Central Sulawesi on the basis of both linguistic (linguistic diversity within the village) and social (leadership and institutional structure) criteria (for details see the report *Lore Lindu und die umgebenden Gemeinden* of October 2003). As the geographic and institutional choices had already been made in Namibia – and the research field was found to be rather sensitive to the presence of German researchers because of the colonial history -, it was deemed more profitable for the interdisciplinary collaboration to wait with the field research of the sociology component until relationships between LAGSUS and the local population had

consolidated. Thus, field research in Namibia began in July 2004, after the development of an indirect methodology to study the relationships of power within the local population as between population and institutions. The resulting theatre methodology (see the distributed Write-up *Children's theatre as a mirror of adults' conceptions*) was tested during that field research and found useful for confirming the existence of a parallel discourse on development problems. At the same time – and despite the interest it created among some Namibian researchers, educationists, and theatre experts – it was found that the time frame of one month per year and the institutional distance between schools and the relevant institutions made it difficult to use its full potential (see the report *Sustainability, the TKFA, and the communal area of Omatjete in the context of the land question in Namibia* of September 2004).

The intervening one-year period between these two field researches[4] was filled with literature research, attendance of conferences related to the emerging topic of the involvement of private business in sustainable development (see the internal information brief *Nachhaltige Entwicklung aus der Sicht der Wirtschaft – eine "rapid Diskursanalyse"* of January 2004), and work on the planned website. Due to inexperience on the part of the volunteering researcher (myself), and co-ordination problems over distances, the completion of a representative website was handed over to an external consultant.

The literature review had two aspects: development and sustainability in general, and core concepts for the research project in particular. The "core concepts" which had been agreed upon during one of the project review meetings concerned: Macht (Power) / Entwicklung (Entwicklung) / Nachhaltigkeit (Sustainability) / Gender / Leadership / Vertrauen (Trust) / Empowerment / Resources. For each of these terms a "definition" was suggested and they were discussed both electronically and during another review meeting. Some of these notions have been summarized well in the scientific and non-scientific literature[5], while others have not received such treatment[6]. The literature review contributed to the widening of the theoretical perspective of LAGUS which occurred during the interdisciplinary discussions at review meetings, particularly during the Namibian workshop following the conference in August 2004. In particular, the increased focus on issues of power in the field research, the widening of the understanding of the term "sustainability" and – related to the latter point – the inclusion of the terms "resources" and "trust" in the list of core terms resulted from these discussions.

The theoretical widening also led to a clarification of the practical role of the sociology component within the field research effort of all components involved: within its mandate to

---

[4] The unexpected length of this period was due first to the development of the political situation in Ivory Coast, which led to the addition of the Ugandan component, where field research was conducted in March 2005; and second to visa problems for the Indonesian component.

[5] For *Entwicklung* see Kößler (1998), for *Nachhaltigkeit* see Luks (2002).

[6] The translation of the preliminary definitions – which were placed on the internal discussion forum – is still pending and should be completed soon after the last intended period of field research for 2005 (Indonesia, September 2005).

contribute to support the development of a comparative perspective, its practical task would be to determine the social position of the speakers in documented sequences of institutional negotiations by developing a sociogram of the villages involved. This was to be done with the use of village maps, complemented by interviews with key informants, the latter focussing on local notions of resource, sustainability, and leadership (see report on *Esslingen workshop*, write-up *The approach to field research for the sociology component of LAGSUS*, and report on coordinating meeting with Rose Marie Beck: *Integrating the sociological perspective and the sociolinguistic perspective*).

The first steps with this methodology were taken during the second field research period in Indonesia (December 2004 to January 2005), which also served to further clarify the general usefulness of the theatre methodology, with the practical task of developing theatre play on resource conservation in the villages delegated to a theatre expert of a Palu government agency (see report *Respect for Boundaries – whose boundaries?* of February 2005). While the theatre method was not pursued further in the context of the following field research periods in Uganda and Namibia (in March 2005 and July 2005 respectively, the reason being constraints of time and manpower for an *effective* implementation), the use of maps and key informant interviews was, which led to a provisional ranking of key resources among key respondents in Uganda (see report *Resource Use and Sustainable Development among the Baluli in Uganda* of June 2005), and a more intensive discussion of water and grazing problems, together with clarification of the relationship between rural and urban branches of the Tjohorongo Kondjee Farmers Association in Namibia (report forthcoming, see draft report *The TKFA as viewed by members and non-members in Windhoek, Walvisbay, Omatjette, Omihana, Otupupa, Otjohorongo, Ozondati, Okongue and Otjiwarongo*)

5.3. Main findings and results

The reports mentioned in the last section served as inputs to the work of the other project components, and the conclusions which transcend the aspects of inter-project co-ordination will be published in two forthcoming papers (see Appendix). The main findings can be summarized as follows:

The literature review confirmed that the language factor receives very scant attention in deliberations about sustainability (which is defined either in environmental or in economic terms, with a conflicting orientation concerning appropriate courses of action between these two[7]), in the literature about power and trust (for details see the list in the appendix), or even in more recent literature about global development (Thiel 2001, Stoez 1999). While the sociology component did not focus on the language factor per se, in the course of group discussions, interviews with key informants, and in the course of translating key questions into the local language, it became nevertheless clear that the local language plays an important factor for the identity of the groups studied, to the extent that some of the *Baluli* interviewees

---

[7] As an example for a view of sustainability which does not see a conflict with economic growth see Morris (2002), for a contrasting view see Chatterjee and Finger (1994).

in Uganda saw better chances for local development with the recent official recognition of the separateness of their culture and language by the government, while some *Rampi* respondents in Indonesia saw their cultural identity[8] endangered as a result of the neglect of their local language in education – and to an increasing degree in everyday communication.

From a wider sociological perspective this may be interpreted as an almost inevitable result of the nexus between global and national processes of economic development and systems of technology and organization which originate beyond the geographic boundaries of the localities studied in this project. As personal economic advancement is almost necessarily linked to success in mastering the languages "attached to" the forms of technology and organization as a precondition to mastering the forms of technology and organization themselves, the local language increasingly loses its "power" as a tool for personal advancement – at least in terms of economic gain[9]. The local deliberations about this effect, however – to the extent that they take place in parallel discourses at all – are often conducted in the local language. For this reason, the Local Language Hermeneutics of LAGSUS seems to offer virtually the only access to understanding the local experience of being dominated by a process of "development" (understood in a very broad sense) which, however, at the same time seems to offers benefits of which most want to have their share.

The sociology component's dependence on translation did not allow more than some tantalizing glimpses of these parallel discourses, and also of their social position as submerged discourses, i.e. discourses which surface only during specific conflicts (such as contests for leadership positions in the Tjohorongo Kondjee Farmers' Association). The glimpses were possible due to the relationships already established by the other long-term researchers of LAGSUS who introduced this researcher into existing networks of relationships, and assisted with the choice of interpreters and other assistants, with whom the development of reasonably trusting relationships was possible[10]. This point is stressed because it allowed in many cases the cross-checking of perceptions about facial expressions and the assessment of behaviours. In addition, this cross-checking was done with assistants who had often worked in pairs, conducting something very close to "naturally occurring conversation", while the main researcher remained rather in the background. Therefore, it is unlikely that the well-known effect of informants simply presenting what the researcher wants to hear played an important role in these interviews.

What was plainly visible in all areas of direct field research was the closeness of leadership positions to *relatively* privileged positions in the local social structure: families possessing

---

[8] For the relationship between identities and colonialism see Heidrich (1994), for the role of culture as a medium of self-reflection see Krewer (1992).

[9] There are exceptions to this trend, as Frank Wickl's studies in Toro show, where recourse to local language and local traditions seems to assist the local power elite in securing their positions.

[10] In Namibia, there was the additional advantage of access to all existing transcripts from official meetings of waterpoint committees and of the TKFA, which led – in intensive interdisciplinary consultation with Rose Marie Beck - to the development of a more precise research agenda for the July 2005 field research.

comparatively more resources or having better access to resources are in most of the places visited also the families with better education in modern terms and the families from which leaders of local institutions are drawn. They are not always, however, the locally "wealthiest" families: those with the best developed concepts of "good leadership" (which occupied a prominent place on the list of topics for the semi-structured interviews with key informants) expressed a lack of ambition for attaining more than a "satisfactory" level of income and property – and this was consistent across the three cultures. Their concepts of leadership can be taken as paraphrases to one of the central insights about leadership and participation: "Dominating behaviour inhibits participation"[11] (see forthcoming publication).

Another tantalizing glimpse was offered by a glaring example of the reverse: a dominating leader in an Indonesian village, whose plot of maize cultivation was very visibly violating the conservation agreement he claimed to be sacrosanct for the inhabitants of his village (in contradistinction to neighboring villages) – and whose behaviour was commented on in parallel discourses to his own locally dominating one: "our leader does not set a good example". Taken together these examples invite to think about the relationship between intentions – of leaders and of followers -, local values, local power structures, the quality of leadership, and the sustainability of resource use. A proper understanding of these issues – beyond these glimpses and the trivial interpretations they invite – requires a more thoroughgoing study than the framework of LAGSUS I allows, however: an intensive and intimate study of parallel discourses will be required – as proposed for LAGSUS II.

This also applies to the existing local reasoning about the relationship between poverty, development and resource use. In a first approximation, respondents in all areas see a necessity for environmental/resource conservation, but claim that poverty is preventing the necessary action, together with a pretended or actual inability for the required forms of organization. Instead – as for "development" in the sense of infrastructure, education, health services, and markets - hope is placed on external action by the state, by NGOs, or by development agencies. While the emphasis differs – in Indonesia the perceived cause for the ability to act sustainably is population growth, while in Uganda and Namibia it is the lack of available land – there seems to be a pervading sense of dependency and powerlessness among a majority of people, while a few activists display initiative, resourcefulness and hope, sometimes gathering followers around them. This applies to the case of OPANT in Toro, Indonesia, to *some* of the active urban and rural members of the Tjohorongo Kondjee Farmers Association in Namibia, and to *some* of the (mainly female) members of development groups assisted by the development project for which Fan Diomande works as an agricultural expert.

---

[11] Chambers (1998: xv)